

# 2019 CYCLING EVENTS TEAM MEMBER MANUAL



**THE ABILITY  
EXPERIENCE**

A PI KAPPA PHI PHILANTHROPY

Dear 2019 Cycling Event Team Members,

Congratulations on being selected as a summer cycling event team member for The Ability Experience. We are incredibly excited to have you on board this summer. Through your efforts, you will be impacting the lives of people with disabilities across the nation. Are you ready to start something incredible?

The Cycling Events Team Member Manual is your complete guide to getting answers to lingering questions you may have, or ones you did not know you had. Specifics about pre-event requirements, fundraising, cyclist training, packing list, and event logistics can all be found in this manual. Reading these materials, meeting the required deadlines, and training for cyclists are key components to be a stellar team member at the start of the trip.

This summer, you will continue to grow and build upon the work done by the over 2,300 Pi Alphas before you. Each one has been in your shoes and has championed everything put in front of them. However, heroes can't save the day without being prepared. By reading this guide and completing your pre-trip requirements, we are confident that you will be able to hit and surpass your goals. Nothing is impossible when you put the work behind it. While fundraising, training, and pre-trip planning may seem overwhelming, it is nothing to be afraid of. You have what it takes, and we know it!

Putting the preparation pieces into place is key to having a life-changing summer. What you put into this experience affects what you get out of it. Above all, have fun and make the most of this experience. Over the summer, take in the rides, Friendship Visits, and the moments with your brothers. They will be some of the ones you carry for the rest of your life. These experiences will change and shape you more than you think. Keep the ultimate goal in mind and please let us know how we can help along the way!

Sincerely,

The Ability Experience Team

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## MISSION AND IMPACT

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### The Mission

“We use shared experiences to support people with disabilities and develop the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders.”

At the core of what we do is our mission. It is important to recognize that we have a two-part mission; to serve people with disabilities and develop the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders. It is important that you understand our mission. It is the core of what we do and behind every decision we make.

There are three important parts of the mission; shared experiences, people with disabilities, and the men of Pi Kappa Phi. Each piece is critical to what we do. Shared experiences between people with disabilities and the men of Pi Kappa Phi have been the fuel of our outreach efforts for over 40 years.

Within the realm of team events, there are several key components that ensure we can achieve our mission. Each of these components is required to ensure that these events can be successful and ensure that we can enhance the lives of people with disabilities while also developing men of Pi Kappa Phi into true servant leaders.



### Mission in Action: Key Components of Team Events

#### *Serving People with Disabilities*

**Friendship Visits** are where the shared experience takes place. Throughout the course of your event, you will visit partner organizations and have an opportunity to spend quality time with hundreds of people with which they serve. For most men who complete Gear Up Florida and Journey of Hope, this is where their ‘mission moment’ happens. It’s where they have an interaction with someone who teaches them more about life than they’d ever think they’d get from someone else. For people with disabilities, the number of people with whom they interact with outside of family and caregivers can be a fraction of what you will likely get to interact with over the course of their life. For you, one stop throughout the trip may feel like a small thing, but many we visit wait all year for ‘our guys’ to come to see them. To us, it can be something we take for granted but for you to come and interact with them, share a dance, a game, a conversation, even just to sit with them, shows them that we see them for who they are, not just their disability. While the impact of this is hard to quantify, you’ll surely understand the good that comes from this once you’ve had these experiences.

**Advocacy** comes in many forms throughout the course of a team event and the positive effects of the message we spread reach far beyond our time in any one town. As ambassadors, you’re expected to learn about people with disabilities, their abilities, and what we can do, as an organization and as a society, to support them. Each year the unique nature of our team events garners the attention of local media outlets across the country, giving us a platform to speak not only on our broader mission, but

also about our partner organizations in those towns. In this way, we educate the public about the abilities and needs of the disability community while also serving as free advertising for our partners.

**Grants** awarded to our partner organizations are one of the most measurable ways to see our mission in action. Throughout the course of each trip, teams will provide pre-determined grants selected by a committee of Pi Alpha alumni in addition to a few other grants that are selected by the team itself. While there is a set amount of money budgeted for grants, teams who fundraise beyond their minimums may be able to increase the number of grants they give out over the course of their trip.

