



Department of
Health

Transportation Ambassador Program **Implementation Toolkit**



July 2023

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Program Development | 2 |
| Program Development – Ambassadors | 6 |
| Program Implementation– Ambassador Activities | 8 |
| Program Evaluation | 10 |
| Case Studies and Lessons Learned | 12 |
| Appendix | 16 |
| A. Example Ambassador Job Posting | 17 |
| B. Example Ambassador Application and Interview Questions | 19 |
| C. Example Ambassador Training Agenda..... | 20 |
| D. Example Pre-Activity and Post-Activity Evaluation Survey | 22 |

Introduction

This toolkit is intended as a resource for public health agencies and/or local government staff interested in developing transportation ambassador programs. This toolkit contains guidelines, tips, examples, and advice on program development, implementation, marketing, and evaluation. The guidance in this toolkit is oriented to the active living goals associated with the Ohio Department of Health’s Creating Healthy Communities ([CHC](#)) Program and focuses on transportation ambassador programs that promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM).

TDM refers to education and encouragement strategies aimed at helping people use the infrastructure in place for active transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, or public transportation.

TDM includes strategies to support public education about:

- How to travel by walking, bicycling, or public transportation.
- Safe walking, bicycling, or public transportation practices.
- Existing programs and resources that support active living such as bicycle libraries or public transportation income assistance programs.
- Local trails, nature paths, bicycle facilities, or routes that are comfortable for walking and bicycling.

TDM also includes strategies that promote and encourage active transportation choices such as:

- Community bicycle rides.
- Community walking tours.
- Safe Routes to School programs such as “Bike to School Day.”
- Incentives such as gift cards or equipment.



Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassadors at a rest stop during ambassador training in Columbus. Source: Toole Design.



Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassadors on a bicycle ride during ambassador training in Columbus, Ohio. Source: Toole Design.

Program Development

Program Purpose

The primary purpose of a TDM ambassador program is to engage the community in education and encouragement activities that promote active transportation. When developed and implemented with equity and inclusion at the forefront, ambassador programs are an equitable TDM strategy that can help build or restore relationships with communities. Historically, intentionally and unintentionally excluding vulnerable communities from transportation-decision making has resulted in these communities having less access to safe, comfortable, and convenient active transportation options.

Ambassador programs provide local governments with a more equitable approach to TDM than traditional strategies such as employer-based incentives. Traditional TDM strategies prioritize encouraging suburban commuters to shift from driving alone to work to an active commute (e.g., walking, bicycling, or taking public transportation). While still useful for achieving regional TDM goals, traditional approaches often reach higher-income communities with less success in reaching lower-income communities. They also prioritize work trips, despite the fact that commutes to and from work only account for 25% of all vehicle trips. TDM ambassador programs provide an alternative, equitable option to reach, support, and prioritize communities with limited access to transportation.

Ambassador programs place community members as trusted leaders, advocates, and messengers. Ambassadors can support agencies by implementing TDM strategies such as:

- Training people how to get around without a car (in small group, large group, or one-on-one sessions).
- Leading practice bicycle rides or bus rides.
- Teaching community members about active transportation safety.
- Encouraging people to use active transportation facilities (e.g., local trails).
- Spreading information about programs that support active transportation.
- Distributing resources or equipment that support active transportation (e.g., bus passes or helmets).



Equity and Inclusion Considerations

Throughout the development of the ambassador program, managing agencies should consider the following questions related to equity and inclusion:

- Does the program development team reflect the priority communities you are aiming to reach?
- With what demographic populations or social identity groups can the ambassador program help build relationships?
- How can accessibility for people with hearing, sight, mobility, and/or cognitive disabilities be improved?

Program Structure Options

The structure of your ambassador program will depend on key factors such as funding availability, program goals, community needs, or even weather. Consider the following questions before identifying your program structure:

- Will the program use volunteer ambassadors, paid ambassadors, or both?
- How many ambassadors do you want to participate?
- How much time will be needed for training ambassadors?
- How many hours per week do you need the ambassadors to work?
- Will the program be run by a government agency, non-profit organization, consultant, or partnership?
- Are there funding deadlines that will impact the ambassador program timeline?
- How long will the ambassador program run? Weeks? Months? All year?
- Will the ambassador program be on an annual cycle? Or will it be a one-time program?
- Will there be a lead ambassador that other ambassadors report to?

Below is an example program structure used for the Central Ohio Bicycle & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program funded by the Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities (BRIC) grant.

| | Pilot Year 1 | Pilot Year 2 |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Program Development | April—June | January—April |
| Ambassador Recruitment | July—August | March—April |
| Number of Training Cohorts | 1 cohort of 12 people | 2 cohorts of 11 total people |
| Ambassador Training | 30 hours over 6 weeks (August to September) | 32 hours over 4 days (April to May) |
| Program Implementation Start | September | May |
| Program Implementation End | November | October |
| Engagement Reach | 150 people | 164 people |

Partnerships

Strategic partnerships can provide resources, funding, and other forms of support for your ambassador program. To identify potential partners, consider agencies and organizations that may have similar goals related to public health, safety, active transportation, sustainability, equity, advocacy, or community-building. Consider the following questions:

- What type of resources and support does your program need?
 - Funding, translation services, equipment, space for meetings, program promotion, recruiting ambassadors, etc.
- Which local organizations have close ties to communities with limited access to safe and accessible transportation?
- Are there opportunities for the ambassador program to support potential partners' goals?

Below is a list of potential partners for active transportation ambassador programs.

