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## **Appendix A: Toolkit for Bicycle Organizations**

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# Promote Bicycle Tourism

## BICYCLE RIDE TOOLKIT FOR ORGANIZATIONS

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## Chapter 1: So You Want to do a Fundraising Bike Ride?

Everybody loves a bike ride! And every community loves fundraisers to support their important causes. Organized bike rides are great ways to earn money for your organization and also support your community.

This Toolkit is designed to help you figure out if a bike ride is a suitable fundraising event for you and, if it is, provide everything you need to make sure it's a success.

### **Bike rides are an excellent way to raise money**

Now is a great time to think about organizing a bike ride because bicycling is only getting more popular. Already increasing annually before the pandemic, recreational bicycle riding on trails approximately doubled in 2020, according to data by the Rails to Trails Conservancy. About 8.5 million Californians will go on bike rides this month.

Many event organizers find profit grows after years of hosting the same event. With experience, volunteers and event organizers become more efficient, participation increases, and the profit margin from a ride also increases. As a fundraising ride gains more notoriety in the community, it often becomes easier to attract sponsors and support from additional partners.

### **Much more than the money**

Fundraising bike rides improve the reputation of your organization and your community and make new connections that can last a lifetime. In fact, when you're getting started, it's great to emphasize these other benefits as motivation. For some, these additional benefits may be more important than the revenue, which can be low in the first year of doing a ride.

Most successful rides will appeal to families and be inclusive of people of various ages and abilities. People who go on bike rides uniformly report making great

friends. There's something about a shared physical experience that brings people together like nothing else.

A popular fundraising bike ride will show off your community to visitors who may not have realized the attractions of your region. It will get "heads in beds," supporting the local hospitality industry. Many studies have shown that bicyclists also tend to spend more nights in an area than non-cycling visitors. In addition, because bicycling is a physical activity, bicyclists require food and drink—lots of it.

### **How to Use this Toolkit**

This guide is a step-by-step manual to producing great bike rides that are fun, safe, and attract lots of participants to raise money for your cause and support your community. Do the steps to be sure a ride is for you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the California Bicycle Coalition at [info@calbike.org](mailto:info@calbike.org) for more information.

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## Chapter 2: First Steps and Considerations

### Inventory what exists

Before you launch a new ride, check out the landscape of what already exists in the area so as not to compete with a well-established event. Start by checking with these organizations:

- Motherlode Bicycle Coalition
- San Joaquin Bicycle Coalition
- Stanislaus Bicycle Club
- Stockton Bike Club

Also, consider partnering with one of these groups. Give them publicity in exchange for promoting your ride. Consider their needs and desires. The more you include other organizations in your planning from the beginning, the more likely other groups are to promote and support your event.

### What kind of ride is best?

There are several kinds of organized fundraising bike rides:

- Single-day rides start in the morning and usually have multiple versions of varying lengths, from as few as five miles to more than 100. They can last just a few hours or most of the day.
- Multi-day rides can take as long as a week, and start and end in different places. They require an extended support network as well as overnight accommodations for participants.
- Most rides use roads open to cars, but on routes with very little traffic on weekends.
- Some rides, usually in more urban areas, take place on closed streets. They require cooperation from local police and traffic enforcement which can be costly and difficult to accomplish.

Because of the challenge of connecting multiple cities across the region with safe roads, most rides here will be single-day rides. Pro tip: organize two days of single-day rides, starting in the same location but using different routes to create distinct loops each day.

### Staffing Roles

You will need lots of people to execute a successful fundraising ride. If your event is poorly planned, it will make it much harder to get participants the next time you run the event. Here is an overview of the roles and responsibilities that you'll need to help you prepare for your ride:

#### RIDE DIRECTOR

Responsible for overall operations of the event.

#### FUNDRAISING COORDINATOR

Responsible for sponsorships (monetary and in-kind).

#### MARKETING & OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Responsible for promoting your event by developing marketing materials and reaching out to media and other partners.

#### VOLUNTEER/STAFF COORDINATOR

Responsible for recruiting volunteers and scheduling volunteers and staff.

#### MERCHANDISING, SALES AND GOODIES

Developing and procuring the goodies for the event (t-shirts, jerseys, water bottles, socks, etc.).

#### LOCATION/ROUTE COORDINATOR

Responsible for securing event location and working with necessary city, county, and state permitting and law enforcement officials to develop a safe event route.

#### LOGISTICS COORDINATOR

Responsible for event materials to be used during the ride, including printing (brochures, maps, cue sheets, waivers, etc.), signs, chalk or paint, supplies, etc. On

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multi-day rides, the Logistics Coordinator commands the base or overnight area. Duties include operations, luggage, lost and found, and troubleshooting.

### **REGISTRATION COORDINATOR**

Responsible for handling and processing event registrations.

If your organizing body does not currently have the resources to cover all these roles, you may be able to recruit knowledgeable and competent volunteers to handle many of these responsibilities. And the same person may take on multiple roles. For example, the

tasks of your Location/Route Coordinator primarily need to be done prior to the event. On the day of the event, that same person could be responsible for signing people in during registration.

### **Planning Time**

It takes 6-12 months to plan and execute a fundraising ride, depending on the size. You will also have post-event tasks, which can take additional days or weeks before you can put the event to bed. We recommend that you read this guide completely before you dive into your fundraising ride.

## **Pro Tip**

Participate in similar fundraising rides nearby to get some real-life experience. Ask the event organizers to let you volunteer to get some behind the scenes experience or participate to get that perspective

## Bike Events Held in Caltrans Interregional Cycling Tourism Five County Areas

<b>Name of Ride</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Entry Price</b> <i>Per Participant / Total</i>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CALAVERAS COUNTY</b>			
Mr. Frogs Wild Ride	250	\$60 / \$15,000	April 2022
RideandWalk4Art	200	\$65 / \$13,000	March 20, 2022
Party Pardee	1,500	\$65 / \$97,500	April 2, 2022
<b>SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY</b>			
Delta Century	300	\$45 / \$13,500	2022
Pedaling Paths to Independence	350	\$45 / \$15,750	Feb. - Mar. 2022
Tour delle Vine	350	\$65/ \$22,750	May 17, 2022
Best Ride	150	\$40 / \$6,000	2022
<b>STANISLAUS COUNTY</b>			
Mom's Ride	250	\$60 / \$15,000	May 2022
Almond Blossom Century	250	\$60 / \$15,000	February 2022
Golden Hills	250	\$60 / \$15,000	2022
<b>ALPINE COUNTY</b>			
Ebbett's Pass Century	250	\$95 / \$23,750	2022
Alta Alpina Challenge	250	\$95 / \$23,750	June 2022
Death Ride	1,200	\$170 / \$204,000	July 2022
<b>TUOLUMNE COUNTY</b>			
None			

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## Chapter 3: Budgeting and Raising Money

So you've done your research, inventoried what exists, considered opportunities and are ready to start drilling into how much you can raise on your fundraising ride. It's time to dive into some numbers!

### How Much Can You Raise?

One of the big questions all organizers grapple with is "How much money can we raise with our fundraising ride?" Some small rides are able to generate several thousand dollars after all expenses have been paid, while larger rides that attract thousands of participants can raise hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### Budgeting

One of the first things you should do when setting up a fundraising ride is create a budget. Compile estimates of expected income and expenses to get a realistic assessment of how much you can raise. That will help you decide how important it is to get sponsors, the right entry fee to charge riders, and how much support you can afford to provide. It can also help you decide if the ride is a good option for your group.