### ***Building Servant Leaders***

**Challenge and achievement** are a central component of all team events. Whether its cycling through the country's toughest terrain or leading others and managing logistics as crew members, pushing yourself and testing your limits is a key component of each program. No day on the road is easy, not all accommodations are comfortable, risk is ever-present. The challenges presented throughout the course of any team event are part of what makes it a transformative experience.

**Ultimate Servant Leadership, Now and In the Future** - By taking part in a summer of service with a brotherhood of men dedicated to that same goal, you walk away with a greater sense of your role in the world as a servant leader. Our alumni regularly share how their experience gave them both the motivation and tangible skills to impact the world long after their trip.

**Safe and positive experiences** are key to ensure that all other components of the mission can be successful. None of the other components of this mission can take place without delivering a program that is positive, consistent and mitigates risks as much as possible. While cycling has inherent risks, The Ability Experience has dedicated a great deal of time and resources to integrate best practices into everything that we do. By building in structure, support and oversight, these programs allow you to focus on your individual role in the experience and grow in ways that are unique to you while allowing our partners to rely on us to bring benefit to them with promises kept.

As we discuss where the money goes, it's important to think of a budget as a statement of priorities, while also understanding that not all priorities carry the same direct costs. In order for programs to achieve their missions, all the components that we mentioned must be there; one can't happen without the others. That being said, not all these components bear the same expenses.

For example:

Administrative, Logistics, Stipends and Housing - This may just seem like 'overhead' on the surface. In actuality, these all factor in to providing an event that reduces risk and provides a positive experience for participants while also ensuring that we can be a reliable, impactful partner for other organizations by being consistent in what we do from year to year. Staff work year-round planning the logistics, confirming best routes, securing volunteers, training participants and ensuring you hit all expectations in order to be effective team members. Crew receive stipends as they are performing essential tasks that aren't required of other participants.

Meals, Lodging and Vehicles - These expenses may seem high to those who've never managed a budget for an organization or event such as this, but in reality, these costs have been minimized a great deal when taking into consideration the number of participants and the number of days covered. For example, the meal cost for Journey of Hope breaks down to less than \$1 per meal. Different expenses have different revenue sources - It's also important to understand when reviewing this budget that the revenue is used to cover different expenses. Most of the costs from receptions are covered through registration and tickets to the banquet. Corporate sponsorships and in-kind donations offset the costs of vehicles, meals and lodging. An endowment helps to cover the cost of safety and training.

	<b>Gear Up Florida</b>	<b>Journey of Hope</b>	<b>Build America</b>
Event Fundraising	\$ 87,550	\$ 656,250	\$ 61,000
Registration Fees	\$ 4,500	\$ 14,850	\$ 2,000
Sales	\$ 1,900	\$ 12,500	\$ 1,500
In-Kind Donations	\$ 19,200	\$ 245,500	\$ 49,000
Endowment	\$ 5,000	\$ 40,000	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 118,150</b>	<b>\$ 969,100</b>	<b>\$ 113,500</b>
Administrative	\$ 38,721	\$ 114,019	\$ 32,230
Logistics	\$ 31,925	\$ 98,298	\$ 19,844
Crew Stipends, Interns and Housing	\$ 1,000	\$ 70,800	\$ 5,900
Event Supplies	\$ 16,979	\$ 75,333	\$ 4,884
Lodging	\$ 7,585	\$ 29,600	\$ 1,400
Meals	\$ 3,940	\$ 34,255	\$ 2,580
Vehicles	\$ 13,178	\$ 115,850	\$ 13,670
Safety and Training	\$ 9,371	\$ 39,801	\$ 2,444
Advocacy, PR, Promotions	\$ 1,840	\$ 27,485	\$ 4,762
Arrival Receptions, AV, Awards	\$ 6,365	\$ 41,365	\$ 2,155
In-Kind Expenses	\$ 19,200	\$ 245,500	\$ 40,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 150,104</b>	<b>\$ 892,306</b>	<b>\$ 129,869</b>
<b>Grants Distributed</b>	<b>\$ 4,500</b>	<b>\$ 45,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>

In summary:

- All key components of the Mission are represented in the budget, though some of these components' bare greater costs than others.
- Compared to other cross-country events of this size and scope, The Ability Experience has sought to ensure that we provide a consistent experience that minimizes risk to participants while maximizing funds to support the programs and our partners.
- There are a variety of revenue sources outside of your fundraising that help cover the costs of the program.
- With additional fundraising done by the team, there are opportunities to increase the number and value of grants distributed throughout the summer.

