

Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists



Education and Encouragement: Bicyclists

As with other modes of travel, education is an important part of safe bicycling. Encouragement may also be helpful for people who are interested in bicycling, but who have questions about how to do it. There are a number of bicycle programs focused on education and encouragement throughout the United States. Encouragement programs help to increase the number of bicyclists on the road. Meanwhile, education programs work to ensure that crashes involving bicyclists do not increase.

Formal Bicycle Training Courses and Programs

Bicycle training courses are an excellent way for new cyclists to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to safely ride a bicycle. They are also good for people who rode a bike earlier in life, but need a skills refresher to develop the confidence to begin riding on a regular basis. There are several different training programs available, ranging from absolute beginner-level classes to those teaching advanced technical skills. Similarly, there are classes suitable for nearly every age.

League of American Bicyclists (LAB) training courses

The League of American Bicyclists is a national organization with standardized training courses. This reduces the need for different local training courses to be built from “scratch.” The LAB courses are structured in a progressive way, so that a student can go from beginning to advanced level, and even go on to become a League-Certified Instructor (LCI), if he or she desires. However, note that LAB classes are not focused on learning how to ride a bicycle (how to balance, how to pedal). They are focused on how to ride safely in a variety of environments, including on-road.

LCIs teach the classes designed by the League, and may also develop specialized classes for individual circumstances or groups. In addition to the training provided by the League, classes taught by LCIs are automatically covered through the LAB’s insurance policy. Up-to-date rosters of LCIs are available online at the LAB website: http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/course_schedule.php. Some LCIs prefer to work with certain audiences. For example, school-aged children, college students, corporate office commuters, night-shift workers. If you are asking for a class customized to your needs (not one already offered), talk to the LCI to ensure they are comfortable with your audience.

- LAB training courses include the following:
 - ◆ Traffic Skills 101
 - ◆ Traffic Skills 201
 - ◆ Group Riding
 - ◆ Commuting
 - ◆ Share the Road (for motor vehicle drivers)
 - ◆ Cycling Skills for Parents
 - ◆ Cycling Skills for Kids
 - ◆ Safe Routes to School
- Traffic Skills 101 is the most common LAB course offered. It includes classroom instruction, on-road riding, and emergency maneuver drills.
- More information on the classes and how to become an LCI is available on the LAB website: <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/>



◀ TS 101 student and instructors in Columbus, OH.
(Source: Juana Sandoval)

League of American Bicyclists (LAB) training courses, cont'd

- All four of the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP) communities have a LAB class component as part of their education efforts. The NTPP communities received \$25 million to demonstrate how improved walking and bicycling networks can increase rates of walking and bicycling (FHWA.) The four communities are Marin County, Minneapolis, Sheboygan and Columbia. For more information on the 4 communities see the FHWA website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/ntpp.htm>



Parking lot drills during ► a “Confident Cycling for Families” class. Eugene, OR.
(Source: [Eugene SRTS](#))

◀ Parking lot drills during a TS 101 class, New Hampshire.
(Source: [Granite State Wheelmen website](#))



Other Types of Bicycle Education

- Learning how to ride a bicycle – Children and Adults. Note that adult learners may not want to take a class with children, or they may not want to take a class with other students. Do not assume that all adults know how to ride a bicycle when working with people you do not know personally. If you want formal training, contact a local LCI to find out if they might be able to provide this service. Of course others may be able to provide this training besides LCIs.
- Basic repair techniques are taught as part of LAB’s Traffic Skills 101 class. However, a class devoted to bicycle repair can be more useful for some students, and can also cover more advanced repairs. [Potential local resources include various bike shops as well as two bicycle co-ops.](#)
- Bike Club Training is another type of bicycle education. LAB also offers separate leadership training for Bicycle Club Leaders. Bicycle clubs tend to be focused on holding regular rides, some of which have a training focus. More information can be found online: <http://www.bikeleague.org/members/club/leadershiptraining.php>
- Since LAB courses are standardized, it is strongly recommended that LCIs be used for training courses focused on safe riding on roads. Many bicyclists may have decades of experience, but that doesn’t ensure that they know the rules of the road.
- One exception is International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA) training classes, which are for law enforcement and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel.

Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists

Bicycle Patrol Unit Education

Law enforcement can patrol on foot as well as on bicycle. In the City of Columbus each bicycle patrol unit consists of two police officers.

- There is more information about this program in Chapter 6 – Enforcement. However, the Bicycle Patrol Unit can also function as an educational tool.
- Law enforcement officers can provide bicycle education, not only by enforcing existing laws and speaking with residents, but by providing an example of good bicyclist behavior.
- Note that the bicycle “officers” downtown are usually not law enforcement officers but are Downtown patrol personnel. These bicyclists are often on the sidewalk.
- Bicycle patrol officers take a training course offered by the International Police Mountain Bike Association (IPMBA). Officers learn “skill development, riding in diverse traffic situations and practicing patrol tactics or EMS-specific techniques. They learn to ascend curbs, descend stairs and perform emergency maneuvers designed to avoid crashes.” (IPMBA website, [Frequently Asked Questions page](#).)



◀ Bicycle patrol officer learning how to bike down stairs.
(Source: [IPMBA website](#))

Encouragement Programs

As opposed to formal education classes, encouragement programs work by creating incentives and support for bicycling. Education may be incorporated into these programs, but the primary goal remains to encourage bicycling. As such, these programs often target people who do not currently bike, or who could bike more often. Some example programs follow.

Pedal Instead program

Pedal Instead is a free bike valet program for special events such as festivals and OSU football games. More information can be found on their website: <http://pedalinstead.org/>.

- The bikes are stored in a monitored fenced-off area. Items on the bikes (such as bags and baskets) can be left on the bike. Locks are not required. This provides ease of mind to users.
- Pedal Instead is staffed by volunteers. All volunteers are local bicyclists and when time permits they can discuss bicycle-related topics with users or passersby.

Pedal Instead program, cont'd

- In the drop-off area for Pedal Instead there is a table with materials on it. These include items such as various bicycle group brochures, the MORPC Bike User Map, and Ohio's Street Smarts brochure.
- This program can encourage people to travel by bike to special events, especially if motor vehicle parking is expensive and/or motor vehicle travel is congested.
- In 2009 Pedal Instead parked 5,436 bikes, which was an increase of almost 30% over 2008. People who used Pedal Instead to park their bikes traveled over 43,000 miles ([Pedal Instead Statistics page.](#))



◀ Pedal Instead volunteers at an OSU home football game. Columbus, OH. (Source: Pedal Instead Facebook page)

- Note the blue fence material that keeps the bike corral secure.

Free Lights Program

Many cities in the U.S. have a program that provides reduced cost or free bicycle lights. This increases bicyclist visibility at night, increasing their safety. It can also serve to educate bicyclists on the need to be more visible.

- The Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan (BBP) recommended a “Lights on Safety” Campaign. It would include advertising and “a way to provide reduced-cost or free bicycle lights to bicyclists.” (Columbus BBP, section 6.5) There are no local examples at this time.
- The 2011 Alliance for Biking and Walking Best Practices Award was given to the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition City of Lights program. Also known as “Ciudad de Luces” the program’s goal is “to increase working-class Latino immigrant bicyclists’ safety and empower them to educate and spread bicycle safety information and advocacy to their communities.”
- They have given out both bike lights and safety vests. More information can be found on their webpage: <http://ciudaddeluces.wordpress.com/>.



Participant in the Free Lights Program in ▶ Los Angeles, CA. (Source: Ciudad de Luces)

Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists

Bike Ambassador Programs

Ambassador programs focus on providing hands-on demonstrations and presentations at various events on bicycle safety. The program goals are to reduce bicycle crashes and help all road users learn how to share the road with each other. All four of the [Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program \(NTPP\)](#) communities have an ambassador program of some form. The NTPP communities received \$25 Million to demonstrate how improved walking and bicycling networks can increase rates of walking and bicycling ([FHWA](#)).