- **County and local government departments.**
 - Public health.
 - Parks and recreation.
 - Planning.
 - Engineering.
 - Public safety.
- **Community-based organizations.**
 - Health and wellness organizations.
 - Immigration support agencies.
 - Food banks, food pantries, and/or free stores.
 - Local board of developmental disability.
- **Regional planning agencies (e.g., metropolitan planning organization).**
- **Other.**
 - Transit agencies.
 - Neighborhood groups.
 - Bicycle shops and co-ops.
 - Recreational bicycle clubs.
 - Foundations and charities.
 - Places of worship.
 - Colleges and universities.
 - Libraries.



Community ambassadors for Indego Bikeshare in Philadelphia, PA. Source: City of Philadelphia.



Youth bicycle safety education training in Madison, WI. Source: Toole Design.

Liability

Before developing an ambassador program, consult with legal counsel for guidance about liability and insurance needs.

Below are some actions that managing agencies can discuss with their legal counsel.

- Require a liability waiver for ambassador activities that involve transportation (riding bicycles, taking the bus, etc.).
- Talk to your insurance provider about whether an ambassador program will increase your organization's liability or reach out to a general/business liability insurance provider.
- Coordinate with your insurance provider to understand any releases necessary for employing ambassadors under 18 or having ambassadors work with people under 18.
- Conduct background checks on all staff or volunteers that are trained as ambassadors.
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with partners to lay out responsibilities and agreed-upon terms.

Equipment and Materials

During program development, consider the equipment and materials that ambassadors will need to conduct their responsibilities successfully. To lower barriers to participation for ambassadors, managing agencies can provide (or coordinate with partners to provide) or loan equipment to ambassadors, if permitted. This could entail bicycles, helmets, locks, or lights. Other materials that may be helpful to provide include clipboards, pens, pencils, notebooks, or tote bags.

Managing agencies should also provide ambassadors with any materials that will need to be distributed, preferably in both digital and paper formats. This includes materials such as flyers, pamphlets, postcards, or websites. To maximize impact, consider asking ambassadors which types of equipment or materials will best help them engage with the community. Be clear with ambassadors about how they can access digital or paper materials and provide guidance during training on how the materials should be distributed. If your ambassador program distributes active transportation equipment such as helmets or bicycles, ensure that ambassadors are trained on all requirements associated with liability and/or insurance.

Program Branding & Marketing

It is important that ambassador programs or, managing agencies have a brand that can be used throughout the program. Branding unifies materials and, if worn on t-shirts or stickers, the ambassadors associated with the program. Recognizable branding can pique people's curiosity about the program, increase visibility within a community, and help ambassadors appear more approachable to members of the public. Consider providing ambassadors and community members with branded items such as t-shirts, water bottles, notebooks, pens, or tote bags. Branded nametags can also be helpful for increasing ambassador recognition and approachability.

Managing agencies should involve ambassadors in decision-making about program marketing. Ask what type of communications will best help spread the word about the program's activities and services. Where feasible, also consider involving ambassadors in program marketing implementation by capitalizing on photography, videography, or social media skills ambassadors may be interested in providing.



Social media: Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Nextdoor can be used to promote ambassador program activities. Use pictures, videos, infographics, interactive posts, and hashtags to engage members of the public online. Managing agencies should keep in mind that different platforms are popular with different demographics. Agencies that do not have a large following on social media (or that have a following of primarily professionals) should work with partners or social media influencers who have a large following amongst underrepresented communities.



Printed materials: Flyers, postcards, posters, yard signs, and other similar printed materials can be used strategically to raise awareness about an ambassador program. Generally, these types of materials will be overlooked by the public if they are wordy and do not stand out graphically. It is best to locate them strategically by working closely with ambassadors and community partners for distribution.



Radio: Radio can be useful for reaching a broad audience, however it is important to remember that different radio stations are popular with different demographics. Get input from ambassador community partners on popular radio stations that can reach vulnerable communities.



Video: Video can be a powerful strategy for marketing ambassador program activities or raising awareness about active transportation resources. When using this strategy, ensure that video subjects are diverse in race, age, gender, disability status, and body size. If program participants will be in the video, have them sign a release form. Short videos are preferred as long videos will lose the audience's attention. Coordinate distribution with partners to ensure reach to vulnerable communities.



Tabling at existing events (pop-ups): Leveraging existing events or popular destinations can help market the program to a wide swath of the community. Tabling includes a booth with information that explain the program purpose, handouts, and incentives (e.g., helmets, stickers, pens, etc.) to encourage people to stop by the booth. Tabling can occur at special events or daily destinations like parks or grocery stores. When using this strategy, reach out to event coordinators, business owners, or local government agencies to ensure you can table at the desired location.

Program Development – Ambassadors

Recruiting and Hiring Ambassadors

The ambassador hiring and recruiting process should be inclusive and encourage a diverse pool of applicants or volunteers that represent the community. Develop a job description that is concise and easy to understand. Include information on ambassador job duties, program expectations, hourly commitment, program schedule, required qualifications, preferred qualifications, and pay (if applicable). Consider translating the job posting into other languages if training and program materials will also be available in those languages.

Share the job description strategically to maximize reach to your priority audiences. If possible, personally invite well-known community leaders to apply or to share the job description with their networks. Coordinate with program partners to recruit ambassadors through flyers, advertisements, or social media posts. Consider the following locations for recruiting applicants:

- Libraries.
- Post offices.
- Banks.
- Grocery stores.
- Facebook groups.
- Email newsletters.
- Bicycle shops and co-ops.
- Senior centers and community centers.
- Bicycle clubs or walking clubs.
- Apartment complexes.