### Fee Strategies

Most events offer a staged pricing structure, with discounts for early registration. People respond to deadlines and discounts, so an early deadline is a great way to entice people to sign up. Discounts should be approximately 10 to 20% off the regular or late pricing. Group pricing is also popular, and it's a good way to get people to participate who might not want to go solo. Group pricing also introduces the concept of teams.

Pricing must cover your individual costs per rider. For example, if you are giving a t-shirt with registration, be sure to include the cost of the t-shirt when determining per rider costs. Most events start at about \$30 per individual. More commonly, it's \$35—\$65 per individual

for a single-day event (see page 15 for typical ride fees). A sample pricing strategy is listed below.

### Sponsorship

Offering sponsorship opportunities and recognition for support are excellent ways to attract contributions. Compile a list of all potential sponsors, starting with those with the greatest alignment and potential to give. But don't limit potential sponsors — ask everyone. Remember that there are others who want to support the community at large and may be more excited about your fundraising ride than you expect.

### Cash Sponsors

Thousands of dollars to help produce your fundraising ride can offset expenses making your event more secure financially and allow a greater percentage of rider's dollars to go for the fundraising goal.

Draft a list of possible sponsors from banks, law firms, health care, tourism, and other corporations and businesses who support your community or cause and/or may be interested in your new fundraising ride.

Reference other successful events in the region to help identify corporations and businesses already investing in the community.

Share this list with all the staff and volunteers you can to find out where they may have door-opening connections. A volunteer or supporter who is friends with a key decision maker will always be more successful in securing a sponsor than a request out of the blue.

Typically, fundraising rides claim that all net proceeds support the cause they're promoting. Because the costs can be significant, especially at the beginning, those net proceeds may be a disappointingly small percentage of total revenue. But if you can find a cash sponsor or sponsors to cover the hard costs of organizing the ride,

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then you can advertise that all proceeds support the cause. That's a great marketing angle!

## In-Kind Sponsorships

Start by looking over the expenses in your budget and consider how you can get these donated. Because some sponsors can acquire and contribute in-kind donations more easily or for less funds, a \$5,000 in-kind donation may be much easier for a sponsor than an equal amount of cash. For example:

A local newspaper may be willing to trade ad space for recognition on a banner at the event and their logo on all the print materials.

The grocery store you frequent may be willing to donate fruit for rest stops. Why pay for rest stop snacks when a sponsor will provide them for free?

Volunteers can also have important connections to businesses and might be able to get full or partial in-kind donations for AV equipment, rental vehicles, printing, etc.

Consider letting a local bike club "sponsor" an event by providing volunteers and other kinds of support.

## Securing and Rewarding Sponsors

Securing sponsors can seem daunting, but the payoff is significant. Sponsorships are also an opportunity to build the partnerships that will make your event successful.

It can be extra challenging for new events that are not yet established to attract sponsors. However, you can turn this to your favor by focusing on how your event will bring more visitors to the area and benefit businesses and the communities economy. Yes, local businesses, especially local stores get asked to sponsor a lot of things, but it is essential that you still ask and let them decide whether they want to be part of your new fundraising ride. It is also worthwhile to consider businesses you patronize as these businesses are more likely to want to see you succeed.

Don't discount or dismiss potential sponsors because you never know the motivations or passions of businesspeople and they may be an enthusiastic supporter in waiting. It is also worthwhile to consider businesses you patronize as these businesses are more likely to want to see you succeed. So whether it is an accountant firm, caterers, sporting goods stores, or other businesses, be sure to ask.

When making your list of potential government, businesses, and organization sponsors, be sure to identify ones that will benefit from advertising at your fundraising ride, such as area hotels, restaurants, energy bar and drink companies, and local bike shops. Draft up a spreadsheet of individual contacts at each of these businesses, agencies, etc. Do you or somebody working with you on your event have a personal connection with someone at each of these potential sponsors? Fill in as much information about them as possible, including whether they have sponsored other local events.

When you approach each potential sponsor, they will expect to be offered a variety of sponsorship options. It is important to develop a tiered sponsorship package (see "Sample Sponsor Levels" below). In general, most fundraising rides try to generate 50% of their funds from sponsorships. So if you have a draft budget in place, it should be relatively easy to determine the number and types of sponsors you will need to achieve your goal.

Assigning more significant rewards for higher sponsorship tiers is important. Here are a few general suggestions for sponsorship perks:

- General recognition on your website, posters, brochures, email communications, and a certain number of social media posts
- Create a sponsorship certificate for display in their store or office
- Exhibiting opportunities at your registration and / or finish celebration
- Special naming opportunities like rest stops, T-shirts or key elements of your fundraising ride

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Aim high with prospective major donors and include more significant sponsor opportunities such as exclusivity for a top level sponsor. For example, if one grocery store sponsors at the top level you agree not to allow other grocery stores as sponsors. You can also invite a leader or representative to speak at the ride. And always be sure to ask sponsors how they wish to be recognized when negotiating sponsorship.

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## **Other Fundraising Options to Consider**

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### **Additional Donations**

Add an option on the registration form for supporters who can't participate but want to help. Add an option on the registration form for participants who want to give more than the minimum amount. It's another chance to spread the word about the good cause you're supporting!

### **Merchandise Sales**

Branded T-shirts, jerseys, socks, water bottles and other gear are often used as incentives, gifts or as sales items to raise additional funds.

Don't spend too much on merchandise, especially if this is your first year running the event. Expect sales to be modest at first. As your event becomes more popular, you will naturally sell more items with your event and organization logo on it.

Branded items will advertise and promote your event in the future. In fact, some fundraising rides look at merchandise development and procurement as an expense line item for marketing.

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## Chapter 4: Logistics

### Choosing a Date

You've already done an inventory of other rides so you know some dates to avoid. Here are additional considerations:

- Note your cycling season. Pick a time of the year which will be comfortable for most cyclists.
- Take advantage of what your community offers. If there is another community event that might help attract people to come for a couple of days, holding a ride at the same time can boost both events. For instance, if there is a popular festival on a Sunday, you might hold your fundraising ride on the Saturday and then folks can stick around and enjoy the festival after the ride.
- Note other events that might conflict with a ride in the area. For instance if there is a huge event that might generate car traffic, try to avoid that date.
- If you narrow it down to three or four possible dates, consider doing a survey of known riders to see if one might work better or if there are other conflicts you haven't thought of.

### Choosing Start Times

- Starting early, between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m., helps beat the heat and traffic. This also allows participants to spend the afternoon relaxing and reliving the event.
- If you are expecting a huge number of participants or are offering multiple route length options, consider staggering your departure times by at least 30 minutes, with longer rides departing earlier. (See below.)
- For extremely long rides, you may want to start as early as 6:30 a.m., as riders could be on the road all day and will need to take breaks and pace themselves.

- Registration should be open before the start time. Have food, maps, supplies, and merchandise available early.
- Consider holding pre-registration the night before your event.