When communicating where the money goes to supporters, it's important to not miscommunicate by saying things like "all the money goes to people with disabilities." A more accurate representation would be to say that "funds raised support the mission of impacting people with disabilities and building servant leaders through this program, with a portion of what is raised going directly to our partner organizations through grants."

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS, DEADLINES, AND DATES

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### Requirements Overview

Preparing for Gear Up Florida and Journey of Hope is a commitment. There are many requirements both cyclists and crew members must complete prior to the event taking place. The Ability Experience has outlined the minimum participant requirements for both cyclists and crew members in this section. Cyclists, you will also have additional training requirements that are laid out in the Safety, Training and Bicycle Care section. You will only get out of this experience what you put into it. Failure to meet the outlined deadlines and requirements will jeopardize your spot on a team and may result in being removed from the team.

Monthly	Schedule monthly call with Regional Director
Monthly	Cyclists train and record verified training miles on Training Peaks
Monthly	Hit fundraising benchmarks and deadlines
Monthly	Watch Benefitness Partners webinar and complete corresponding quizzes by the 20 <sup>th</sup> of each month
11/30/2018	Sign up for Benefitness Partners Training Program (password: abex2018)
Dec 2018	Watch Mission-focused webinar and complete corresponding quiz by 12/20/18
12/31/2018	Sign The Ability Experience Liability Waiver
12/31/2018	Get a bike
1/31/2019	Pass the LAB Traffic Skills 101 Test with >80% <i>(send pic verifying score to Regional Director)</i>
2/28/2019	Pass the Safety Management Plan Test with >80%
2/28/2019	Submit medial history form and copy of health insurance
2/28/2019	Pay security deposit
March	Attend a Regional Team Training
4/30/2019	Complete drug test (Gear Up Florida)
4/30/2019	GUF CREW ONLY: Complete in-person American Red Cross CPR Certification
4/30/2019	Gear Up Florida minimum fundraising commitment due <i>(Cyclists: \$3,000; Crew: \$1,000)</i>
5/20/2019	Complete drug test (Journey of Hope)
5/20/2019	JOH CREW ONLY: Complete in-person American Red Cross CPR Certification
5/31/2019	Journey of Hope minimum fundraising commitment due <i>(Cyclists: \$6,000; Crew: \$3,000)</i>

*\*For any team member that is accepted after a deadline listed above, you will work with your Regional Director to set up alternative deadlines to complete all items.*

## Communication Platforms

From the time you are added to the team all the way to when you board the plane for Orientation, The Ability Experience staff and Benefitness Partners will be with you every step along the way. Between your monthly phone calls with your Regional Director, Newsletters, Webinars, Classy, and the Participant Center, there are a lot of resources and communication platforms you will use. Take some time to review what each communication platform is and how to utilize it.

**Classy** - Classy is the fundraising platform The Ability Experience uses for all online fundraising. Classy has made peer-to-peer fundraising simple. You have the ability to personalize your fundraising page, send a short URL link to potential donors, and are able to see live updates as donations come in. You will want to take some time to personalize your Classy page so that when potential donors visit it, they are able to see why you are participating in such an event. Not only will you want to show who you are and why you are doing this but explain the impact their donation will have.

**Participant Center** - The Participant Center will be your one stop shop for all things pertaining to your summer event. Be sure to bookmark this in your web browser so you are able to check it regularly. In the Participant Center, you will find headlines with important dates you will need to know as well as links to each month's newsletter, webinar, and monthly quizzes. You will also find the requirements section which will have dates and deadlines for when different items need to be submitted. Also located in the Participant Center is the resource library, which covers many areas of topics such as fundraising plan template, sample fundraising letter, bike buying guide, packing list, and links to helpful cycling videos. We recommend that you take the time to review the Participant Center and familiarize yourself with everything on it.

**Monthly Newsletter** - At the beginning of each month you will receive the newsletter in your email. It is important that you read through the newsletter for it will be filled with helpful tips. You will also see upcoming deadlines, webinar topics, and various mission moments from Pi Alphas and how doing a summer event impacted them.

**Monthly Call** - Each month you will schedule a call with your Regional Director to review your progress and support you in your preparations. You will go over your fundraising and training progress, be able to ask any questions you may have, and go over the previous month's quiz. It is crucial that you come prepared to these phone calls with topics to talk about. Your Regional Director is a great resource for you to use and will be able to share ideas that other team members have used to be successful. Take full advantage of this resource to exceed your goals.