Agencies implementing an ambassador program can increase diversity and inclusion by reducing barriers to the application process. Consider removing traditional job application requirements like resumes and cover letters. If conducting interviews, give applicants the option of in-person or phone interviews. Ensure that any in-person interviews are conducted at an ADA accessible facility.

Traits to Look for in An Ambassador

Ideal ambassador candidates have most of the following qualities:

- Friendly, outgoing, or people-person.
- Clear communicator.
- Patient.
- Community resident.
- Interest in community-related issues.
- Culturally competent.
- English fluency (unless training and program materials will be provided in other languages).
- Ability to pass a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and Sexual Offender Record Information (SORI) check.

Additional skills and qualities that can be helpful for your ambassador program include:

- Ability to work weekends and evenings.
- Interest in active transportation or public health.
- Multilingual.
- Social media skills.
- Photography or videography.
- Bicycle mechanic or repair skills.
- Customer service experience.

Focus interview questions on understanding applicants' lived experiences and ability to learn ambassador duties rather than technical knowledge of transportation or TDM. Example job posting, application, and interview questions are available in Appendix A and B.

Training Ambassadors

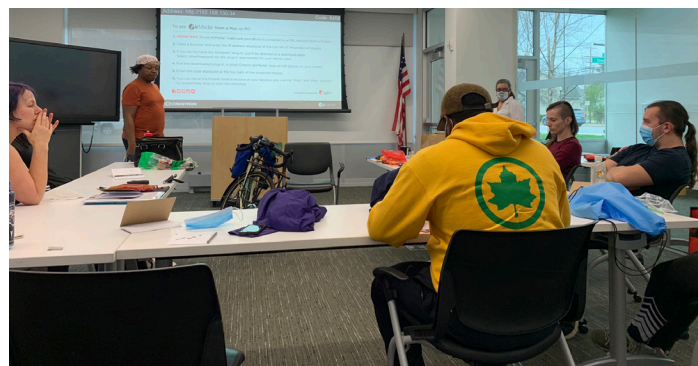
Training for ambassadors will be determined by the program structure and goals. It should be as interactive and engaging as possible, particularly if there is a large amount of information for ambassadors to absorb. Trainings can be a combination of traditional presentations and experiential education. Consider incorporating icebreakers, group discussions, role playing activities, guest speakers, practice bicycle rides, practice bus rides, or other interactive strategies, in the training.

Be clear with ambassadors about any equipment or materials they will need during the training such as bicycles, helmets, notebook, pens, or backpacks. It is recommended to provide a list and include arrangements they may need to make such as lunch, snacks, and weather appropriate clothing (e.g., jacket, sunscreen, umbrella, etc.).

Topics for active transportation-related ambassador program training could include:

- Bicycle laws and safety.
- Bicycle route planning via apps, online, or maps.
- Bus etiquette and safety.
- Bus route planning via apps, phone, or online.
- How to encourage people to utilize ambassador services.
- Information about local and regional active transportation programs.
- Where to access bicycle and transit passes.
- Tips for using active transportation in various types of weather.

See Appendix C for an example training agenda.



Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassadors at a classroom training session at a local library. Source: Toole Design.



Equity and Inclusion Considerations

- The training schedule and format should be accessible to all ambassadors. Consider surveying ambassadors before setting dates and times.
- If bicycle rides are part of the ambassador training, develop all routes with consideration for people with disabilities, older adults, and people who are still getting comfortable with cycling. Build in frequent stops in areas with shade, benches, and accessible bathrooms, if possible. Try to incorporate landmarks, art, parks, community amenities, and diverse neighborhoods into training routes.
- Consider coordinating with bikeshare providers, bicycle shops, bicycle co-ops, and/or transit agencies to provide bicycles and helmets for ambassadors during training.
- Consider hosting your training in locations that are welcoming and inclusive to all people such as libraries, community centers, or parks.

Ambassador Compensation

If funding is available, managing agencies should pay ambassadors for their time through hourly wages or a stipend. It is important ethically to recognize the time and labor that ambassadors are giving to the program. Additionally, paid ambassador programs will attract more applicants and provide ambassadors with additional income.

If program funding does not allow for paying ambassadors, other compensation or incentives can be considered such as:

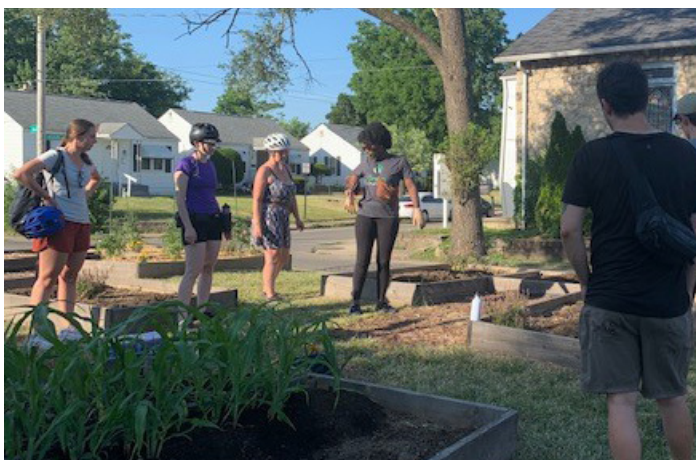
- Bus passes or bikeshare passes.
- Gift cards.
- Meals.
- Travel reimbursement.
- Cellphone reimbursement.
- Professional development credits.
- Bicycle equipment (e.g., lights, helmet, lock, etc.)