### Reasons to “Stage” a Ride

Can you imagine hundreds, or even thousands, of cyclists all starting a ride at the same time? How would you line up and hold all of these cyclists in one place? What happens at the end of the ride when the majority of participants arrive within minutes of each other? Here are some good reasons to stage your ride:

- Spreading your start times over a period of time (usually a couple of hours) will help reduce congestion when starting, while on the course, and when returning.
- Your longer-distance riders will want to get out on the road early, an issue before heat and sun become an issue. Schedule these riders to start first.
- Your event will “feel” longer; even those participants who may only bike 10 or 15 miles will get the sense that this is an “event” that they're participating in.
- Staging distributes the work for your support staff more evenly throughout the day. For example, if you are providing lunch for returning riders, it takes fewer volunteers to help feed riders as they come back over a longer period of time, rather than all at once.
- While mass start rides are visually appealing, exciting, and allow riders to ride together on rides with lower participation levels, they require greater staffing and logistics.
- Mass start rides also have a greater impact on traffic and might require more police and/or volunteers.

- Staggered starts are safer, especially for inexperienced riders.
- While staggered starts may require fewer people to manage the crowds, they will likely require longer volunteer time commitments.

## Getting Permits and Insurance

### WORKING WITH OFFICIALS

In our counties, it can take up to three months to get your permits, so start early, especially if your event incorporates public spaces like parks, roads, and trails. You will need a proposed route, a public safety plan, and certificates of insurance for the relevant public agencies. The permitting agency can help you with these if you approach them early enough.

The permitting agency will tell you if you need a certain number of police or Emergency Medical Technicians for your event. For large events, you may be required to pay for officers during the event to cover the extra staffing their department will need. In other cases, police and emergency medical services will simply “hang out” at your event instead of at the local station at no extra charge. Check with your local community officials about their emergency plans for weather, heat, deaths, or road closures. If they don’t already have their own plans in place, add this as an item to be completed before your ride so you can inform local officials and EMS services about your plans if any of these situations should occur.

Some large events actually present a handbook promoting the communities where participants will be staying overnight. Often, the permitting process will go more smoothly if the city, county, or state is a partner. They may be willing to donate things such as police service or waive permit fees if they are an official sponsor of the event.

### INSURANCE

If you’re running a fundraising ride, you need event insurance. Fortunately, this is a relatively simple item. There are several companies that specialize in bicycle event insurance. Most policies run a minimum of several hundred dollars per event, and will charge additional rates above a certain number of participants. Contact

the League of American Bicyclists for suggestions on where to buy insurance. You will also need participants to sign release forms. Contact the California Bicycle Coalition for sample release forms suitable for California.

## Designating the Route

Selecting a beautiful and safe route is one of your most important decisions. People enjoy riding with little traffic, smooth pavement, and beautiful scenery. You also have to consider the location of the beginning and end of the ride, and all the rest stops in between.

### ROUTE SELECTION

- Consult with your local bike club. They will know which roads are fun and safe and which are less attractive for bicycling.
- Designate several routes that can be divided into rides of varying distances, to accommodate participants of varying abilities.
- Keep your route as simple as possible to minimize missed or wrong turns.
- Check to see if your route needs permits. If you’ll be traveling through public land, including National Parks, National Forests, State Parks, State Forests, and Bureau of Land Management land, you will need to contact the proper office as far in advance as possible about your intended route. They often have only a limited number of “commercial” permits per region, and if your ride has net proceeds, you may be considered a commercial venture.
- Will you want police assistance or road closures?
- Does your route have challenges like construction or dangerous areas with higher traffic levels? If so, how can you mitigate or work with agencies to set up cones or have patrols available to help slow car drivers?
- Test your route on the same day of the week as your ride (weekend and weekday traffic often vary) and keep an eye out for all potential hazards (drain

grates, cracks, etc.) and see if they can be addressed or marked for the event.

## BEGINNING AND ENDING LOCATIONS

Most often fundraising rides are loops or out and back so that the start and finish are at the same site. However, if your start and finish are different, consider shuttles or other transportation options for folks to get back to where they started.

- Is there enough parking?
- Is there access to bus or public transit, and do these accept bicycles?
- Do you have room at the start for staging riders if you are having a staggered start?
- How can you handle a public address system at the start for welcoming riders, announcements, etc.?

## REST STOPS

Does your event need a rest stop? The answer is probably 'yes' if your event is longer than 10 miles on trails or more than 25 miles on roads. For longer or multi-day rides, plan a rest stop for every 10–20 miles on average.

Plan on providing water, sports drinks, and fruit, as well as high-carb and salty snack options at your stops. If your event is held during a particularly hot time of the year, pay special attention to the riders as they come in for a stop. If possible, have your EMS or knowledgeable medical people present to help spot riders who may be in trouble and not realize it. Request that participants carry ample water, a bag for snacks, and their own basic repair kit. This information must be clearly laid out online when they're researching the ride.

Be aware that on multi-day events, some riders may want to start very early in the morning to avoid the heat of the day, or to complete a large number of miles. You will need to adjust both the meals and rest stops accordingly.

Cyclists will often want to try a couple different items at a rest stop. Consider having food pre-portioned in plastic

bags to keep things clean and so that riders can take some snacks with them for an energy boost while they ride.

## OTHER STOPS: STORES, ATTRACTIONS, ETC.

Multi-day rides often take riders through quaint towns and past breathtaking scenery. These events are usually slower paced with the idea of enjoying the scenery and engaging with the community as much as possible.

Give your participants the chance to stop and enjoy the local attractions. You can even work this into the marketing materials for the ride. Note the places the riders will be stopping, such as a farmer's market, old-fashioned malt shop, or antique shops.

Decide if attractions that cost money will be paid for by your organization or by the participants. You can often negotiate free admission or a discounted group rate at museums, parks, etc. Make sure to advertise that this stop is included in their registration fee.

For multi-day trips, it is helpful to review the next day's itinerary with the participants each night so they can plan their ride accordingly.

## DEVELOPING MAPS AND CUE SHEETS

A cue or "route" sheet is a piece of paper that prompts the participant along the route. Cue sheets are almost always included in participant registration packets and on the day of the event. Clear cue sheets will keep experienced cyclists on the right route and happy.

Some club riders live and die by cue sheets, and the quality of your available maps and cue sheets will reflect the quality of the event. Many digital formats like Ride-WithGPS not only produce nice cue sheets but include downloadable GPS files that riders can load on their phones or GPS devices.

Here are some tips for creating good maps and cue sheets:

- Try to limit your maps and cue sheets to one sheet if possible (map on one side and cue sheet on the other).

- Good maps and cue sheets include turns (right, left, etc.), as well as mileage and important landmarks.
- Be sure to include information on getting help, including phone numbers, in case participants become lost.
- Work with your local bike club to develop and/or test out your map and cue sheet.

Good maps and cue sheets include:

- Turn-by-turn instructions, including mileage between turns and cumulative mileage
- Street names and landmarks
- Indication of start, finish, rest stops, and bathrooms
- Warning and descriptions of tricky areas
- Cross streets
- Elevation chart (typically on the bottom)
- Legend with scale and north orientation

For more detailed information on mapping and topographic data, we recommend [RideWithGPS.com](http://RideWithGPS.com).