**Benefitness Webinars** - Each month cycling coaches Corey and Alan will host two live webinars. These webinars will go over topics such as training, workouts, diets, bike maintenance, cycling safety, and situational awareness. Following each month's webinar, you are required to take the quiz on the material, which is due by the 20th of the month. Webinars are there for you to have the chance to ask coaches Corey and Alan any questions you may have in regard to anything cycling related.

**Facebook Page** - When you received your acceptance email you were instructed to join the Facebook page. The purpose of the Facebook page is for you to get to know other team members and to help each other along the way. You are able to bounce fundraising ideas off each other, share any wins/accomplishments you have made, pictures from training rides and more. Coaches Corey and Alan will be posting updates for training and helpful videos on the page as well, so be sure to check Facebook regularly. The Ability Experience staff will also post reminders of upcoming deadlines and any information that you need to know.

## Who to Contact

Below you will find your points of contact to aid you in the preparation of your summer event. You are encouraged to utilize this manual for any preliminary questions you may have, however, if you need further assistance or clarification please contact the noted individual.

Category	Element	Contact Point
Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules &amp; Support</li> <li>• Classy Page</li> <li>• Emails, letters, events and social media</li> <li>• Corporate Sponsorship</li> <li>• Tax deductibility and gift matching</li> </ul>	Regional Director
Crew Member Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Requirements</li> <li>• Training, orientation, and logistics</li> <li>• Position descriptions &amp; internship details</li> </ul>	Regional Director
Cyclist Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Training Requirements</li> <li>• Bike: purchasing, maintenance, gear, and safety</li> <li>• Training Peaks/Benefitness Partners</li> <li>• Nutrition (training &amp; during summer)</li> <li>• Cycling webinar quizzes</li> </ul>	Cycling Coaches
Team Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical deadlines</li> <li>• Apparel, packing, and bike transportation</li> <li>• Alcohol, drug and tobacco policies</li> <li>• Drug testing</li> <li>• Itineraries &amp; day-to-day logistics</li> <li>• Friendship Visits, lodging, and meals</li> <li>• Spending money</li> <li>• Maildrops</li> <li>• Arrival</li> </ul>	Regional Director
Family/Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family/Parent opportunities</li> <li>• Family Weekend details</li> <li>• Kickoff and Arrival details</li> </ul>	Chelsea Ball

# FUNDRAISING GUIDE

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## Introduction

Fundraising for your event is a big commitment! It will likely take quite a bit of time and effort in order to reach your goal. We are here to teach you the best practices and help you use your time as effectively as possible. The most important thing is to get started as soon as possible. The first time asking for a donation will be hardest, but it gets easier. Do your best to set yourself up for success by avoiding procrastination, staying consistent and being open to learning along the way. This is where one of the best lessons from this experience begins - to hit your goals, you must put in the work and be a man of action. This may seem like a daunting challenge now, but by the end of this experience, you should have the confidence to go after even loftier goals.

There is a lot of information in this section. We kind of throw the kitchen sink at you so that you can come up with a plan that will work for *you*. There's no single right way to fundraise. The key to being a good fundraiser is figuring out where your strengths are and focusing on those areas. Take the time to read through this thoroughly and then come back to write out your plan. Starting out fundraising and seeing your page at \$0 can be stressful and overwhelming. Believe us, if you consistently put in the time and effort and take advantage of all of the resources provided, you'll reach your goal.

Let's start with the basics of what you'll be doing. Peer-to-peer (P2P) or social fundraising is a type of crowdsourcing that enables participants or supporters to fundraise on behalf of an organization or cause. The key to its success is its ability to expand the network and reach of a campaign through teams, fundraisers, and supporters who all have the ability to share their stories and support. This makes it extremely effective and easy to do!