Program Implementation– Ambassador Activities

The following section provides an overview of various activities that ambassadors can conduct to promote active transportation efforts. Ambassadors should be well-trained on the activities they are expected to conduct, and provided with any equipment or materials necessary before program implementation begins.

Community Engagement & Marketing

- **Canvassing:** Canvassing is a strategy to meet community members door-to-door where they are. Ambassadors can go door-to-door to gather information or share information about active transportation with the community. This strategy is direct but can also be strenuous, so it is best used for a specific area (e.g., neighborhood or corridor). Consider using this strategy to reach vulnerable and/or underrepresented communities that may not otherwise see education, encouragement, or program marketing materials.
- **Tabling at existing events (pop-ups):** Ambassadors can engage with the community by staffing booths at existing special events or at common destinations such as farmers markets, grocery stores, bus stops, libraries, community centers, community pools, parks, or trailheads. Keep in mind that managing agencies or ambassadors may need permission from public or private landowners before tabling. Tabling gives people the opportunity to meet with ambassadors, ask questions, and learn more information about TDM strategies or ambassador services. Consider providing incentives for ambassadors to distribute (e.g., stickers, t-shirts, tote bags, sunglasses, candy, etc.) to encourage people to stop by the booth.
- **Community bicycle rides:** Community bicycle rides engage people by cycling along a designated route and assessing conditions. They are short and slow rides that are family-friendly and accessible to all levels of cyclists. Ambassadors can lead community bicycle rides as a way to learn about people's experiences and encourage cycling in a specific neighborhood.
- The route for community bicycle rides should include both on-street and off-street segments. Routes should highlight a community asset (e.g., shared use path, park, public art, etc.) and a transportation-related problem (e.g., unsafe intersection, gap in the bikeway network, lacking shade or benches, etc.). This will give ambassador the opportunity to provide information on how to deal with the challenge. Consider the time available, weather, number of participants, cycling experience of participants, terrain, and safety when developing the bicycle ride route. Additionally, have a designated “sweep,” or ambassador who will make sure that no one gets left behind. The sweep should know the route beforehand.
- **Community walking tours:** Walking tours engage groups of no more than ten people by walking along a designated route and assessing conditions for people walking and biking. The focus is to collect qualitative information rather than quantitative information. Ambassadors can use this activity to understand people's lived experiences when walking, biking, or experiencing space in their community.



Participants on a community bicycle ride led by Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassadors listen to a representative from the Growth & Growing Collection share information about a local food garden. Source: Toole Design.

Walking tour routes should highlight a community asset (e.g., park, public art, popular small business, etc.) and an active transportation-related problem (e.g., unsafe intersection, gap in the bikeway network, bus shelter in poor condition, etc.). This will give ambassador the opportunity to provide information on how to deal with the problem. Develop walking tour routes with consideration for people with disabilities, older adults, and/or children. Also consider the time available, weather, participants, terrain, and safety when developing the walking tour route. One mile is often an appropriate walking tour length. Build in frequent stops in areas with shade, benches, and accessible bathroom's, if possible.

Active Transportation Education & Training

- **One-on-one practice bicycle rides:** One-on-one practice bicycle rides (or small groups of three or less) are an effective strategy for helping someone feel more comfortable with transportation cycling. This is because the one-on-one or small group environment can mimic the experience of bicycling alone for transportation. They also allow for a customized route that can incorporate destinations relevant to the participant. For example, a trained ambassador can help a community member plan and practice riding from their home to their local library. Bicycle safety and route planning support should always be incorporated into one-on-one practice bicycle rides. Ambassadors should always test the bicycle route themselves before conducting the ride with the community member.

- **One-on-one practice bus rides:** Similar to practice bicycle rides, ambassadors can use this strategy to support community members who are interested in learning how to use the bus for transportation. Ambassadors can assist community members in route planning, understanding bus etiquette, transferring buses, and other aspects of using public transportation. Pedestrian safety and route planning support should always be incorporated into one-on-one practice bus rides.
- **Group training sessions (classroom):** For groups of four or more, ambassadors can conduct group training sessions. These trainings may provide similar information to the community as one-on-one practice rides, however they can be conducted in a classroom setting without the experiential element of doing a practice bicycle or bus ride. This may be more appropriate for certain demographics. Group training sessions should aim to be interactive and engaging to participants. Information shared can include:
 - Active transportation safety.
 - Legal rights and responsibilities of pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Route planning via apps, maps, or websites.
 - Mobility provider resources.
 - Tips for using active transportation in various types of weather (e.g., rain, snow, etc.).
 - Bicycle maintenance tips.

Conducting group training sessions may require managing agency coordination for details such as scheduling, location, registration, live interpretation, etc.

- **Group training rides (bicycle or bus):** Ambassadors may also lead training rides to teach larger groups of people how to use bicycles or bus for transportation in an experiential way. These rides should be slow and accessible to all levels of cyclists. There should be at least one ride leader per four participants. When developing the training route, consider the time available, weather, number of participants, cycling or bus experience of participants, terrain, and safety. The route should be tested beforehand by the leading ambassador and if possible, any additional ride leaders. Incorporate stops into the route to allow time for sharing information and resources for transportation cycling.

Program Evaluation

It is important to evaluate your ambassador program both during and after implementation. Quantitative and qualitative information can help track the effectiveness of ambassador activities and provide guidance for adjustments in on-going program implementation. A thoughtful review of outcomes can help managing agencies learn what worked and what did not and ensure that future ambassador programs are improved.

