



## OVERVIEW

Community partnerships help cities to bridge gaps between bike share equity programs and the communities that they're seeking to serve. Partners play many roles: from guiding initial equity program development, to organizing community connections, and on through program delivery and assessment. Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and local advocacy groups may have the staff, programs, local presence, and deep understanding of specific communities that bike share programs often lack. Collaborations and partnerships require nurturing and investment, but provide unique opportunities for bike share systems to make meaningful connections with communities and residents.

## CURRENT APPROACHES

In our recent survey of cities and operators running bike share systems, 78% of bike share equity programs included at least one outside partner, and over half included more than one. CBOs and local advocacy groups are most common, but private companies, system sponsors, and foundations are also collaborators. Partners support all phases of programming, but most often take a lead in promotion, sign-up, and bike education.

**Community Outreach:** In the simplest case, a community partner can offer bike share sign ups (often at a discounted rate) at their own sites or via existing programming. For example, Divvy (Chicago) teamed up with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to offer discounted cash memberships in person at their Financial Opportunity Centers around the city. In other cases, community partners may serve as ambassadors for bike share, promoting and supporting community members to join and use the system. Capital Bikeshare (DC)'s Community Partners Program relied on a network of over 30 different partners to link their need-based clientele with discounted memberships. Others took it a step further with partners co-developing equity programs. MoGo Detroit offered competitive mini-grants to local organizations to develop innovative promotion and sign up ideas through their Mobility and Opportunity Task Force program. WE-Cycle (Basalt/Aspen, CO) worked with multiple CBOs to develop effective programming for local Latinx populations in creating Movimiento en Bici.

**Bike Education:** Typically led by local bicycle advocacy groups, these programs leverage existing bicycle education work to help those needing a little extra training to get comfortable trying out bike share. Programming may simply be group rides that incorporate promotional use of bike share, while others may include training on bicycling and how to use bike share. Relay Bike Share (Atlanta) organized a multi-partner training and promotion team for its Westside Atlanta Bike Champions program including local bicycle-focused advocacy and community groups Atlanta Bicycle Coalition; Red, Green, and Bike; WeCycle. Adaptive bike share is a specific area where specialized expertise may be essential. MoGo Detroit worked with Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC) to develop and implement their adaptive bike program.

## CONSIDERATIONS



**Plan for ongoing management and support.** Partnerships place additional management and other burdens on both the bike share program and the community partner. Agencies often cited challenges with adequately supporting their partners, especially where specific funding is absent or limited. Agencies might also have to broker coordination between community partners and the bike share operator.



**Don't spread yourself too thin.** Engaging a broad range of partners may seem great on paper, but adapting to multiple partner programming and working styles can be challenging.



**Understand how bike share fits your partner's core mission.** Is biking part of their core mission, or are they more about serving the specific community/population/neighborhood?



**Don't overlook the basics.** A significant barrier to bike share use in underserved communities is simply not knowing about the bike share system, who it's for, and how to use it. This gap is compounded by members of these communities also lacking friends and family that have used the system. Community-based groups can help to fill the information void in a way that acknowledges local context.



**Support your CBO partners with more than appreciation.** Show that you value the expertise and relationships that community partners are bringing to the table with a cash grant or stipend.

### *Promise and Pitfalls of Partnerships - Insight from the report:*

*When asked about notable equity accomplishments, many of the systems we surveyed mentioned building trust in communities through successful partnerships. The partnerships also raised awareness with partner organizations about the role biking can play in providing transportation to people who use their services. However, managing the process of engagement and community relationships has been a challenge for some systems. Some systems mentioned the importance of managing expectations with partners and building relationships with organizations that are aligned with the mission of bike share. Lack of long term funding and staff turnover, particularly among ambassadors, can make managing relationships more challenging.*

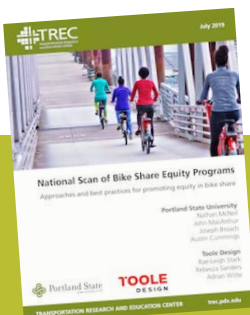
## RESOURCES

Here are some key resources to support the development of your community partnerships:

- [Strategies for Engaging Community](#) - NACTO (see pgs 44-45)
- [Bringing Equitable Bike Share to Bed-Stuy](#) - Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
- [Partnering with Community-Based Organizations for More Broad-Based Public Engagement](#) - Institute for Local Government (ILG)

## MEASURING AND EVALUATING

Coordination with partners doesn't stop at program delivery. Agencies also need to clarify who will measure and evaluate equity initiatives and their outcomes. Bike share may be new to partners, even if they're used to program evaluation. Beyond simply noting what and how to measure, partners should be informed why they are collecting each piece of data and how it will be used. For more on this topic, see our companion brief in this series: Data Collection and Metrics for bike share equity programs.



Adapted from the "National Scan of Bike Share Equity Programs" report, this is part of the "Breaking Barriers to Bike Share" resource series. Comprised of ten topics, this series looks at bike share through an equity lens and provides successful approaches and recommendations for stakeholders to implement.