Fundraising is a skill just like anything else. It will be uncomfortable and difficult at first, but the more you do it, the easier it is and the more effective you become. We've put all these resources together for you so that you can get started on the right foot and become a great fundraiser in no time. It just takes a little practice. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- **Ask everyone you know!** It seems obvious, but so many fundraisers get stuck because they simply stop asking. The number of people you can share your message with is the biggest determinant of success. Get creative to expand your network; this is a great opportunity to build your personal and professional network for the future.
- **You're going to be nervous.** That's okay and very normal. You already got past the hard part, which is signing up. Sometimes it feels that fundraising is like begging. Fundraising is no different than sales or employing skills that you will need to use in the business world.
- **You are selling the opportunity for someone to make an impact through you.** You are helping someone connect to the community through your work. You should be proud of what you're doing and willing to share it with the world. The only way to fight off this feeling of guilt is to put yourself out there and ask. Remember, the worst thing anyone can say is, "no."
- **Make your solicitations as personal as possible.** Donors aren't just supporting our mission, they are also supporting you, so make them feel appreciated. Talk to your biggest supporters first to set the tone for when you start sharing with your broader network.
- **Be persistent.** Often times, it takes 3 or 4 asks before someone makes a donation. Following up shows your commitment and creates a sense of urgency. Think how many times you've planned on doing something and put it off, work on *your close* in order to turn those commitments into actual donations.
- **Get feedback!** Have a friend look over your fundraising letter and page to make sure it answers all the important questions and avoids grammar and spelling mistakes.

- **Use your Regional Director for help!** Whether you want an extra set of eyes on your fundraising letter or need more ideas to reach your goal, your Regional Director is here to help you achieve your goals. Ask questions and share your success and struggles so that they can get to know you and help you succeed. Good communication is key.

## Fundraising Rules

There are a few policies and rules to follow when it comes to fundraising. Failure to follow any of these fundraising rules may result in dismissal from the team.

### The Basics

1. Registration fees are non-refundable, non-transferable, and not tax deductible.
2. Donations made on your behalf are donations made to The Ability Experience. If you withdraw or are dismissed from the team, these donations will not be refunded.
3. Donations made on a team member's behalf may not be transferred to another team member.
4. The Ability Experience does not reimburse team members for personal expenses.
5. Team members who fail to raise the minimum requirement will not be eligible to participate in The Ability Experience's team events or become a Pi Alpha.

### Chapter Fundraising Support

1. Chapter fundraising efforts cannot benefit a team member's total. Even if your chapter wants to help you out, chapter fundraising should be submitted on behalf of the chapter, not your individual fundraising effort. This is unfair to the chapter, the rest of the team, and all Pi Alphas who have reached their fundraising goals on their own. No free rides.
2. Established chapter fundraisers may not be diverted to fund your individual team event fundraising minimum.
3. Team members may not organize fundraisers using chapter manpower. No more than 10% of your chapter or a maximum of five (5) chapter brothers may help you in the planning or execution of an event. If more than five chapter brothers are participating in team events, all team members may work together on an event or fundraiser.

### In-Kind Contributions

1. In-kind contributions (cycling equipment, tools, clothing, travel, etc.) do not count towards a team member's fundraising total.
2. In-kind contributions made to a team member are generally not tax-deductible.
3. Donations made to The Ability Experience on your behalf **cannot** be used to help reduce transportation, equipment, or other personal costs.
4. You cannot ask for funds to benefit The Ability Experience and funds to buy a bike or cover other personal expenses in the same solicitation. This is to avoid confusion. Be clear.

Please keep in mind *why* you are fundraising - to impact the lives of people with disabilities. If you do ask for help paying for your bike, equipment, or other items, keep that campaign private and only ask individuals who would be willing to help you in addition to supporting the event. Remember that the more money you raise for our mission, the greater impact Pi Kappa Phi and The Ability Experience will have on those we are reaching out to across the country.

## Fundraising Commitment

Each team member has committed to raising a certain amount for your respective event. We are committed to working with you to make sure you have the tools you need to succeed. As we discussed during your interview and onboarding call, you need to be in good communication with our staff.

	GEAR UP FLORIDA	JOURNEY OF HOPE
CREW	\$1,000	\$3,000
CYCLIST	\$3,000	\$6,000

We have put together fundraising benchmarks and deadlines for each event. **Fundraising deadlines** are required checkpoints along the way to ensure you're making fundraising progress. *Benchmarks*, between the deadlines, are there to help keep you on track. Hitting these marks each month with help you stay on pace to hit your minimum with no trouble.

### If you miss a deadline, you should expect the following:

1. An email from your regional director notifying you of missing a deadline and requiring you to set up a call as soon as possible
2. Create and submit a detailed fundraising plan to get you back on track
3. A mutually agreed upon schedule with fundraising targets required to stay on roster
4. Your status on the team will be re-evaluated and you will likely be moved to a roster waitlist
5. The Ability Experience reserves the right to dismiss team members from the event

***If you miss the final deadline, you must sign and submit a credit card commitment form in order to participate in the event.*** If you do not meet the final fundraising deadline and will not sign a credit card commitment form, you will be removed from the roster and not permitted to participate in the event.