Evaluation during Program Implementation

The primary quantitative measure for evaluating community engagement is tracking the number of people engaged. For ambassador programs, that could mean tracking the number of group training sessions conducted or bus passes distributed. Whatever the measure, it is important that managing agencies tell ambassadors how they will be expected to track implementation during training. Below is a list of potential quantitative measures that can be tracked by ambassadors during program implementation:

- Tabling events attended.
 - Number of people engaged through tabling events.
- Number of residences canvassed.
 - Number of people engaged through canvassing.
- Number of bicycle or bus ride activities.
- Number of group training sessions.
 - Number of group training session participants.
- Number of printed materials distributed.
- Number of pre-activity surveys completed.
- Number of post-activity surveys completed.
- Number of names listed on sign-in/sign-up sheets.
- Number of social media interactions (i.e., views, likes, or comments).

Provide opportunities for community members to share qualitative feedback about the ambassador program. This can be incorporated into surveys, collected through social media, or collected directly by ambassadors as they carry out their responsibilities. Example program evaluation surveys are available in Appendix D.

Managing agencies should aim to reduce barriers for ambassadors by developing a system for on-going program tracking that is accessible both digitally and through paper materials. Consider using free online-sharing platforms such as Google Drive and also providing printed materials (e.g., surveys or sign-in sheets). It is recommended that managing agencies use time during ambassador check-ins to discuss quantitative measures and qualitative feedback. Check-ins are also a good time for ambassadors to submit surveys, sign-in sheets, or other paper evaluation strategies.

Keep in mind that ambassadors themselves can be a resource to understand how well program implementation is going. They are the ones interacting with community members and will have insight on changes regarding program activities, equipment, materials, marketing, branding, or other aspects that can improve program implementation and help managing agencies better reach TDM goals. Consider asking ambassadors for feedback on a quarterly or biannual basis. Be sure to be open and honest with ambassadors about how their feedback will be used and addressed.



Community members in Los Angeles, CA complete a survey at a pop-up event. Source: Toole Design.



Lead Ambassador for the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Program at a pop-up event in Columbus. Source: Toole Design.

Post-program Evaluation

The information provided from evaluation during program implementation will be instrumental in the development of a post-program evaluation. Managing agencies should consider developing a short report or summary of ambassador program efforts for evaluation, and to showcase ambassador efforts and successes over the course of the program.

This report or summary can include a review of:

- The program development process.
- Program purpose and goals.
- Ambassadors.
- Ambassador activities.
 - Including how ambassador activities and engagement will be used by the managing agency.

The report can also include an assessment answering the questions listed below:

- Did the program accomplish its goals and reach its targets?
- What were the top program successes?
- How many people were engaged through the program?
- Did the program meet its goals for reaching vulnerable and/or underrepresented community members?
- What type of feedback did community members provide about the program?
- What type of feedback did ambassadors provide about the program?
- What were the top program challenges?
- What lessons have been learned now that the program has ended?
- What changes will be made for future ambassador programs?

Case Studies and Lessons Learned

Want to see how other places in Ohio and around the country have implemented active transportation ambassador programs? Check out the Columbus, Ohio case study below along with other programs from around the country that are using ambassador programs to advance active transportation.

Ohio Case Study – Transportation Demand Management Program

In Central Ohio, Columbus Public Health (CPH) and Toole Design developed a pilot Bicycle and Bus Transportation Ambassador Program. The goal of the program was to address transportation disparities through TDM by encouraging active transportation and educating community members on how to get to the places they need and want to go without a car. A second program goal was to hire and train a diverse cohort of ambassadors to teach community members bicycle safety, bus travel tips, and route planning while providing social support in one-on-one or small group interactions.

Ambassador training and pilot program implementation was supported by community partners including a local youth bicycle organization, Remember Us Urban Scouts; a local bicycle shop and co-op, Franklinton Cycle Works; Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA); bikeshare provider CoGo/Lyft; and immigration resettlement agency, Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS). The training was developed to accommodate all levels of cyclists and transit riders, no matter their experience or comfort level with bicycling for transportation or using public transit. Over the course of 30 hours, the Bicycle and Bus Ambassadors received both classroom and experiential training on:

- Bicycle safety – Ohio bicycle laws, types of bicycle

infrastructure, hand signals, and year-round weather safety tips.

- How to plan bicycle rides – various trip planning apps, regional bicycle maps, and CoGo bikeshare training.
- How to travel by COTA bus – various trip planning apps, COTA travel training class, purchasing tickets, bus transfers, COTA on-demand services, and bus safety tips.
- How to teach other people to travel by bicycle and by bus – role playing scenarios, training bicycle rides, and training bus rides.
- Program marketing – sharing promotional materials such as CoGo passes and COTA passes, and learning how to encourage interested, but concerned community members.

After completing training, Toole Design and the program's Lead Ambassador provided ongoing support to ambassadors through scheduled phone check-ins, texts, and emails.

The program wrapped up its second pilot year at the end of 2022. A total of three cohorts were trained and delivered bicycle rides, assisted with bus rides, and shared resources with community members in Central Ohio over the two years. To evaluate program implementation, the number of people engaged by ambassadors is tracked a short pre-ride survey and post-ride survey. By the end of the two-year pilot, 314 community members had been engaged, surpassing the overall goal of reaching 230 people.



A Bike & Bus Ambassador practicing how to put their bike on an off-duty COTA bus during training. Source: Toole Design.



Community members participating in a group training ride led by a Bike & Bus Ambassador. Source: Toole Design.