There are currently no bike ambassador programs in the State of Ohio. One of the oldest and largest programs is the Chicago program. Below is a summary of Mayor Daley's Bicycle Ambassadors Program in Chicago. More detailed information on that program can be found here: <http://bicyclingambassadors.org>.

- The program was created in 2001. In 2010, the Ambassadors attended 359 events and had face-to-face contact with more than 60,000 people, up more than 600% since 2001 ([Ambassador profile](#), 2011 and [2001 Bicycle Ambassador Annual Report](#)).
- The three main goals of the program are:([2010 Bicycle Ambassador Annual Report](#)):
 - To increase the number of trips made by bicycle
 - To reduce the number of bicycling-related injuries and fatalities
 - To help cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians better share the roads and off-street trails



Bicycle Ambassador talks ►
to a bicyclist about sidewalk
riding in Chicago, IL.

(Source: [2010 Bicycle Ambassador Annual Report](#).)

- Ambassadors attend community events to encourage and educate residents about bicycling. Their peak season is between May and September. Events include: musical festivals, neighborhood health fairs, block parties, and farmers markets. Ambassadors also give demonstrations at day camps, libraries, schools, and area businesses ([Mayor Daley Bicycling Ambassadors webpage](#), 2011).
- The Ambassadors work with a diverse audience, including people of all ages and cultures. They have handouts available in many different languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Polish ([Mayor Daley Bicycling Ambassadors handouts webpage](#), 2011).
- High school students can work with Bicycling Ambassadors to target their peers. They become Junior Ambassadors after completing a 10-week after-school bicycle safety and repair class ([Mayor Daley Bicycling Ambassadors about webpage](#), 2011).

Bike Ambassador Program List

Below is a partial list of cities with ambassador programs and their websites:

- Chicago, IL: [Mayor Daley's Bike Ambassadors](#).
- Boulder, Colorado: [GO Ambassadors](#)
- Minneapolis, Minnesota: [Bike Walk Ambassadors](#)
- Washington, DC: [DC Bike Ambassadors](#)
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: [Bicycle Ambassadors](#)



◀ Bicycle Ambassadors educate on proper bicycle helmet fit in Chicago, IL.

(Source: [2010 Bicycle Ambassador Annual Report](#))

Bike Share Program

Please see section 5.8 for information on bike share programs. These programs can encourage biking to people who do not own their own bike, tourists, and other users.

Bike Hawaii student program

The Hawaii Bicycling League runs a bike education program on the island of Oahu. In the program LCIs teach on-road bicycle safety to fourth grade students.

- Over 21 years, more than 90,000 fourth grade students have gone through the program ([Hawaii Bicycling League](#)).
- The program consists of three days at the school, during school hours. Topics covered include: helmet fit, maintenance, parking lot skill drills, lane changes, and obstacle avoidance ([American Bicyclists Magazine](#), p. 13, Sept/Oct 2009).
- For more information visit the Bike Ed webpage: <http://www.hbl.org/content/bikeed>.

Brochures and other educational materials

As interest in promoting safe bicycling increases, different groups across the U.S. are creating brochures and other materials. Following are some good examples of bicycle-related materials that contain good information for any type of outreach effort.

Adult Education Materials

- A 46-page booklet has been developed by ODOT for bicyclists. It is called “Bicycling Street Smarts: Riding Confidently, Legally and Safely.” For hardcopies of the booklet, please contact the State Bike/Ped Coordinator Heather Bowden at Heather.Bowden@dot.state.oh.us. You can also view the [Street Smarts booklet online](#).
- Another helpful document is the brochure “Do you make these eight common bicycling mistakes?” It is [available online](#).

Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists

Child Education Materials

- [Bicycle safety coloring book](http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/publicationsform.stm) offered by Ohio Department of Public Safety. Materials are free and available in quantities up to 200. For ordering information: <http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/publicationsform.stm>.
- [Bicycle safety guide](http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/publicationsform.stm) for parents and children offered by Ohio Department of Public Safety. Materials are free and available in quantities up to 200. For ordering information: <http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/publicationsform.stm>.