Fundraising minimums must be reached by all team members, without exception. In the event that you do not meet your fundraising minimum at the final deadline, you must complete a credit card commitment form in order to participate. The Ability Experience will charge your credit card for the remaining balance prior to the start of Orientation. If you continue to fundraise after your credit card has been processed for the remaining balance, ***The Ability Experience will reimburse you upon written request, prior to August 31, 2019.***

## Your Fundraising Page

Your online fundraising page is hosted on the platform Classy, which is the number one online and mobile fundraising platform. It's simple interface, low fees, and adaptable fundraising campaigns make it the fundraising platform of choice for The Ability Experience. For technical support or questions, refer to <https://www.classy.org/support/contact/> or contact your Regional Director.

Classy will occasionally send you emails about your campaign and you'll be notified by email when you receive a donation, so make sure you mark emails from Classy as "not junk".

## Customizing your page

Your fundraising page is the last thing people will see before they hit donate. So, it's really important that it looks professional and convinces donors that they should support you and this cause. If you think of fundraising like a sales pitch, this is where you get people to "close" on the donation.

Classy provides lots of options for you to be able to convey the message you'd like to donors.

1. Upload a quality photo of yourself
2. Assign a custom URL such as, <https://give.classy.org/John-JOH>
3. Change the headline to something catchy
4. Write a message in the story section about why you're spending your summer in the service of others and what a person's support would mean to you
5. You can share pictures or write updates about your progress before and during your event to keep donors informed
6. Adjust your goal to at least your minimum and move it even higher if you're well on your way to hitting it

## The Pitch

Now that you have some background on your event and the mission of The Ability Experience, learning to talk about it is critical. To hit your goal, you are going to have to talk to everyone you know, and don't know (yet), to get there. This part is what we call, "The Pitch." The pitch is a 30-second speech that summarizes who you are, what you're doing, and why they should donate to your trip.

You should be able to reel off your elevator pitch at any time. It could be while talking to a friend, at an interview with a local paper or during a short presentation to a club at school. You'll have to get good at understanding your audience and delivering the right message in an appropriate amount of time. We'll talk about this later, but for now let's practice.

**To create this pitch, you start by answering three simple questions: who are you, what are you doing, and why are you doing it?**

- **Who are you?**  
"Hi, I'm Simon Fogarty and I'm from the Pi Kappa Phi chapter at the College of Charleston"
- **What are you doing?**  
"This summer I am riding my bike across Florida from Miami to Tallahassee on a trip called Gear Up Florida."  
  
"This summer I am riding my bike across the country from Santa Barbara, California to Washington D.C. on a trip called Journey of Hope."
- **Why are you doing it?**  
"The 800-mile trek uses shared experiences to benefit The Ability Experience which seeks to build the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders while serving people with disabilities."  
  
"The 4,000-mile trek uses shared experiences to benefit The Ability Experience which seeks to build the men of Pi Kappa Phi into servant leaders while serving people with disabilities."

Now bring those three things together to create your pitch. Here's an example:

*"Hi, I'm Harry Mixson and I'm from the Pi Kappa Phi chapter at the College of Charleston. This summer I am cycling from California to Washington, DC with a team from around the country to raise funds and awareness for people with disabilities. This event is part of The Ability Experience, a non-profit organization created to use shared experiences to develop servant leaders and impact the lives of people with disabilities."*

This will lead into questions about your trip, The Ability Experience, and how people can support, which you should also be prepared for! Now that you've built your pitch, practice it, perfect it and utilize it.

## Fundraising Plan

Over the years, team members have fundraised in just about every way imaginable. The key to fundraising success is finding which strategies are most effective for you. There are some general principles that will help you spend your time fundraising as effectively as possible. So, let's dig in.

### How much should I ask for?

Once you have brainstormed your list, it is important to figure out how much you will ask from each person, business, or organization. Adding a column in excel will help with this. The chart below shows the range of gifts, prospects, and actual donations you will need to secure to meet a fundraising goal of \$6,000. If your goal is \$7,500, \$3,500, or \$1,500, you can adjust the following numbers accordingly. More important than the specifics of the chart, is the idea of how many people you need to ask to hit your goal. We have also added a few of the tactics from the ladder of effectiveness. If you think you can raise more funds from face to face visits (we highly recommend this!) then go for it. If you think you're mailing will be more successful and you don't need to do an event - make it happen and adjust your plan. This is just a guide and you'll have to make the decisions and map out your own strategy.

