



YOUNG SPOKESPERSON PROGRAM TOOLKIT



ABOUT US:

[NOLA Women on Bikes'](#) mission is to break down barriers to biking among women and transgender people of all backgrounds and ages in Greater New Orleans.

We create social cohesion and empower our members through peer-to-peer exchanges, skill sharing and bicycle-related education and fun social events. We also develop job training and mentorship opportunities for local girls, young women, and LGBTQ youth interested in bicycle industry-related careers.

In Spring 2014, we received a **League of American Bicyclists Women Bike Mini Grant** (\$1000) to hire one young person to be a paid intern at the regional bicycle advocacy organization Bike Easy for three months. The goal was to have the internship experience completed by June 2015. The following Toolkit explains how we put together this specific Young Spokesperson Mentorship, how other Women Bike Groups can replicate this in other cities, and lessons learned from the process!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE?



Currently, many youth in New Orleans face challenging prospects to secure employment. In New Orleans, 23% of youth aged 16-24 are neither working nor in school. This mentorship opportunity provides meaningful job experience to a promising young woman identified person and will help increase her skills and grow her network to work in transportation related fields. And, by specifically giving this opportunity to a young woman, it will also help to increase representation of women in the bicycle industry, where there is a significant gender gap, especially for women of color.

This mentorship is one small step towards reducing youth unemployment and creating a more equitable and representative bicycle community in Greater New Orleans.

HOW TO MAKE THE YOUNG SPOKESPERSON MENTORSHIP A REALITY:

I. Align Your Allies:

NOLA Women on Bikes is a diverse and growing group of women identified individuals working or engaged in active transportation. We decided to partner with two local successful organizations doing work in both the fields of youth employment and bicycle advocacy for this internship including **The Youth Empowerment Trafigura Work & Learn Center (YEP)** and **Bike Easy**. The missions of both of these organizations aligned well with our goal for the **NOLA Women on Bikes Young Spokesperson Mentorship Program**. **YEP** has previously partnered with us to place two young women in their program with bike related internships and already offer necessary bicycle job mechanic training classes as well as job preparation classes such as resume building and job interview training. With this built in capacity and with their staff recommendations, we were able to identify another successful young women candidate for the Bike Easy Spokesperson Mentorship. **Bike Easy** was in the process of growing their capacity to engage a young person in bicycle advocacy by setting up community programming and events that would reach wider audiences in New Orleans.

bikeeasy



2. UNITE PARTNER GOALS:

To ensure the best experience for the young person all program partners need to come together and identify:

- What are realistic goals and experiences that the internship can offer that will help with future employment for the Young Person?
- How can we encourage further interest in active transportation in New Orleans?
- How to create a positive work environment for a young person in a busy non-profit with small staff capacity?

As part of the **NOLA Women on Bikes Young Spokesperson Mentorship** grant we set these goals to achieve the mentorship by:

- Creating the internship work schedule directly with the Young Person
- Outlining the internship goals and deliverables of the Young Person ahead of the start date with all the organizations involved, and then review it with the Young Person as part of the interview process so everyone is on the same page!
- Asking for part of the grant funding to go towards covering transportation options (whether it be bus fair or a bike) that would enable the Young Person to get to the internship independently if they chose to do so on a weekly basis.
- Regularly checking in with YEP, who already had a close relationship with the Young Person, about how the internship was progressing.
- Always provide positive feedback to the Young Person each week for successful completion of tasks.

****A KEY TO SUCCESS**** Learn from your previous mistakes!! In advance of this internship, NOLA Women on Bikes previously worked with the YEP Trafigura Work & Learn Center on a few other internship opportunities and identified that many young people with YEP have to travel a far distance to get to the center of the city, and/or are dependent on relatives for transportation. Figuring out the young person's availability and offering a stipend for travel and/or access to a bike for transportation was a way to encourage the young person to plan ahead.