◀ Cover of the Bicycle Safety guide available from ODPS. (Source: ODPS)

Commuter information

Bike Pittsburgh, an advocacy group in Pittsburgh, has developed a guide for new bicycle commuters. It is in comic book form and is easy to read. This is a good guide for new commuters and most of the tips are applicable to central Ohio. <http://bike-pgh.org/101/bikecommuting101.pdf>

MORPC Bike User Map

There is some educational information in the map, which includes safety tips and information on the relatively new paint markings known as shared lane markings or “sharrows.” To view the map online, or to request a copy, please visit:

<http://www.morpc.org/bikemaps/>



Cover of the Bike User Map ▶ available from MORPC. (Source: MORPC)

Plans that Support Bicycle Education Efforts

Transportation and city plans tend to focus on infrastructure planning and design. However, support can be found in these plans for bicycle education and encouragement efforts, whether with policy goals or program funding.

The Columbus Bicentennial Bikeways Plan (BBP)

The Bicentennial Bikeways Plan (BBP) was released in May 2008. This plan was developed for the City of Columbus, but given the boundaries of the city, it has regional implications. The City of Columbus is the largest city in the MORPC region, based on both population and land area.

- Two of the nine bicycle elements identified in the Columbus BBP include education: (6) Promote bicycle safety issues and (9) Champion the education of motorists and bicyclists concerning the shared use of roadways (p. 1-4 and 1-5 of Columbus BBP).
- The Plan recommends the following to address and (6) Promote bicycle safety issues: education and enforcement programs, including incorporating bicycle safety education into public schools' curricula, and driver point reduction classes, a campaign to increase the use of bicycle helmets and bike lights, and target enforcement to encourage bicyclists and motorists to follow traffic laws (p. 1-4 of Columbus BBP).
- The Plan recommends the following to address and (9) Champion the education of motorists and bicyclists concerning the shared use of roadways: citywide Share the Road education and enforcement campaign, with the High Street corridor as a demonstration area (p. 1-5 of Columbus BBP).
- For more information view the entire Columbus BBP online: <http://www.altaprojects.net/columbus/>.

Regional Bikeways Plan

MORPC promotes “multi-modal transportation choices including travel by highways, transit, passenger rail, **bicycling**, and walking; reducing the demand for driving alone (MORPC Strategic Plan, 2011). Every four years MORPC develops a regional bikeways plan.

- One of MORPC's strategic priorities is to support personal mobility options.
- The latest Regional Bikeways Plan can be found online: <http://www.morpc.org/trans/BikePedRegionalBicycleTransportationFacilitiesPlan.pdf>. This is in the process of being updated for the 2012 Regional Plan.
- MORPC manages allocations for the Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, which can include educational programs. For more information on the TE funding process, please see the MORPC funding website: <http://www.morpc.org/transportation/funding/MORPCAttributable.asp>.

Staffing Support for Programs

Many cities find it beneficial to have a staff person dedicated to bicycle programming. Oftentimes this position is known as the Bikeways Coordinator. In addition to educational programming, the Bikeways Coordinator can work on the planning, facility construction, and maintenance of the bikeways. This person can also work with the Advisory Committee, which is usually made up of a broad cross-section of local residents.

Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

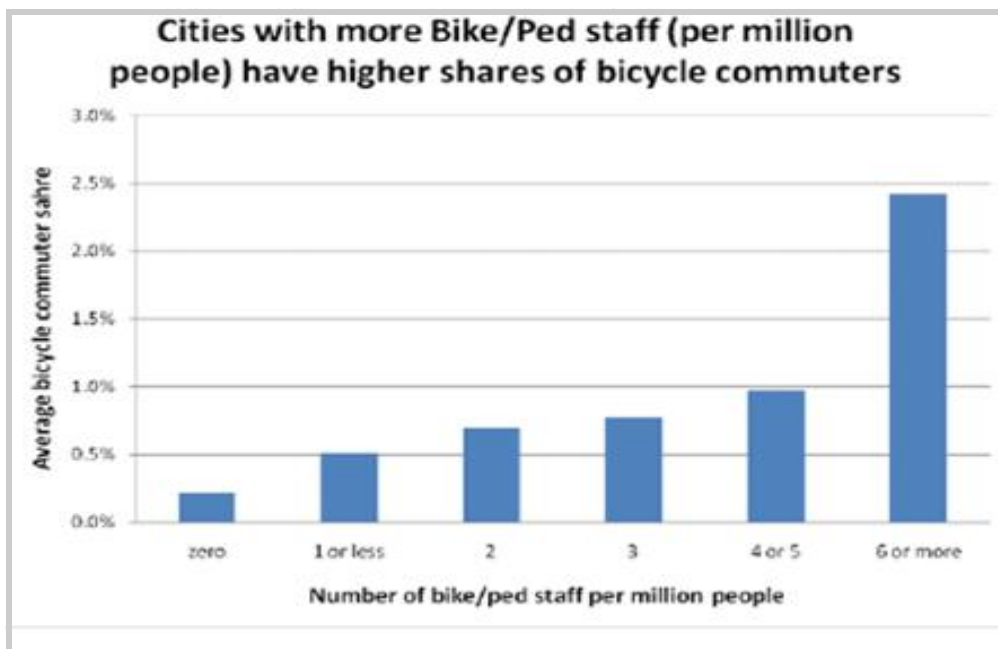
5.2: Bicyclists

Bikeways Advisory Committee

- An advisory group made of up residents can help to advise the city on bike projects and programs. This group should meet regularly. While this should not replace general public involvement, the meetings should be open to the public and well publicized to increase transparency. Additional public involvement meetings should be held, especially for larger projects.
- A good example of a local advisory group is the Dublin Bicycle Advisory Task Force. Its website lists meeting agendas, as well as meeting minutes. Local residents were allowed to apply to join the task force. City Council reviewed the applications and selected members. The Dublin Task Force was most active from late 2009 to early 2011: <http://www.dublin.oh.us/bdscomm/bike/index.php>.

Report on Need for Staffing

- The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) released a report in April 2010 on different levels of staffing support for bicycling: http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why_bike_ped_staff_april_2010.pdf. This document may provide some helpful information on the benefits of staffing support.



▲ Figure 4 from the [League of American Bicyclists \(LAB\) report](#). (Source: LAB)

Related Topics and Fact Sheets

Following are some topics related to bicycle education but covered in other factsheets of the toolkit.

Safe Routes to School program

Please see section 5.5 for information on the Safe Routes to School program. This program encourages walking and biking to school through infrastructure improvements, parent and student education, incentives, and enforcement of traffic laws.

Education to motorists

Many motorists do not know or understand current law regarding bicycles. Educating motorists about bicycles and other modes of transportation is important, since all users of the roadway have an obligation to understand the rules of the road. See section 5.4 for more information.

Bicycle Laws

For a full review of bicycle laws, please see section 6.2 on Bicycle Enforcement. A key part of educating people is to make sure they are aware of the laws that affect them as bicyclists.

Professional Training for Engineers and Planners

There are a number of training opportunities for engineers and planners that will help them include bicyclists in their work. Some options include:

- The National Highway Institute (NHI) is a division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It holds training classes with continuing education credits. These include Pedestrian Facility Design ([FHWA-NHI-142045](#)) and Bicycle Facility Design ([FHWA-NHI-142046](#)). Visit the website for more information: <http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/>.
- There are a wide variety of conferences that offer continuing education credits. The Pro Walk Pro Bike conference is held every two years and usually offers continuing education credits. For more information visit the website: www.bikewalk.org/conference.php.
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has created a university course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Twenty-four lessons cover a range of topics including issues, planning, and design. For more information see the FHWA webpage: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05085/>.
- The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) holds monthly webinars on non-motorized transportation topics. For more information check the website: <http://www.apbp.org/?page=Webinars>. Locally MORPC hosts these webinars for free to members and the general public. Contact MORPC staff person [Joe Fish](#) for more information on the webinars held at MORPC. Most presentations offer credit for professional certification.

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Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists



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Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists



Sources and Resources, cont'd

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Chapter 5—Education and Encouragement

5.2: Bicyclists



Sources and Resources, cont'd

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