No matter your strategy, following up is going to be key. It is important to plan for check-ins and follow ups, especially after someone has committed to supporting you. This may feel awkward, but it is something that even professional and volunteer fundraisers do all of the time. Sometimes life gets in the way or it is simply a timing issue. A simple phone call goes a long way to bringing in that donation you've been waiting for. (Yes, sometimes an email will work, but a call is much more effective.)

### Gift Range Chart

Gift Range	# of Gifts Required	# of Prospects Required	Subtotal	Cumulative Total	Cumulative Percentage
\$500	2	8	\$1,000	\$1,000	17%
\$250	3	12	\$750	\$1,750	13%
\$100	8	20	\$800	\$2,550	13%
\$75	12	48	\$900	\$3,450	15%
\$50	20	75	\$1,000	\$4,450	17%
\$25	38	125	\$950	\$5,400	15%
\$10	60	175	\$600	\$6,000	10%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>		

## The Solicitation Ladder of Effectiveness

This shows the different solicitation techniques and which you should place priority. While fundraising letters and e-mails are the easiest way to reach people, they are not the most effective. Talking with someone directly is always more personal. In fact, our numbers show gifts solicited in person are almost two times the size of those received online. Getting in front of a few key donors could pay big dividends. Social media and news stories may reach more people, but they have a much lower donation rate. This should help inform your strategy and gift range chart.

Pay close attention to the difference between *personal* and *impersonal* asks. The more personal you make your fundraising plan, the more successful you will be in reaching your goal.

### Ladder of Effectiveness:

1. Face-to-face conversation with handout
  - a. Team of two (Bring a parent or chapter brother)
  - b. One person
2. Phone call followed up with a letter/email
3. Personal Letter/Email followed up with a phone call
4. Impersonal letter/e-mail (direct mail, mass email)
5. Fundraising event
6. Door-to-door solicitations
7. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

### Putting the Plan together

Now that you understand many of the ways you can fundraise, it's time to put a plan together. What do you want to do to make it happen? What methods will have the biggest impact for you? Remember, you don't always know until you try it. It is also important to consider the timing of fundraising. Take advantage of times when you will be visiting family and friends like holidays, vacations and special events. Think about when you will have time to fundraise both at home and at school. Don't schedule your biggest fundraising event the same week as midterms. Consider when your chapter and sororities have events on campus and plan around those as well. To start, map out each month ahead with two or three things that you can do to be most effective with your fundraising. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Holidays:** It's the season of giving, so why not ask for donations while people are in a charitable mood?
- **End of Year:** People love taking advantage of tax deductions from donating to non-profit organizations. Just remember that if someone gives you a check near the end of the year, get it in as soon as possible so that it is credited to that the same year.
- **Winter Break:** This is the most important time of year for fundraising for most people. Go in with a plan to meet with family and friends back home and you'll be come out on top.
- **Back on Campus:** This is a great time talk to Greek life before the craziness of the semester kicks in. New Exec boards are in place and ready to make their mark on campus, reach out to them and other organizations for support.

- **Spring Break:** Sacrifice is a part of service. How can you spend your spring break to get ahead on fundraising and even get in some long rides?
- **Birthday:** Asking for donations in lieu of birthday presents is a great way to boost your total.
- **Graduation:** Are you graduating right before taking on your event? We know that can be stressful but use it to your advantage. Ask family and friends to make donations on your behalf in place of graduation presents.

## Donor List

Developing your list of potential donors is the foundation for a successful fundraising campaign. The more names that you can generate, the more likely you are to reach your fundraising goal. Grab your parent’s holiday card list, look back at old teams or organizations you have been a part of, and share a document with close family that may help you grow your list. This is job #1.