## CRAFTING MARKINGS AND MARKING ROUTES

Creating good route signage is critical, especially if your event takes place on-road. Here are some tips:

- Spray chalk arrows are recommended. Place two large arrows before each turn and one confirming straight arrow after turns.
- Corrugated plastic signs are more expensive than paper, but they are waterproof, more visible, and can be used year after year.
- Paper signs are cheap, but can quickly disintegrate if the weather turns wet. Lamination will help but they still may not last more than a year or two.

- Regardless of the materials you use, make sure the signs are large enough to be seen from several hundred feet away and placed far enough in advance so cyclists can make smooth transitions in speed and turns.
- If your ride contains routes of varying lengths, be sure to clearly note which route the sign is for and use consistent colors for each route. For example, if your event has a 25-mile and 50-mile routes, have all the 25 signs in orange labeled “25” in the same place and “50” on yellow signs.
- Consider marking the route for significant bumps and cracks, as well as railroad tracks or other potential hazards.
- If you are using signs, mark the route a day in advance. If you use spray chalk or paint to mark your route, this can be done up to a week in advance.
- Consider marking the street crossings to alert vehicle traffic. If you are running an on-road ride, it is best to put up signs the night before to minimize early morning work.
- Budget for fuel to reimburse the people marking the route.
- Mark your route in as many places as possible. For an on-road event, place signs every mile or less. This will help keep riders on route. Signs become increasingly important near the end of the ride where slower riders may be spaced too far apart to follow a group.

## DIRECTIONS

- In addition to clearly communicating instructions for all registered riders about when to arrive and where to go, you will want to plan out directional signs for people arriving in different modes.
- Drivers should have clear signage visible from a distance showing where to enter and to park (as well as volunteers to direct and keep traffic flowing smoothly).

- Signage from bus or metro stations for people walking with their bikes is also important.
- Some people will even choose to bike there to avoid the hassles of parking, so be sure to have clear signage/directions for bicyclists and be sure to train your parking volunteers to prioritize people on bikes.

## Managing Supplies and Equipment

### FACILITIES

Events in public spaces need an event permit. Almost all cities or counties have a special department for permits. It is common for facilities to ask for proof of insurance and/or to be co-insured (See insurance on page ZX). They may also control your use of their facility and intended route. To allow adequate time to obtain necessary approval and permits, you should start planning your event far in advance.

In the case of private property (including land and facilities such as an amphitheater, campground, etc.), you'll need to contact the owner or manager and begin the process of obtaining permission or reserving and renting the facilities. Be sure to also inquire if the event location will be available on the days before and after for event set-up and tear-down.

### SIGNAGE, PARKING, VENDORS, TEAM TENTS, LAYOUT, ETC.

An event layout that is accessible, orderly and logical will help give your participants a good experience.

- Keep the layout simple and linear so participants can see how to get to the start area if possible/
- Have an orderly staging of checking in, getting event information, and picking up their welcome packet / goody bag.
- After participants have checked in and gotten essential information, have a neatly laid out area for exhibitors, mechanics, merchandise, food, beverages, and other essential resources. If possible lay this out in a semi-circle for better visibility.

- If you have the ability to facilitate a team area (tents for teams to connect and set up) this can help build some buzz and energy, but it isn't essential everyone go through or by this as you don't want individuals to feel excluded.
- Try to concentrate food and drink vendors in part of the exhibit area or in their own area near the start (and or finish). They likely will provide their own tents, tables, but you should at the least offer tables, chairs and power connection. Check in at least a month ahead to make certain you know their needs / expectations. Information on what you can provide and stages of planning can be laid out in the vendor agreement form at least a month ahead of the event.
- Some cyclists will want to make certain their bike and equipment are in good working order before they head out on a longer ride or race, so have a place clearly identified where folks can test ride a small circuit in the parking lot or near the start area.

### EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

Generate a list of the equipment that you'll need for the event such as tables, chairs, bike racks, barriers, supplies for "Support And Gear" or "SAG" vehicles (see page 49) etc. Here are some common questions that should be answered as early as possible:

- What equipment will be needed? Trucks, tents, tables and chairs, audio and/or visual equipment, timing equipment, etc.?
- Can items be loaned or rented from local sources?
- If rented, might they offer a reduced rate for fundraising rides?
- How will this equipment or materials make it to the event?
- Can the renter deliver and pick up? If so, is there an extra cost?
- If you are transporting any equipment, will you have the resources to

return it promptly (within a day or two) after the event? (A key detail often overlooked.)

- Is there a back-up supplier or vendor for event-day equipment in case the first one does not come through?
- Materials such as tape, rope, markers, scissors, etc., can all be obtained at office stores, hardware stores, etc.. Get these items at least a month prior to the event because as the event draws nearer, you are sure to have more challenges and details demanding your attention.

## FOOD

Order and secure as much food in advance as you can. This is especially true for non-perishable food to be handed out during the event, such as energy bars or bottled drinks. If not donated, try to obtain at least a month in advance for the same reasons that you would obtain event supplies early. Participant needs will quickly monopolize your time as you get closer to the event. Be sure to sort out all plans and logistics for fresh food deliveries on the day of the event and storage options to keep food cool and fresh (or warm as needed).

## GOODIE BAGS

Everyone loves goodies. You can include free stuff like sportgels, sport bars, special offers from local merchants, etc., in the goodie bag. When you're asking for event sponsors, be sure to ask if they would like to include any goodies. (When developing sponsor levels, you may consider limiting goodie bag inserts to top sponsors). Be sure to have these items in your hands several weeks before the event, as volunteers will be needed to create and stuff the goodie bags that you may hand out.

Here are some typical contents of a goodie bag:

- Organization information
- Membership form
- Sample energy bars or gels

- Water bottles
- Coupons for discounts at local sponsoring bike shops or sponsoring businesses
- Safety information including rider etiquette
- Information on next event (if you have other things planned, like a fundraising awards dinner)

For multi-day rides, some of these materials can be shared at the end of each day. There are a number of sources of free bags. Bicycling Magazine (Rodale) will supply your ride with bags if you agree to supply them registrant information. If one of your sponsors is a retailer, chances are they will be more than happy to supply you with bags since they will receive an extra marketing benefit.

## Registration

A clear plan for registration with some testing is essential. Some things you may want to consider:

- Registration should open several months before your event. If you have been planning for some time, all of the materials should be ready for your website and print communications.
- Offer early pre-registration discounts for participants who register well before the event. The more people you can entice to register early, the more able you will be to plan and the chance of canceling the event due to weather will decrease. The cutoff for early registration should be two weeks or more prior to the event.
- Be sure to have registration forms available at the event, as you may get up to 10% or more of your participants registering the day of the event (or many more, for shorter and more affordable events)
- Provide a maximum cap on the number of participants. You could still be flexible, but it may help to provide a sense of urgency for registration.

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## PRE-REGISTRATION

Participants who pre-register have made a commitment to be at your ride and are more likely to attend, even if the weather isn't ideal, than someone who hasn't yet registered. End pre-registration no later than two weeks before your event. Some organizations end it as much as one month before the event.

Provide several options for registering:

- Most participants will register online. Services like Active.com, BikeReg.com or EventBrite take a small percentage of the registration fee as part of their service or add on a fee paid directly by the participant. Online credit card payment acceptance services such as Square, PayPal and others also take a fee, which is typically 3–4% of the registration cost.
- Via mail with a check, money order, or credit card.
- Via phone with credit card.

