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It's Time to Support These Cycling Orgs Pushing for More Racial Diversity

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BROADEN REPRESENTATION ON THE BIKE.

BY [THE BICYCLING EDITORS](#) Jun 25, 2020



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other ethnic group to say they are fanatics about outdoor recreation. Rather, it's partly due to a historic, glaring absence of representation.

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Bike Industry: It's Time to Commit to Diversity

“[Generally, the bike industry] defaults to this lens of a white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied man with class privilege,” says Kara Fallon, shop manager of [Bikes Together](#) in Denver, CO. But that doesn’t paint an accurate picture of who cyclists really are, and “it doesn’t allow us to build safer or inclusive spaces for those who don’t share that perspective. To be inclusive, we need an intersectional approach.”

Which is why the sport as a whole is evolving. “Diversity of thought is helping to propel cycling forward in a myriad of ways; there’s a conscious effort toward dispelling old images while welcoming new and diverse perspectives,” says Kecia McCullough, a licensed master of social work and leader of the [Black Girls Do Bike](#) chapter in Rochester, NY. “[We’re] moving away from the outdated line of thinking toward a more modern [image] of what a cyclist [actually] is and looks like.”

To do that, Fallon says it’s crucial we take a step back, create intentional spaces, listen, amplify BIPOC and trans voices, and support BIPOC and trans people in positions of leadership. As a start, here is a sample of some organizations working to encourage more racial diversity in bicycling, along with ways you can get involved to support them.

National Organizations

[All Mountain Brothers](#)

Mission: Encourage people of color through mountain biking and exploring the world.

[Black Girls Do Bike](#)

Mission: Grow and support a community of women who share a passion for cycling

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Mission: Promote healthy lifestyles for cyclists of all ages, advocate for bicycle safety on behalf of inner city youth, educate members about bike maintenance, rules of the road, and the legendary Black cyclist [Marshall “Major” Taylor](#).

[Melanin Base Camp](#)

Mission: Increase the visibility of outdoorsy BIPOC in the media, advertising, and in the stories we tell ourselves about the outdoors.

[Pedal 2 the People](#)

Mission: Collective of BIPOC moving their lives forward, two wheels at a time.

[WTF Bikexplorers](#)

Mission: Create a movement toward more connection, gender inclusivity, and racial equality within the bicycle adventure community; support, celebrate, and connect women/trans/non-binary cyclists who use their bicycles to explore.

Local Organizations

[Metro Atlanta Cycling Club](#)

Location: Atlanta, GA

Mission: Promote cycling in the Black community and build camaraderie among all cyclists.

[Blackstone Bicycle Works](#)

Location: Chicago, IL

Mission: Provide educational and vocational opportunities to youth from some of Chicago's most underserved neighborhoods.

[Team Veloz](#)

Location: Chicago, IL

Mission: Create a space for riders typically excluded from cycling, with an emphasis on young Latinx and POC riders.

[West Town Bikes](#)

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Mission: To share educational and practical information on how to be healthy mentally and physically with people who normally lack the resources to do so.

[Ghisallo Cycling Initiative](#)

Location: Austin, TX and San Antonio, TX

Mission: Develop youth who safely and expertly integrate bicycling into their daily lives; teach participants self-sufficient cycling skills; facilitate the experience needed for youth cyclists to be peer leaders.

[Slow Roll](#)

Location: Detroit, MI

Mission: A weekly bike ride dedicated to continually contributing to the growth of bicycle culture.

[Alterra Home Loans Cycling Team](#)

Location: El Paso, TX; Los Angeles, CA

Mission: Build stronger, healthier communities for the future through the sport of bicycling; expand the capabilities of youth from communities where exposure and access to this sport and lifestyle are limited.

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[Bahati Foundation](#)

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Mission: Support inner-city youth in underserved communities through inspirational speaking engagements and cycling outreach.

[Legion of Los Angeles](#)

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Mission: Elite cycling team dedicated to increasing diversity, encouraging inclusion, and giving supporters access to their favorite athletes.

[Neighborhood Bike Works](#)

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Mission: Inspire youth and strengthen Philadelphia communities by providing equitable access to bicycling and bike repair through education, recreation, leadership and career-building opportunities.

[Pedal Posse Divas](#)

Location: Philadelphia, PA

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[Star Track Cycling](#)

Location: Queens, NY

Mission: Improve the lives of children aged 8 to 14 from underserved communities, teaching teamwork through the principles of bicycle racing and enhancing physical and social development through relationships with teammates and coaches.

[Two Seconds Ahead](#)

Location: New York, New York

Mission: A new cyclocross movement that puts representation and community first.

[Gearin' Up Bicycles](#)

Location: Washington, DC

Mission: Create career development opportunities and teach essential workplace skills to youth from underserved communities while encouraging cycling as a practical, healthy means of transportation.

How to Show Meaningful Support

While many have spent the last few weeks following organizations' social media accounts and reposting messages to help broaden outreach and impact, it's important to continue the work offline. Here are a variety of ways to invoke change in the bicycling community.

Understand why these organizations exist in the first place.

