

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR BIKE SHARE

Youth are the future of bike share ridership, and there are a number of tactics to reach them through outreach. Here are some strategies from cities leading the way:

1. YOUTH MEMBERSHIPS

One strategy is to outreach to teenagers who are old enough to be bike share members themselves. The Citi Bike for Youth program in Brooklyn, NY gave free annual bike share memberships to 41 low-income teenagers, aged 16-24, many of whom were also in career development programs. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has built off this work with the Citi Bike to School pilot program that partners with schools to help 16- to 18-year-olds get to class on bike share.

- Challenge: This strategy is only useful for youth who are old enough to hold bike share memberships, an age that differs among cities. Without additional outreach activities or policies, youth memberships may be an incomplete engagement mechanism.
- Advice: “Remember that young people are great early adopters. They are less afraid and more willing to try things.”
—Tracey Capers, Bed Stuy Restoration Corporation

2. AMBASSADORSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS

Another example is to engage youth in becoming a part of bike share maintenance and management. In Milwaukee, Bublr Bikes provides the opportunity for interested youth to become certified bike mechanics through internships with the Boys and Girls Club and Trek. Youth can also serve as ambassadors to the local community by leading events and engaging with residents. They sometimes work on special projects, such as surveying potential bike share members.

- Challenge: Ambassadorships and internships require commitment over a period of time, and it can be tough to keep youth engaged with a long program.
- Advice: “We do breakout sessions that are a little less structured. If the kids are having a hard day, they can adjust their activities for the day.” —Caressa Givens, Bublr Bikes

3. CLASSES

A third option is education. Philadelphia gives bicycle safety classes for youth of all ages, which teach the principles of safe riding and generate excitement for biking as recreation and a way of getting around. This strategy has the added benefit of engaging parents at the same time, who may be eligible for Indego bike share memberships even if their children are not.

- Challenge: When doing bicycle education it might be necessary to start from scratch. Kids don’t always know about bike laws or even that they exist.
- Advice: “Make sure to have activities for the youth as off-bike engagement. It shares the importance of safety and ingrains it in the culture.” —Waffiyah Murray, The City of Philadelphia

For further information on youth engagement, please see Philadelphia’s toolkit [Engaging Youth in Urban Biking and Bike Share](#).

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