Encourage pre-registration by offering numerous cut-off dates. The idea is to encourage early registration so you can get a good idea of participant numbers as far ahead of time as possible.

- Early-bird registration includes a discount and a gift
- Regular registration is the regular price, and no gift
- Final registration cut-off, with a higher cost.

When determining cut-off dates for early registration discounts, be sure to take into consideration the necessary lead-time for ordering any merchandise you might be giving away. For example, if you are giving away socks as an early discount incentive, you might need to place your order six weeks in advance. Expect late registrations past the cut-off date as well. If you need to put a cap on the maximum number of riders, including this cap number in the registration materials may encourage riders to register early rather than waiting until the last minute and risk being left out.

## SAME-DAY CHECK-IN AND REGISTRATION

Same-day check-in and registration is a headache, but it can account for 10% or more of your participants. Here are some tips for reducing problems associated with same-day registrations:

- End the early registration discount 10-14 days before the event.
- Participants will begin showing up more than an hour before the event. Make sure your volunteers and staffers are ready.
- As part of the pre-event planning, make packets for each participant. Make at least 10% more than you need for pre-event registrations.
- Make sure that you have a way to take cash, checks, and credit cards. Bring a cash box and petty cash to make change.

## WAIVER AND RELEASE FORMS

Waiver and release forms are necessary for all events. Although the form can't prevent a lawsuit, it does help to discourage them and sets riders' expectations that the ride is very much at their own risk. These forms should be part of the registration process and can be included as part of the online registration process with some online registration services. They should also be included as part of any registration form that is filled out by hand.

## REGISTRATION IDENTIFICATION: NUMBERS, BRACELETS, ETC.

Prepare items to identify and track participants several weeks before the event for inclusion in registration packets, and collect them at the end of the event.

If your event has rider identification numbers, include their registration number in the spreadsheet of participants with their identifying information and emergency contact information. ID numbers may help to resolve any conflict that might arise from mistakes made during the heat of the event. Mistakes are common, since participants will generate more results than the timer can keep up with at times. This is why the event results on

timed events are often unofficial for many hours. The delay allows all mistakes to be discovered and resolved.

Some rides use different numbering series for individuals and teams, as well as for the different ride lengths.

## Ride Support

### SAG SUPPORT

SAG stands for support and gear. It is a necessary component of nearly any fundraising ride. Rides that have SAG on the road have what is called the “SAG Wagon.” These vehicles can give a lift to a rider experiencing mechanical or physical difficulties.

At least one SAG Wagon should follow at the end of the ride because the slowest riders may need the most help. If resources permit, additional SAG Wagons should be interspersed at several points along the ride. Remember, flat tires, participants in distress, road construction, major weather events, and other unforeseen issues don't occur only at the end of the ride. SAG drivers should have cell phones (or Shortwave radio if cell service is limited) and a list of cell phone numbers for event staff and key volunteers. For car-free and off-road (rails-to-trails) rides, a chase vehicle can be a bike with a flat trailer, while the SAG Wagon can still meet up with riders at trailheads.

Here is a list of items that should be in the SAG vehicle:

- First aid kit
- Extra water, sports drinks
- Additional food or energy bars
- Tubes, patch kits, basic bike repair tools, and floor pump
- Cell phones and/or short wave radios
- Extra maps and cue sheets
- Bike rack or ability to carry at least a few bikes (pick-up trucks and minivans work well too)

- If the chase vehicle is on-road, it should have space for several bikes and several riders. SAG is one of the most important components of your ride, and good or bad SAG can make or break your event.

In addition to the checklist above, SAG should also include:

- Two people per SAG vehicle if possible. One should be able to operate a short wave radio if cell service is an issue (with GPS tracking if possible) and one should be able to fix bikes.
- A calculated distance between SAG vehicles depending on the length of your ride; a distance of approximately 15 miles allows for both SAG vehicles to quickly reach a rider in need and keep the number of SAG vehicles reasonable.
- If your route is less linear and more concentrated, calculate for the number of SAG vehicles within a square area.

Keep a list of riders who rode SAG. Give the list with arrival times to the headquarters area, so you can locate lost riders.

### MEDICAL SUPPORT: ON-SITE OR ON-CALL

For larger events with several hundred riders or more, an on-site EMS is vital. For smaller events, the local EMS may be on-call from home as volunteers, so it is important to notify your local EMS well in advance of your event to have staff standing by.

Always have EMS and emergency phone numbers handy for all key volunteers and staff. Print emergency numbers on maps and cue sheets. Also, find out which of your staff and volunteers have medical experience, especially for longer rides. Cue sheets should always have the address and phone number of the nearest hospital.

Some multi-day trips require all leaders to have CPR and Advanced First Aid Certification, plus trainings such as Wilderness First Responder (WFR) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for some leaders. In addition, each leader should carry a basic first-aid kit, and the sweep

and support vehicles should be equipped with a full medical kit.

## BIKE MECHANIC SUPPORT

Unless your event consists only of bike shop mechanics, participants will expect on-site bike support. You will be amazed at the level of disrepair of some participants' bikes!

- You can often get a local shop to provide free support in exchange for a banner, logo, or promotion during your event. Some shops have a mobile support unit (van or truck) that can be set up at events and will bring everything necessary to do basic repairs.
- Place floor pumps in a separate area from the mechanics' area—many riders will be using their bike for the first time in months and will need air.
- Air is the number one support need at events. Fixing flats is the second most requested support requirement, followed by brake and derailleur adjustments.
- If you're putting on a multi-day ride, be sure to have a competent bike mechanic as part of key staff, as well as necessary tools and supplies with the SAG vehicle or trailer.
- If necessary, train volunteers in basic repair skills. This will increase your ability to deal with riders' breakdowns, and the training is a nice perk for volunteering.
- If you can get extra mechanics for the SAG vehicles, do so.

## LUGGAGE SUPPORT FOR MULTI-DAY RIDES

For multi-day rides, luggage is typically driven to the final destination of each day.

Have a policy on luggage that tells participants how much they can bring. One large bag or two small bags is standard. Consider using a numbered wristband and luggage tag system. When luggage is claimed, match the wristband number and luggage tag.

You should also include a policy regarding electronics, as some will bring tablets and laptops. Participants must package these electronics carefully, and should not expect staff to protect them against damage.

Make sure participants carry a day's worth of necessary items in a saddle, handlebar, or CamelBak bag. Included in this bag are basic tools, tubes and patch kits, rain gear, camera, cue sheet, snacks, etc.

Fence off the luggage area and provide staff to supervise pick-up. Keep large tarps handy in case of rain. Carefully supervise the luggage loading, so people stack their luggage high enough. Otherwise, you won't be able to fit it all into your luggage vehicle.

Remember that the portaging of luggage is a great sponsorship opportunity. For example, a delivery company, trucking company, or realtor with a moving truck can sponsor your luggage vehicle.

## Day-of-Event Logistics

A solid day-of-event plan is essential including the list of people staffing various aspects of the event. Staff should include a couple key people in charge of handling unanticipated needs or incidents. These volunteers should be able to make quick decisions and handle crisis management.

Have clarity about who is in charge of the overall day-of-event logistics and a second-in-command back-up person ready in case your primary day-of-event person becomes unavailable. Ideally, that person would have no other responsibilities (not the media coordinator, greeter, or other public role). Hopefully this person will be bored because the good planning you have done will help prevent many crises, but that is not likely to be the case – something always comes up.

