

LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE
June 22, 2022

LHSC gets $50,000 in grants to combat drug-impaired driving

June 22, 2022 – Louisiana is upgrading its toolkit to combat impaired driving, thanks to grants the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission received to purchase new drug laboratory equipment and to fund a toxicologist to analyze substances and provide testimony in impaired driving prosecutions.

The $50,000 in grants were formally presented recently to LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman by the Governors Highway Safety Association and Responsibility.org.

One $20,000 grant will be used to purchase hydrogen, compressed-air, and zero-air generators for the North Louisiana Criminalistic Laboratory, which provides forensic toxicology services for 29 of Louisiana's 64 parishes. This new equipment will be used to test impaired driving blood samples for a wider analysis of drugs, including inhalants.

A second grant will be used to contract with a forensic toxicologist, who can provide expert analysis and court testimony in drug-impaired prosecutions. Such cases can be more complex than alcohol-impaired driving cases, and prosecutors sometimes settle for lesser charges or dismiss the cases because of a lack of forensic support.

GHSA and Responsibility.org said this "first-of-its-kind on-call toxicology program…can be a model for other states" because it can identify dangerous, drug-impaired drivers, get them off the streets and into proper treatment and monitoring programs.

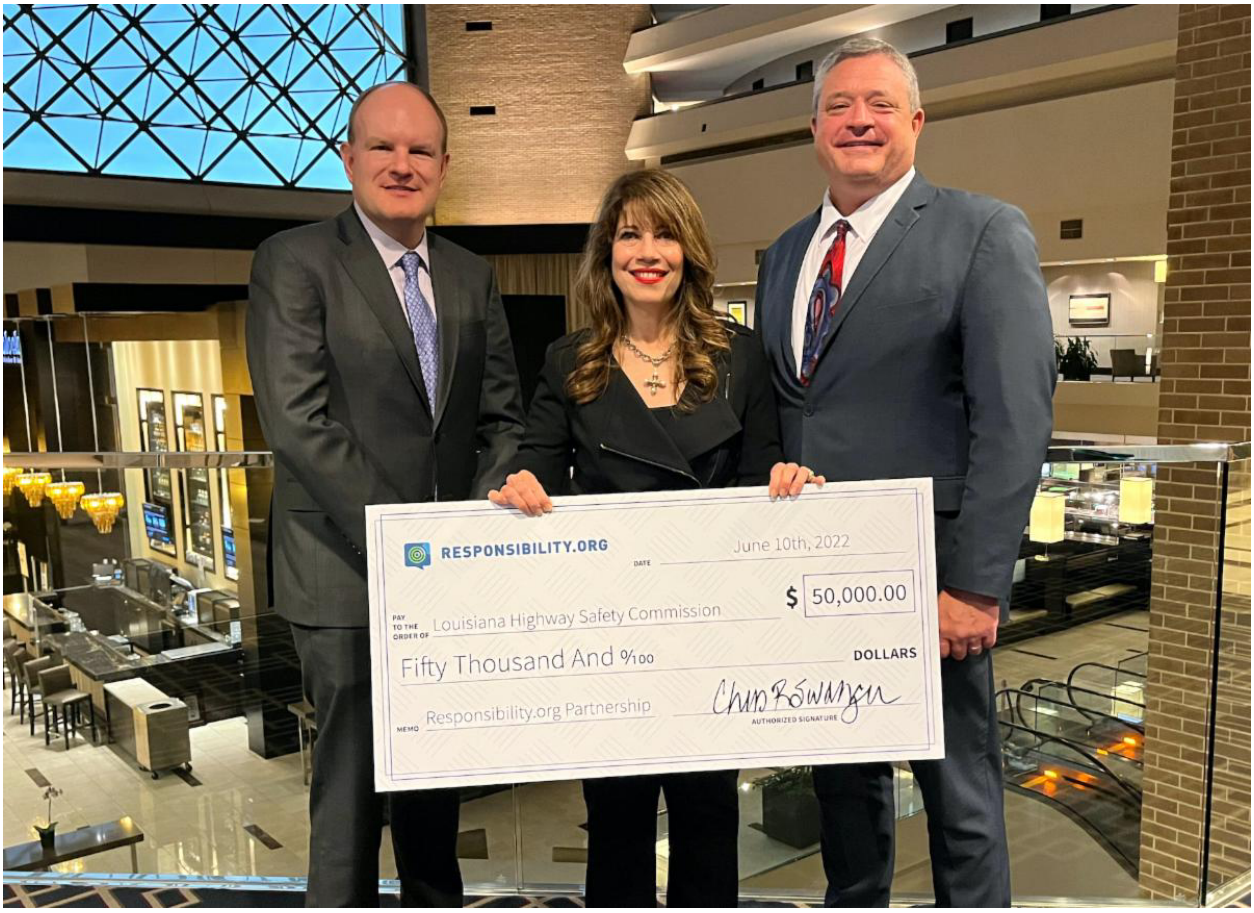
"The bottom line is, these grants will save lives in Louisiana because they will finance the tools we need to make our roads safer," Freeman said.

"Giving law enforcement the tools to identify alcohol- and drug-impaired drivers and expanded testing is critical for protecting all roadway users," GHSA and Responsibility.org said in a news release announcing the grants.

Louisiana, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, and Nevada were the five states to receive grants from GHSA and Responsibility.org to combat impaired driving.

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is a nonprofit association representing the highway safety offices of states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Responsibility.org is a national not-for-profit that leads the fight to eliminate drunk driving and works with others to end all impaired driving, eliminate underage drinking, and empower adults to make a lifetime of responsible alcohol choices as part of a balanced lifestyle.



GHSA Executive Director Jonathan Adkins, left, and Responsibility.org Vice President Darrin Grondel, right, present the grants check to LHSC Executive Director Lisa Freeman.

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