Equity and Inclusion Considerations

Training cohorts of Bicycle and Bus Ambassadors diverse in race, ethnicity, age, gender, and income was a top priority for the program, along with creating an inclusive and empowering training environment. The following strategies helped achieve that goal:

- Outreach to the following organizations to recruit diverse candidates to apply for the cohorts: Columbus Public Health Active Linden Coalition, Columbus Public Health Bike Friendly Franklinton Coalition, Columbus New American Leadership Academy, Motherful (a collective for single mothers), Remember Us Urban Scouts, Black Girls Do Bike, Franklin County Jobs and Family Services, and Zora's House (a collective for Women of Color).
- Not requiring people to own a bicycle to become an ambassador. Free bikeshare bicycles and annual memberships were provided for training through partnership with Lyft/CoGo Bikeshare.
- Encouraging people in vulnerable populations to share their lived experiences during training, particularly those related to transportation and/or discrimination.
- All bicycle rides during training were “No Drop,” meaning no one was left behind in the group, no matter their speed. An assistant trainer was always at the back of the ride to ensure no one felt like they were holding the group back.
- Part of the program budget was set aside for translation of marketing materials.

Lessons Learned

- Keep training cohorts small so that everyone has the opportunity to meaningfully participate. Five to eight people is a good size, not including trainers.
- Provide on-going support to Ambassadors after training through text or phone call check-ins. Use this as an opportunity to address any concerns, answer questions, and provide encouragement.
- Pre-ride and post-ride surveys are a good way to track the number of people Ambassadors are interacting with, but they are not perfect. Use check-in time to confirm the number of bus and bike rides being delivered.
- Coordinate with local transit authorities to use an off-duty bus during training. This gives Ambassadors the opportunity to learn about traveling by bus in a low stress environment before getting on an active bus.
- The Bike and Bus Ambassadors in this program are part-time, hourly employees of Toole Design. It is important ethically and strategically to provide a competitive hourly, weekly, or monthly wage that incentivizes Transportation Ambassadors to remain involved in the

Ambassador Programs from around the County

Chicago, Illinois: Streets are For Everybody (SAFE) Ambassadors

[Chicago's ambassador program](#) has been operating for 20 years. SAFE Ambassadors use community outreach to encourage people to walk, bicycle, and use transit often and safely. SAFE Ambassadors give presentations and demonstrations at schools, libraries, festivals, farmers markets, block parties, and other community events to educate the public. Frequently requested services include teaching people of all ages to ride a bicycle, bicycle safety lessons, and tips for bicycling to work or the store. SAFE Ambassadors also provide pedestrian/bicycle education for elementary students and supplement driver's education with active transportation for high school students.

Relevant practices:

- The SAFE Ambassador program emphasizes practicing education material during the training so ambassadors are comfortable.
- Ambassadors are taught established procedures before, during, and after events.
- Ambassadors are taught standard responses to local media.

- Ambassadors are taught about relevant bicycle laws and frequently asked questions (for example, what is a bike lane?).
- The City of Chicago uses evaluation forms, completed at the end of each event that ambassadors attend, to analyze the success of the program. Ambassadors record what went well, what could have gone better, and the number of people they interacted with. A summary of the evaluation forms is summarized in an annual report.
- Ambassadors support the City's bikeshare program at new parking locations and during high-use events.

Indianapolis, Indiana: Riders in the Know

[Riders in the Know Ambassadors](#) provide safety education to bicyclists and motorists in Indianapolis. Ambassadors attend a one-hour training to understand Bike Indianapolis' advocacy efforts and how to present at community events about safe bicycling.

Relevant practices:

- Ambassadors focus on four areas to decrease the number of bicyclist crashes: Ride on the Road, Ride with Traffic, Obey Traffic Signs and Signals, and Ride with Lights at Night.



Bicycling Ambassador in Chicago helping a community member. Source: Planet Bike.



Bicycling Ambassador in Chicago sharing information with a young bicyclist. Source: Planet Bike.

Salisbury, Maryland: Bicycle Ambassadors

[Bicycle Ambassadors](#) provide safety presentations to students, businesses, senior groups, and other community groups. They also staff booths at community events and provide bicycle skill courses. Bicycle ambassadors educate the community on bicycle-aware driving, everyday cycling, cycling with children, cycling in winter, and other topics.

Relevant practices:

- Ambassadors must read the best practices information in the [Colorado Bicycling Manual](#) and complete a safety test to ensure they are knowledgeable of safe bicycling practices.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Bike Squad

[Bicycle Ambassadors](#) patrol parts of Lancaster to assist the public with directions and community concerns, such as trash, graffiti, and city maintenance issues. Ambassadors also act as enhanced sense of security, especially during community events. Ambassadors undergo a 40-hour training to understand how to best represent Lancaster.

Relevant practices:

- Ambassadors wear branded shirts to be easily identifiable to the public.
- Ambassadors learn how to gather feedback from the public and escalate public concerns to the correct City department.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- **Establish focus areas for the content that ambassadors will share.** Packaging messaging content in focus areas allows ambassadors to communicate main ideas in a short amount of time. Ambassadors for Bike Indianapolis share four concepts to help people understand how to bicycle more safely.
- **Provide guidance on steps that should occur before, during, and after an event.** Guidance should include required materials, how to set up at an event, how to deliver the message or service, and steps to wrap up the event. Post-event reporting should be simple yet comprehensive. Consider integrating reporting into a process ambassadors need to do, such as timecards or reimbursement/stipend forms.
- **Dedicate time for ambassadors to practice their material.** No matter how simple the material may seem, ambassadors will benefit from rehearsing.
- **Create opportunities for ambassadors to collaborate.** An ambassadors-only email group can be used to network and share tips. Consider hosting mid-program and final meetings with all the ambassadors for collaboration and celebration.
- **Train ambassadors on appropriate communication techniques with members of the public.** Ambassadors should be prepared to effectively communicate with the public. They should be friendly, hospitable, and seek to teach rather than to shame. Training should also instruct ambassadors on conflict resolution, as the public may come to the ambassador with complaints. Chicago's SAFE Ambassadors are provided with standard responses to common questions or complaints about an event, program, or the City itself.
- **Provide media relations training.** Local media may attend events in which ambassadors may host or participate. Basic press etiquette and talking points can guide ambassadors. Alternatively, ambassadors should be aware of where the media can direct inquiries.
- **Establish and communicate expectations for an ambassador uniform.** Themed shirts can make ambassadors noticeable while staffing events. Ambassadors can also wear a bicycle helmet if focusing on bicycle education.
- **Provide a photographer to attend ambassador-led events.** Ambassadors may be too busy to take photos themselves, and high-quality photos will be valuable for both the ambassadors and your community.

Appendix





Example Ambassador Job Posting

Job Posting example from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program:

Toole Design Group in Columbus, OH is looking to hire part-time Transportation Ambassadors for the 2022 Transportation Ambassador Program. Do you enjoy connecting with members of your community? Do you want to learn more about bicycle safety and public transportation? Do you like working on your own schedule? Would you like to work for a firm that is committed to the well-being of its employees? If so, please read on!

This Transportation Ambassador position will help community members in Franklin County learn how to bicycle and ride the bus to travel to work, school, healthcare, places of worship, and other locations and activities. Transportation Ambassadors will be trained to deliver bicycle rides and bus rides to community members, teach bicycle and bus safety, and share information on resources including bus passes and bikeshare memberships.

Transportation Ambassadors will earn a competitive rate of \$20 per hour. Job responsibilities include:

- 33 hours of paid training between April 26 – 29.
 - Training will include classroom sessions, bicycle rides, and bus rides (please note, Ambassadors must already be comfortable bicycling).
- 30-minute monthly check-in phone calls with the Program Manager (May – November 2022).

- Deliver bike rides or bus rides to community members. This could include your family, friends, neighbors, or other people you know through work, school, worship, and/or community activities. Rides can be delivered at any time between May and November 2022.
- Example: Biking from your neighbor's home to the library and back.
- Distribute resources to community members such as bus passes and bikeshare passes (May – November 2022).

Work Schedule for a Transportation Ambassador

Mandatory group training dates for this position:

- Tuesday, April 26, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 27, 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, April 28, 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 29, 6:00 p.m.

After training, Transportation Ambassadors work a flexible schedule of approximately eight hours per month through November 2022. Ambassadors may deliver bicycle and bus rides at any time that works for them and the community members they are delivering to. This part-time position is temporary and will terminate in November 2022.

Ready to Join our Columbus Team?

We understand your time is valuable, so we have a quick and easy application process. NO RESUME REQUIRED. NO COVER LETTER REQUIRED. If you feel that you would be right for this Transportation Ambassador position, please fill out our application by clicking on the link on this page.

At this organization, diversity is a necessity, not a nice-to-have. We have a collaborative culture where people of all backgrounds come together to share ideas and build better, more inclusive communities. We encourage those from underrepresented communities — women, people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants, those with disabilities and people at all the intersections in between — to apply. Even if you don't think your current skill set checks every box, but this role seems to align with your strengths, we want to hear from you.

Requirements

- At least 18 years old.
- Authorized to work in the United States.
- English-speaking (bilingual applicants encouraged).
- Be able to ride a bicycle (you do not need to own a bicycle; one can be provided by Lyft/CoGo for training) (adaptive bicycle riders encouraged).



Example Ambassador Application and Interview

Job Application Questions example from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program:

1. Do you know how to ride a bicycle?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Are you available for training (33 hours total) during ALL dates and times below?
 - Tuesday, April 12, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
 - Wednesday, April 13, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 - Thursday, April 14, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 - Friday, April 15, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Why do you want to become a Transportation Ambassador?

4. How did you hear about this job opening? Choose one.
 - a. Community Refugee & Immigration Services
 - b. City of Columbus Department of Neighborhoods
 - c. Active Linden or Bike Friendly Franklinton Coalition
 - d. Franklin County Jobs and Family Services
 - e. Motherful
 - f. Word of mouth / referral
 - g. Other: -----

Ambassador Interview Questions example from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program:

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself and what drew you to apply for this position.
2. How often do you bike?
 - What do you like about biking?
 - What don't you like about biking?
3. How often do you take the bus?
 - What do you like about taking the bus?
 - What don't you like about taking the bus?
4. How do you think this program can help people in your neighborhood or community?
5. Toole Design is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, please briefly discuss how that shows up in your life and/or work.
6. How did you hear about this position?



Example Ambassador Training Agenda

Training Agenda Example from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program (Year 2):

Day 1 Agenda – 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

1. 9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.: Group Introductions
2. 9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.: HR Orientation
 - Company values.
 - Payroll and schedule.
 - Workplace Safety.
3. 10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.: Group Discussion
 - Materials and equipment needed for days 2 – 4 of training.
 - Previous experience or specific experiences bicycling and/or bussing in Central Ohio.

Day 2 Agenda – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

1. 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.: Educational Bike Ride (in groups of 4 – 5 people)
 - Complete liability waivers.
 - Complete Pre-Ride Evaluation Survey.
 - Group introductions.
 - Discussion topics for stops:
 - Rules of the road and rules of the ride.
 - Lane positioning.
 - Different types of bicycle facilities – bicycle boulevards, bike lanes, trails, shared travel lanes, inductive loops.