Other duties and tasks required for the day-of-event (do as many the day before as possible):

- Double-check that you have everything on your checklist.

- Volunteers and staffers should be on site at least two hours before registration on the day of the event.
- Give your key staffers and volunteers a list of key roles, names, and cell phone numbers. Provide walkie-talkies to key teams, if possible. Be sure they know who to call for various forms of assistance.
- Move tables, chairs, tents, and bike racks to the event start and end areas.
- Set up banners, tables, racks, tents, etc.
- Distribute equipment and materials to all rest stops and SAG wagons.
- Some participants will likely begin showing up as early as one hour before the listed event check in time, so make sure the volunteers and staff who will be handling registration and packets are ready to go.
- Set up your public address system and make frequent announcements regarding ride departure times, safety information, sponsor plugs, thanking participants, and helping build excitement, etc.
- If you have a local service club, such as Kiwanis or Rotary, hosting your ride, be aware that your participants may be eating spaghetti multiple days in a row. You must manage this by either asking the cooks to alter the menu (being sensitive to their timeline and costs), or communicate this clearly to your participants.
- One option for multi-day rides is to find a local restaurant and make reservations as far in advance as possible. This reduces the amount of food that you need to take with you, and puts the burden of the cost of meals on the participants.
- Cyclists eat a lot of food, so you must convey this to whoever is coordinating food. A well-fed cyclist is a happy cyclist. Running out of fuel will leave a bad taste in a participant's mouth.
- For events that provide meals, be sure to have some food options that take into account a wide range of dietary preferences and needs. Vegetarian and vegan are the top two dietary requests. If you are leading a multi-day ride, be sure to ask on the registration form about any dietary restrictions, including diabetes, food allergies, or special needs.

## ACTIVITIES AND MEALS AFTER THE RIDE

As with all aspects of event planning, meals should be planned as far in advance as possible. Here are some tips for making sure your participants are adequately fed:

- Be sure to add the cost of meals into event fees. Food can account for a large portion of your expenses.
- If you're running a multi-day event, you can either bring meals along or have meals waiting when your participants arrive at each destination. For large numbers of riders, this can be very daunting because you will need a way to keep meals cold and to cook them.
- There are caterers who will host a day, or even travel with you on a longer trip and set up all of the meals and snacks. If you have multiple caterers, you should make sure the menus vary from day to day, and that you communicate riders' dietary needs and cyclists appetite expectations to each caterer.

- Contact and work closely with your state Health Department. They have rules that must be followed for food safety, such as hand washing stations, no off-site cooking, gloves for meal preparation, etc. Take food safety very seriously. One bad incident will cause years of problems.

## Safety

### BICYCLE SAFETY RULES & EDUCATION AND HELMET USE

Rides often include people who haven't ridden before, which is inherently more risky and requires a greater attention to safety. Clear bike safety guidelines posted at registration and included with pre-ride materials are essential. A safety patrol will also help keep people in line.

It is common practice for helmets to be required at fundraising rides because of liability issues and

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insurance requirements. Make sure to state clearly that the safety rules you communicate apply to everyone and that anyone who will not adhere to these basic rules can be removed from the fundraising ride. You should include language in your Waiver/Release forms that states that safe riding and helmet use during the event are mandatory. After all, everyone wants to have fun, and a trip to the hospital are not how participants want to spend their day.

## **RIDERS' MEETINGS**

Getting as many participants as possible together before the start of an event helps ensure everyone is reminded of safety considerations and updates. If possible, “preview” or review the route and features, road conditions, safety hazards, etc.. Provide extra cue sheets and maps and have volunteer cyclists or safety patrol leaders brief participants.

For multi-day rides, meetings should be held each evening ahead of the next day’s ride or at breakfast. Include starting and ending locations, food options, attractions along the route, construction or obstacles along the route, weather predictions, overnight accommodations information, etc.

## **Accommodations and Restaurants**

Even for single-day events, you should have some lodging and campground recommendations for

participants to stay the night before, the night after, or both. Work with your local tourism agency to identify hospitality partners and explore possible discounts. Develop a list you can share with registrations and on your website. Having a list and a short description of local restaurants is also super helpful for participants. Feel free to note and prioritize sponsors so participants can patronize businesses that support your fundraising ride.

One downside of multiday events is the significant additional logistics to deal with regarding lodging and meals. Here are some tips for making sure your participants can enjoy multiday events that include camping or hotels:

- Make plans as far in advance as possible. Campgrounds and lodging along bike paths are often reserved months or years in advance. Restaurants likely also have limited space. Be sure you don’t just show up and expect they can serve or host you easily (or at all!)
- You can often get group discounts at hotels and camping sites when you plan well in advance.
- Most riders don’t want to rough it when camping. Make sure there are adequate shower and restroom facilities. If there aren’t, note this clearly on the registration materials.

## Chapter 5: Promoting Your Event

### Who Are Your Target Groups?

Who will attend your fundraising ride? What skill levels are needed to participate? Who will your ride appeal to, and do you have enough people who will want to participate in your area to make it worthwhile? Here are some things to consider when determining your target group:

Determine if your ride is narrowly focused. For example, a 100-mile ride is not for many weekend cyclists. Is your target group large enough to make this event worthwhile?

The widest possible group includes everyone with a bicycle. A ride that offers multiple length options—from weekend warriors (5–15 miles), to moderate cyclists (25–35 miles), to hardcore cyclists (50 miles and up) can draw from a larger participant pool.

Structure your low mileage rides to have the least number of hills, the lightest traffic, the most straight-forward route, etc.

Although more experienced cyclists can handle varied terrain and more complex traffic patterns, try to keep the route simple enough that providing assistance to participants on longer rides is not hampered by large expanses of wilderness, difficult terrain, etc.

### Finding Lists of Prospective Participants

How do you reach potential participants who don't already know about your organization? You can obtain lists of local cyclists by trading mailing lists with bike shops, local cycling groups, and with groups like the League of American Bicyclists ([www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)) and Adventure Cycling Association ([www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org)).

Be sure to keep all registration information for next year so you can send a registration flyer to encourage participants to ride again. Collect an e-mail address on your registration form and e-mail participants the following year to notify them of the upcoming event. Encourage

your members and supporters to send an e-invite to friends by creating a template for them.

### Stand Out for What is Special

What are some of the ways your ride is special? What do you like and what is different? What sets it apart from all other the competing events? These can become key selling points for your event.

- What are the unique attributes and conditions of your ride that people will appreciate?
- Does your ride connect to and support other causes to help the community?
- Is your route thematic? Will riders visit quaint villages along a canal or river? Will participants get a taste of local wines and cheeses?
- What else makes your ride unique? Does it cross some cool bridges in your county? Does it traverse the steepest hills? Does it offer three lengths of rides for all levels of riders?

### Outreach to Attract Participants

#### ASSIGN A MEDIA AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

One of the jobs necessary for your event is the Media or Outreach Coordinator. This person is responsible for all communications with the media and should write or approve any press releases. How do you get the word out prior to your event? Where do questions from participants get funneled prior to the event? What about day-of-event communications?

Here are some tips:

- Advertise as a public service announcement on local radio stations.

