



Tara Casanova-Powell

Director of Research

Traffic Injury Research Foundation USA, Inc.

Tara Casanova Powell is the Director of Research of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation USA, Inc, a charitable, independent road safety institute.

Career and research highlights:

- > Tara's main fields of interest are impaired driving, distracted driving, younger drivers, pedestrian and bike safety, wildlife roadside safety, evaluation of road safety programs, traffic enforcement issues and risky driving behaviors.
- > Prior to her appointment at TIRF USA, Tara worked for Preusser Research Group (PRG) from 1999 to 2015. Tara served as a senior research associate (2010-2015) where she led several national and state projects involving alcohol and drug impaired driving, occupant protection, teen driving involving graduated licensing, pedestrian and bike safety, older drivers and distracted driving.
- > Tara is highly published in the field and has presented at several international and national conferences.
- > Tara was the Director of Research for Cedar Island Marine Research Laboratory for seven years (1999-2006). Tara devised methodology and modeling for population research studies and was a consultant to create protocol and develop government policy for invasive species management and environmental impact strategies.
- > Tara was the Vice President/Co-founder of the non-profit Combat Veterans Sports Foundation (CVSF) where she developed cooperative initiatives with Major League Baseball (MLB) teams and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to provide internships for wounded combat veterans. Tara also co-developed an online degree program which promoted educational opportunities and corporate internships to eligible active duty military placed in warrior in transition units or medically retired veterans who suffered a service-connected disability or disabilities in active service.
- > Since 1999, Tara, in conjunction with Hamden High School in Hamden, CT, teaches a yearly week-long subtropical marine ecology class at the Bermuda Institute for Ocean Sciences, St. Georges Bermuda.
- > Tara has worked with several state and federal agencies including CDC, GHSA, IHS and NHTSA.

Academic highlights:

- > Tara received her M.S. in Biology with a concentration in Population and Community Ecology (2001) and a B.S. in Biology with minors in Chemistry and Marine Studies (1995) from Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, CT.
- > Tara taught several upper level biology classes for twelve years (1995-2006) as Adjunct Faculty at Southern Connecticut State University and served as the biology club advisor for ten years.

Professional memberships and affiliations:

- > Tara is a founding member of the Connecticut Statewide Impaired Driving Task Force. Tara is also a manuscript reviewer for Traffic Injury Prevention.