3. ASK WHAT THE YOUNG PERSON REALLY WANTS TO GET OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE?

- During the internship process finding the Young Person's passion and/or comfort zone in the work environment is just like working with any employee and is key to a good outcome. Matching the interest of the Young Person, understanding their comfort zone for public speaking, and their interest in exploring the city by bike was key to the success of this particular internship.
- Bike Easy was also able to offer a dedicated staff person who was more familiar with youth programming to be responsible for that one-on-one mentorship, which allowed for a more meaningful relationship to grow as well, which was awesome!



Damu, the 2015 NOLA Women on Bikes & Bike Easy Young Spokesperson

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES THAT WORKED FOR THIS YOUNG SPOKESPERSON:

PROGRAM 1 - Bike Easy's Bike Light Interventions (Spring 2015)

Activities:

- Utilized the University of New Orleans Annual Bicycle Count and determined locations for public outreach.
- At outreach events managed table and directly connected with local bike riders about bike safety education and distribution of bike lights to local commuters.

PROGRAM 2 - Bike Easy's Youth Bicycle Rodeos (Spring 2015)

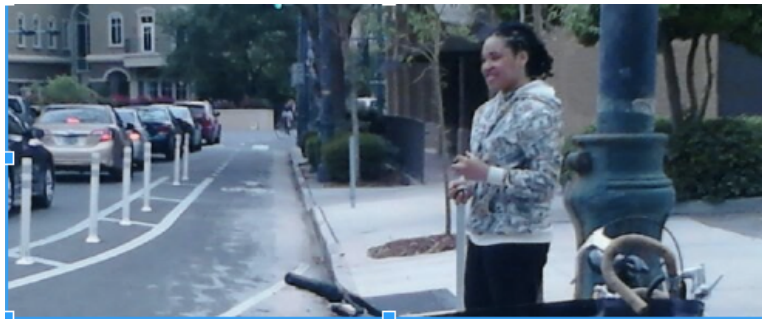
Activities:

- Set up and managed petition table and supervised youth mechanic stations at Youth Bicycle Rodeos throughout the spring including the first ever participation in the inaugural city-wide National Safe Routes to School Walk and Roll to School Day

PROGRAM 3 - Bike Easy's Youth Summer Bike Club (Spring into Summer 2015):

Activities:

- Help review and provide feedback for the first Youth Summer Bike Club at Bike Easy
- Help with outreach to youth participants prior to the beginning of the program
- Act as ride leader for the Youth Summer Bike Club rides



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE YOUNG SPOKESPERSON MENTORSHIP AT BIKE EASY:

1. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

- Develop written agreements with goals for each of the partners to keep them all on track and connected through assessment goals throughout the program duration.
- Revisit terms regularly & amend as needed to be adaptive to changing circumstances such as staff changes or program funding issues
- Together review potential Young Person applicants and create a good list being aware of challenges and opportunities that could arise

2. INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- Build in staff time for specialized & dedicated oversight for the Young Person
- Maintain adaptive work plans with Young Person so they can have input and give valuable feedback for their experience

3. YOUNG PERSON DEVELOPMENT

- Develop clear expectations of the Young Person and make clear channels of communication regarding scheduling, payroll process, and consequences of absences regarding the paid internship goals

-Make time each week with the Young Person for program updates and general performance (i.e. encouragement on good work done!)

NEXT STEPS FOR THE NOLA WOMEN ON BIKES YOUNG SPOKESPERSON MENTORSHIP PROGRAM:

1. Continue to create new partnerships with active transportation organizations and business in Greater New Orleans in 2015 into 2016
2. Fundraise on the local level to continue to cover internship stipends
3. Further engage with the Youth Empowerment Project's Trafigura Work and Learn Center youth by NOLA Women on Bikes members participating and engaging with their programming and events!



Any questions or for more information contact us at nolawomenonbikes@gmail.com or www.nolawomenobikes.wix/website