- Ask local media for in-kind support in exchange for sponsor recognition at your event.
- Advertise in local club newsletters and ask them to post about your ride on their social media channels.
- Ask all local, regional, and state partners and media (websites, blogs, magazines, etc.) to help spread the word of your event.
- Provide information to your Chamber of Commerce and local, regional, and state tourism bureaus.
- Create banner ads to put on club websites and your website.
- Create a special e-mail address to handle all incoming requests and registrations for your event.
- Develop promotional materials and make them downloadable on your website for others to use.
- Create a web icon and request that your sponsors and partners place it on their site with a link to your site.
- Post information on sites that sell bikes and equipment as well as those that promote sporting events and tourism.
- Be sure to send press releases to all media outlets, including print, radio, and television. This serves two purposes: It alerts media that there will be lots of cyclists on the road, and it provides an excellent human interest story.
- Participate with an information table at events, festivals, and farmers markets before your ride.
- Encourage your supporters, staff, board members, and volunteers to add a tag line to their e-mail signatures that gives a quick one-sentence plug and link for your event.
- Have a contact standing by to handle last-minute calls from the media.

- Take advantage of opportunities to participate in local or regional radio and television shows.

There are also talk shows where you can bring one or more people involved with the event. Some are taped in advance, while others air live. Make sure your guests are comfortable with the format.

## **FLYERS, POSTERS**

A picture is worth a thousand words, and a good event poster can be worth a thousand participants. Here are some tips for getting your event flyers and posters seen:

- Flyers generally come in two sizes—8 ½ x 11" and 11 x 17". This makes printing them at a local copy center easy and affordable
- Post flyers everywhere: libraries, bike shops, sporting goods stores, grocery stores, community bulletin boards, and any public meeting space that allows it. Ask volunteers to check these often to make sure they are still posted and not covered over.
- Create flyers that have tear-off slips with the vital event info printed on them so people can take the contact information with them.
- Send your poster or flyer electronically to your media contacts and mailing lists, and make it available on your website's event and media pages.

You can often get a local artist or graphic designer to create event artwork pro-bono in exchange for recognition. Local art schools are a good place to find student artists, some of whom may need to do a community project. Some organizations decide to host poster/t-shirt design contests as a way to get a creative design and create some excitement around the event beforehand.

A good t-shirt or poster design can go a long way toward helping to promote your event. If you give t-shirts that are a good fit with a nice design, people will wear them all year, creating year-round promotion. And an attractive design by a local artist could earn your poster a spot framed on locals' walls. What better way to promote

your event than to have it branded in living rooms and t-shirts throughout the year?

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Advertising and organic marketing on social media is critical to getting the word out to your intended audience. These tips will help you take advantage of thousands of people who will market your ride for you if you engage properly.

- Identify the social media channel or channels that best fits your target audience. Before your first post, understand which channels you'll be using. It's better to engage with the audience on one channel well than to engage poorly on several channels.
- Develop images and slogans early on so that you can maintain a consistent and familiar presentation throughout the marketing period.
- Create a hashtag for your event so that people can reference it in their own posts. That same hashtag will be used on the day of the event by riders who will post their pictures to share their experience with their friends. #ourgreatbikeride #photooftheday #fit #happy
- Post steadily. Set a schedule. Use one of many tools that will schedule and driver social media posts for you.
- Consider advertising to amplify your message.

## **EARNED MEDIA, PRESS RELEASES, ETC.**

Press Releases are still a great way to get your event in the media. To attract and retain the media's attention, here are some tips:

- Limit your press release to one page.
- Include the who, what, when, why, and where.
- Make it interesting and unique. Consider telling a story of a participant-to-be or origin story for the founding of your event.

- Include contact, website, phone, and e-mail information.
- Draft the press release as if it is an article, as some outlets will simply cut and paste.
- Visuals are crucial, so be sure to include photos and/or graphics if you can.
- Follow up with your media contacts to make sure they received your press release.
- Send your press release to a variety of departments at the media outlet, including community events, sports, health, local news, etc.

## **Media at the Event**

Invite the media to attend your event. Let them know the best time to show up, such as the start time, the arrival of dignitaries, etc. Provide a fact sheet with key info about the ride and background information about your organization.

Having the media at your event won't attract any more participants on the day of the event, but it can help to cement your event in the community's mind as something to do next year. Media coverage can also fortify support for your organization, and create more satisfaction among your sponsors.

- Appoint a point-person for media on the day of the event. Make sure that all media questions are directed to this person.
- You can invite local dignitaries to speak at your event, too. This will often generate more interest with the media.
- Prepare for photo opportunities and sound bites. If you can get a local celebrity to participate, use it as another touch point with the media and inform them ahead of time.
- In the event of a serious problem, you should develop a standard message that can be delivered to the media.

- Be sure to have a single source for the media in emergencies. Also, be sure to advise staff to refer media inquiries to this designated contact, in the event of an emergency.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Many professional photography services will shoot your event for free because they can sell the pictures to the participants. They typically send a link to the digital images with a “watermark” so participants have the ability to preview and shop photos before buying them. You might be able to arrange a deal with the photographer to get a portion of photograph sales. Also, make sure to ask the photographer for the rights to use their photos in future promotion for the event. In addition, have at least one volunteer assigned to taking photos.

While nearly everyone’s cell phone is pretty advanced, it is still a good idea to have an extra digital camera or two handy and in the hands of your key supporters, volunteers, and staff. These can be used for promotional materials for next year’s event, and also to stroke the egos of volunteers and board members who would like a souvenir of all of their hard work. Some organizations take advantage of photo-sharing apps such as Google Photos or flickr.com to share photos with volunteers and participants.

## Looking Ahead

### SWAG

Many fundraising rides offer some sort of souvenir or give-away to all participants, or to those who register by the early deadline. Think of items that keep promoting your event for year. Many events produce t-shirts, jerseys, or sweatshirts with the event name, logo, slogan and key sponsors.

If the apparel is a good fit, a good color with an attractive design, you can count on participants putting it into their wardrobe rotation. The benefit for you: free year-round promotion! This can also be promoted as a sponsor benefit if you include sponsor logos on the item.

Other items that can help get your organization or event’s name out there are water bottles, bags, and

anything that is actually useful to participants. Besides helping to attract people to register early and making them feel like they are getting something for their money, you can also count this investment toward promotion for next year’s event.

## MAKING POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

Large public events are great opportunities to engage local elected officials in your organization. What politician can resist a big crowd? Many events request a letter from the mayor, governor, or appropriate area leaders welcoming participants to the event.

Send a VIP invitation to local elected officials and consider inviting key local officials to address the participants with a send-off speech to start the ride. Engaging local officials helps remind them of your cause and how many people in the community support it.

But do limit invitations to just a few leaders and ask them to keep speeches to a minute or two. Participants appreciate words of encouragement but will be anxious to get going and lose patience if there is too much talking at the start.

## COMMUNITY GOOD WILL, TOO!

Your fundraising ride is also a great time to get your organization’s name out to the community in a positive way. Think about how you might engage local community groups with your event. Here are a few ideas:

- Invite community groups to organize a rest stop and allow them to promote their cause in exchange for their volunteer time.
- Coordinate rest stops near local businesses that cyclists might be interested in. The local businesses will be pleased when the ride helps draw new customers into their store.
- Find a local teacher who is willing to engage his or her class in community service such as painting “Share the Road” and “Look out for Cyclists” signs you can post along your route. Make sure to acknowledge the class at the event and send them a nice thank you.