Plain and simple, oftentimes the mainstream repeatedly fails to recognize these organizations' request for attention and support, says Courtney Williams, bicycle advocacy consultant and founder of [The Brown Bike Girl](#). "Any problem a white cyclist has, it's probably more intense in a Black and Brown community. There aren't different issues, it's just a failure to examine the issues for a different set of people."

So the first step is to educate yourself. "There's a lot of learning, unlearning, and relearning for all of us to do," Fallon says. Resources they recommend starting with:

- [Bicycle/Race: Transportation, Culture, & Resistance](#) by Adonia E. Lugo, Ph.D.
- [Bikequity: Money, Class, & Bicycling](#) by Elly Blue
- [Bike Lanes Are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning](#) by Melody L. Hoffmann

Assess your own racial awareness, too. "It's important to broaden your personal interactions with diverse groups

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If you're financially able, now's the time to make monetary donations. "Your dollar speaks louder than words," says Danielle Williams, founder of [Melanin Base Camp](#) and the [Diversify Outdoors Coalition](#). "It's a way of acknowledging the leadership of advocates who are already out there doing the work."

Rather than a one-time donation, consider setting up a recurring monthly contribution to ensure that work continues long after the headlines on protests get replaced by the next news cycle.

And before you leap to create an organization of your own, make sure a similar one doesn't already exist. If you don't, it could erase the work of someone who's already established—and oftentimes, that's Black and Brown leadership, Danielle Williams says. Find out who's already operating in the space and research how you can uplift them instead.

Volunteer your skills.

If you aren't financially able to donate, you may be able to lend a helping hand. There might be a need for website developers, graphic designers, event organizers, administrators who can track down event insurance or handle paperwork, event marketers (whether that's sharing on social media or distributing posters and flyers to local bike shops), or even volunteers to help with check-in, answer questions from participants, serve as ride guides, or bike mechanics.

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10 Ways the Bike Industry Can Promote Diversity

Whatever your skill, Danielle Williams suggests reaching out to the organization first to get a grasp of their needs. "I'm a big fan of sending a very brief email of, 'Here are some skills I have, is there any way I can help?'" Then, be OK with whatever answer you get. "This may not be the opportunity for you to lead, but have a supporting role behind the scenes," she adds. "Don't underestimate that right now."

Donate materials.

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While promoting a Black Lives Matter solidarity social media post tells an audience where you stand, many are calling for predominantly white companies to release action plans detailing how they plan to implement change going forward. One place to start informing that plan: strategic anti-bias and anti-privilege training, such as The Brown Bike Girl's [Outside Advocate](#) seminar. The cultural competency seminar helps cycling advocates identify racial privilege and bias at work, assess how their organization's outreach strategies have been helpful or harmful to communities of color, and provides an informed foundation on how to begin to rework them, Courtney Williams says.

This training also helps organizations see how they may not be living up to inclusive mission statements and can ultimately be a catalyst for change. "Without changing sensibilities and values, and doing the work to identify the way [in] which 'normal' has been deceiving or exclusionary, any return to 'normal' is going to perpetuate the same thing," Courtney Williams explains. "We have to come up with new, [informed] game plans and change cultural attitudes in our organizations."

Push companies to change internally.

Another important action item: ensuring teams and boards have equal representation. "Over [40 percent of Americans](#) identify as people of color, but a lot of outdoor organizations don't represent that at all," Danielle Williams says. "So there's a disconnect that will always be there until you change things internally."

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15 Inspiring Black Cyclists You Should Know About

An ideal way to start that process is by signing pledges aimed at advancing diversity. Two examples: the [Cycling Industry Pledge](#), which "holds companies accountable to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cycling community," and [The Outdoor CEO Diversity Pledge](#), which "connects leading outdoor brands with inclusion advocates to advance representation for people of color across the industry."

And take heart knowing that nobody expects you to snap your fingers and—*poof!*—have everything right-sized. "I think you can still be an all-white or mostly-white organization and say, 'We're not where we want to be, but we're

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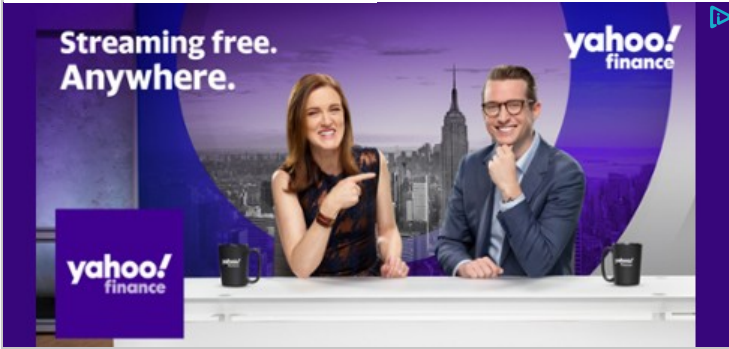
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What It's Like to Be Black For a Day

Ask Yourself, Who Gets Left Behind in Cycling?

Nelson Vails: Black Lives Matter Opened My Eyes

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