- Bike parking.
- Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Guaranteed Ride Home program.
- Local bike co-ops and bike shops.
- Traveling with cargo (e.g., groceries).
- How to deal with discomfort/pain from bicycling.
- TDM resource materials provided by program partners.

- Post-ride evaluation survey.

2. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Classroom Session

- Group Discussion topics:
 - What did you learn from the educational bike ride?
 - Do you wish anything went differently on the ride?
- Training topics:
 - Ohio bicycle laws.
 - Common concerns of people interested in bicycling (and how they can be addressed).
 - How to build a bicycle route for yourself and/or for others.
 - Delivering bicycle rides with care and confidence.
 - Program evaluation.

3. 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.: Lunch and Educational Bike Ride #2 Preparation

- Ride preparation includes splitting into groups and building routes.

4. 2:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.: Practice Educational Bike Ride #2 (in groups of 4-5 people)

- Each group rotates leaders so that everyone gets the chance to practice leading an educational bike ride.

5. 5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: Closing and Homework

Day 3 Agenda – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

1. 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.: Classroom Session

- Training topics:
 - Purchasing a used bike.
 - Bicycle maintenance basics.
 - CoGo bikeshare presentation (station locations, how to sign-up, income-based assistance programs, etc.).
 - COTA travel training presentation (fares, elements of a bus stop, bus etiquette, etc.).
- Group discussion/role-playing:
 - Practice addressing common concerns of people interested in biking or bussing for transportation.

2. 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch and Educational Bus and/or Bike Ride Preparation

- Ride preparation includes splitting into groups and building routes.

3. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Practice Bus Etiquette with an Off-Duty COTA Bus

- Discussion/training topics:
 - Where to pay fare.
 - Requesting a stop.
 - Getting a transfer.
 - Biking and bussing together.

4. 3:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.: Practice Educational Bus and/or Bike Ride

- Each group rotates leaders so that everyone gets the chance to practice leading an educational bike ride.

5. 5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: Closing and Homework

Day 4 Agenda – 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

1. 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.: Morning Rush Hour Practice Educational Bus and Bike Ride

- Practice rides in groups of two, starting at whatever location is agreed to by both partners and ending at a common destination (library). Partners rotate who is leading the ride to get a chance to practice leading a one-on-one ride.

2. 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.: Classroom Session

- Group discussion/training topics:
 - Identifying people that would benefit from ambassador services.
 - Encouraging people to utilize ambassador services.
 - Common destinations where people could easily bike.
 - Approach to tabling events, one-on-one rides, and group training sessions.
 - Leading with equity and inclusion.

3. 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Lunch

4. 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Classroom Session

- Role-playing scenarios:
 - Encouraging people to utilize ambassador services.
 - Building bike and bus routes.
 - Working with a community member that is interested in biking or bussing but worried/hesitant.

5. 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.: Practice Educational Bus and Bike Ride Preparation

- Preparation includes splitting into new groups of two and building a route that includes both bike and bus.

6. 4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.: Training Wrap-Up

- Provide space for ambassadors to recap training, offer encouragement to one another, and say goodbye.

7. 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.: Evening Rush Hour Practice Educational Bus and Bike Ride

- Partners rotate who is leading the ride to get a chance to practice leading a one-on-one ride.

D

Example Pre-Activity and Post-Activity Evaluation Survey

Pre-Ride Evaluation Survey example questions from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program (Year 2):

1. What ZIP code do you live in? _____
2. How do you usually travel to get to work, school, or other places you go frequently? Choose all that apply.
 - a. Walk
 - b. Bike
 - c. Bus
 - d. Pay for a ride in a car (taxi, Uber, Lyft, or pay gas money for a ride)
 - e. Drive alone in a car
 - f. Drive or ride with others in a car
 - g. Other: _____
3. “I know how to travel to work, school, or other places I go frequently without using a car (driving, paying for a ride, or carpooling.)”
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. How comfortable do you currently feel walking, biking, or taking the bus for trips to work, school, or other places you go frequently?
 - a. Not at all!
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Completely!
5. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Post-Ride Evaluation Survey example questions from the Central Ohio Bike & Bus Ambassador Pilot Program (Year 2):

1. What transportation option did you use with your Transportation Ambassador?
 - a. Walk
 - b. Bike
 - c. Bus
 - d. Other: _____
2. How would you rate your overall experience with your Transportation Ambassador?
 - a. Terrible
 - b. Okay
 - c. Good
 - d. Great
 - e. Amazing!

3. After your experience with a Transportation Ambassador, how comfortable would you feel walking, biking, or taking the bus (whichever way you traveled with the Transportation Ambassador) to get to work, school, or other places you go frequently?
- a. Not at all!
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Completely!
4. After your experience with a Transportation Ambassador, how likely are you to walk, bike, or take the bus (whichever way you traveled with the Transportation Ambassador) to get to work, school, or other places you go frequently?
- a. No way!
 - b. Probably not
 - c. Eh, maybe
 - d. Probably
 - e. Definitely
5. “I know how to travel to work, school, or other places I go frequently without using a car (driving, paying for a ride, or carpooling.)”
- a. True
 - b. False
6. Do you have any comments to share about your experience with a Transportation Ambassador?

Transportation
Ambassador Program
Implementation Toolkit



**Department of
Health**

Prepared by Toole Design

TOOLE
DESIGN