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- Can you find a sponsor to pay for helmets you can give away at your event to people in the community? Then you can promote the giveaway.

If you can think of ways to give back to the community with your fundraising ride and support other local community groups at the same time, you are sure to foster lasting good will. Make sure to thank all your partners in the community and recognize them at the event if possible.

You might also consider getting a sponsor to donate pizza for a volunteer appreciation night where you can give your volunteers and supporters a wrap-up of the event and thank those involved. This sort of appreciation goes a long way to ensuring your volunteers and community partners will return to help again for next year's event.

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## Chapter 6: After Your Event

### Post Ride Surveys

So your event is over. Congratulations! Now it's time to get some feedback from your participants, volunteers and staff so that you can make next year's ride even better. Here are some tips for getting those surveys filled out and back in a timely manner:

#### PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

- Post-event surveys for the riders should be short and take no more than five minutes to fill out.
- Announce on your public address system that you're collecting surveys as riders return.
- Include them in the goodie bag so they can be mailed later if participants do not want to fill them out on the spot. Be sure to include your mailing address.
- You can offer an extra prize (drawing) or goodie for each survey that is returned.

#### STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SURVEYS

Staff and volunteers will view the event from different perspectives than the riders. Their surveys should include questions about what they heard and learned from the riders, as well as questions about the logistics of the event. Get their input about what might be done differently to make things run more smoothly the next time, both for the riders and for themselves. Be sure to ask them, "Will you be willing to volunteer again next year?"

#### SURVEY RESULTS

Have your staff or a volunteer compile the survey results. Do this as soon as reasonably possible after the event. Most organizations compile the results in a simple spreadsheet or text document, with sections for tallied numerical rankings and selections of informative comments.

### REVIEW, ANALYSIS, AND ADJUSTMENT

Gather your key staffers and volunteers to review the survey results. It is important to remember that the review meeting should remain neutral. If there were problems with specific individuals during the event, the survey review meeting is not the place to air them or work them out. That should be done privately.

Use the meeting to gather suggestions for improvements for next year's event. Keep a list of suggestions in a file that can be revisited when you begin planning the next event. Compile the suggestions and prepare a short report for your board detailing the things that went smoothly, and those that did not.

Your survey results can be a gold mine of information as well as a source of potential new volunteers. If you come across any comments in which a participant has had a particularly unpleasant experience, see if there is a way to contact them. Acknowledging that there may have been a problem and listening to their comments will help to keep that participant from discouraging others from participating in the future. If you find comments from participants indicating that this was one of the best experiences they've had, ask them if they would like to help with the planning and execution of next year's event.

Finally, do make changes based on the suggestions you receive from your participants, staff, and volunteers. Each fundraising ride is unique. While the logistics outlined in this Guide may be transferable among different events, there is no way to incorporate all of the local variables, personalities, and unforeseen challenges that you will encounter during the planning, execution, and wrap-up of your event.

### Post-Event Report

After you have finished counting all your receipts, downloaded or developed your photos, and have a minute to breathe, write a post-event report. Even though you are

likely exhausted, it is vital to post a post-event report to your website as soon as possible. The purpose of the post-event report is to wrap up communications with your partners, volunteers, and participants and share the highlights and accomplishments from the ride.

The report brings closure to the cycle of the event for all involved. It can also be a chance to thank your sponsors again and to brag about how much money you raised, what a great turnout you had, or the fantastic weather and most memorable moments from the event.

This task can be as simple as a letter and a few photos posted to your webpage, an article in your organization's e-newsletter, or a special email sent to everyone involved with the event. Online photo galleries are also a great way to showcase the highlights of your event.

## **Paid No Shows and Goodie Bags**

Almost without exception, fundraising rides do not offer refunds to participants once the event has taken place. Some events explicitly state on the sign-up materials that participants will not receive a refund if they do not show up. Most rides give offer the option to cancel with a full refund more than one week from the event, and with partial refund with less than one week before.

After the event is over, you'll likely have a couple of boxes of participant packets or goodie bags left over. Keep the bags for a couple of weeks after the event so that these no-show participants can come in and claim their goodies if they please. Don't waste your time contacting each no-show and offering to get their goodies to them. If they really want the goodie bags, they'll get in touch with you.

Once a sufficient amount of time has gone by, you have several options regarding what to do with leftover goodie bags:

- Recycle any paper goods that are time-specific or time sensitive.
- Collect any goodies that are branded for your organization (such as water bottles, t-shirts, etc.) and set

them aside. You can use them for membership premiums in the future, or for next year's event, assuming they do not have year specific markings on them.

- Collect any food-type items such as energy bars or performance gels and offer them to your local cycling club. Chances are you'll rapidly get tired of eating energy bars and performance gels as meal substitutes in the office. This stuff doesn't stay fresh forever, so you might as well spread the good cheer to others.

## **Thank You**

Congratulations! You did it!!! Focus your exuberance into thanking everyone who made it possible. Send thank yous to your sponsors, key staffers, and volunteers. Be sure to include some of the better photos and testimonials. If you have compiled your survey results quickly enough, including insights or positive take-aways is ideal.

It is important to take the time to hand write personal thank you notes in addition to a printed letter or report. Personalize letters and, if possible, note how each person or organization made a difference. This will build loyalty and greatly improve the chances they will return to help next year. After all, their insights and experience will make them even more valuable to the continued success of the event. And of course, a quick email thank you right after the event is good to do, but handwritten notes will stand out and be remembered.

## **Scheduling Next Year**

After putting on your new fundraising ride for the first time, you will have insights and feedback on how to improve next year. Even though you may want to change a few things, go ahead and schedule next year's event (or at least give a tentative date(s)) before the date of your first event. You want to take full advantage of the good will and endorphins participants will feel after completing the ride, so have a sign up for next year available

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for participants. You may also want to give an incentive like a discount to encourage immediate registration.

For the second year, you can start earlier, plus many tasks won't take as long to do now that you have some experience. Questions to ask as you plan your second annual ride:

- How might you adjust your planning and implementation timelines?
- Were there sponsors who you now know need to be approached earlier (or later) in the calendar?
- How can you use participant information, testimonials and other key data to make the case to sponsors who didn't step up the first time?

You may decide you need to adjust the date, but chances are by one month before your event you'll have a pretty good sense if sticking with the same date next year will work or if you should look for a revised date. Giving your participants a one-year notice will allow them to plan for your event far in advance and it shows your sponsors, volunteers, and partners that you are committed to continuing this ride into the future.

## **Congratulations on Supporting Your Community**

With a little bit of hard work, your fundraising ride can become a cornerstone event in the community and region. Fundraising rides promote your community, raise money for good causes, and benefit the local economy. Rides also give cyclists the opportunity to enjoy everything your community has to offer.

We hope this guide inspired you to take on a fundraising ride! As much as we have attempted to address as many aspects of fundraising rides in this guide as possible, we know you are likely to have questions. Feel free to contact us if you have questions at [info@calbike.org](mailto:info@calbike.org).

What follows is a set of resources and checklists to help you have a successful event.