**Start by brainstorming as many people as you can in the areas listed below. It will probably take a few times of sitting down and getting creative about who you can reach out to.** Fill in as much information as you can at first, then work with family and friends to fill in additional contact information and add more names to your list. Start with the following columns:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Name                   | • Amount Asked           |
| • Phone Number           | • Date of Last Follow Up |
| • Email Address          | • Date Donated           |
| • Mailing Address        | • Amount Donated         |
| • Organization / Company | • Thank You Sent         |

There is a **Microsoft Excel template in your Participant Center that can be used to create your donor list.** If you don’t have contact information for someone, go ahead and list their name so you don’t forget them and then add their information later. Don’t be afraid to ask someone for their address or email so that you can reach out to them more formally, they will appreciate your effort.

***PRO TIP: Use mail merge in Microsoft Word to quickly create dozens of personalized letters, print mailing labels, and send out follow-up emails.***

**Who Do I Reach Out To?** Everyone! Don’t forget to include both your communities on campus and back at home. Start with your local Chamber of Commerce and Student Activities Center for a listing of organizations that would be able to help you out! **You never know who is going to have a connection with our cause and will be more than willing to support it.**



Here are some ideas to get you started:

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

Parents / Guardians  
Grandparents  
Aunts / Uncles  
Cousins  
Siblings  
Parents' / Guardians' Friends  
Neighbors from back home  
Friends from back home  
Friends' parents from back home  
Family Civic Clubs  
Family business contacts  
Family friends  
Chapter brothers' parents  
Chapter Pi Alphas  
Chapter alumni (see Historian for list)  
Former coaches / teachers / employers

**CIVIC GROUPS AND LOCAL ORGS**

Chamber of Commerce  
Rotary Club  
Lions Club  
Kiwanis Club  
Knights of Columbus  
Jaycees  
Place of worship  
IFC / Panhellenic  
Other Fraternities and Sororities  
Student Government  
Other campus organizations  
University faculty and staff  
Local businesses (home and school towns)

Set parameters for what you're asking for. Don't go into a business, tell them your fundraising goal, and ask if they can help. Explain that your goal today is to raise \$500 by asking businesses for \$100 each. Make sure that you explain the impact of the donation and offer to bring in customers through a benefit night if you are asking a restaurant.

***PRO TIP: Have a flyer, letter or business card to hand them in case a manager is not available to meet with you. You can have Gear Up Florida/Journey of Hope business cards with your contact information made for pretty cheap at different websites.***

Corporate sponsorships are available. If you know of a company that may be interested, let your regional director know and we will work with you. These are very rare, so don't bet on getting one.

## **Fundraising Letter**

Now that you have your donor list in good shape, for most team members, your go-to move is going to be your fundraising letter. Yes, we say fundraising letter because for a majority of the group that will be your potential donors, this is going to be the way to go. It is more personal and more likely, not only to be read, but to see results.

*Note: Yes, email and even Facebook Messenger can work too. Some team members have had success with email letters, but we all know how packed our inboxes can get and messages missed. These mediums serve better as a follow up than they do as your main ask.*

As we mentioned previously in the manual, it is important that you do not procrastinate and start fundraising as soon as possible. You have a small window to launch a campaign and the further you get away from your acceptance date, the tougher it will be. Sometimes guys want to start with getting corporate donors or wait on one big check. **The story always ends the same—the donation never comes in and the team member is left scrambling.**

It is also important to remember that while the fundraising letter has been one of the most successful fundraising methods to date, it is not sure-fire. While your letter is out, you must be doing other things to supplement your letter campaign. If you sit back and wait for the mail to bring you all your money, you will be disappointed very quickly. Again, following up with your donors will be key.

We will talk about two types of letters in this section: handwritten and printed. Handwritten letters may not be your go-to for letter campaigns, but a few years ago our top-fundraiser wrote more than 100 handwritten letters to family and friends. It was that simple, and he didn't have to do anything else. Many team members have been successful with this because your letter will get read—guaranteed! This then opens up an opportunity to have a conversation about the event.

We highly recommend this for people with whom you are trying to get a face to face meeting. Keep in mind your call to action should be an ask for a meeting, not a donation from the letter.

Printed letters are a great way to make sure your letter gets read but with some efficiencies built in. Adding a quick personal note on the letter adds a personal touch but allows you to print one letter to send to your donor list. Also, adding in a return envelope that has been addressed for the donor makes it even easier. All a donor needs to do is put in their check and drop it in the mailbox. Some team members have included a stamped return envelope, but we have not found that to improve the likelihood of someone sending a donation in and the price of stamps can add up.

### **Writing your letter**

The purpose of your letter is to introduce people to The Ability Experience, how you are serving the organization through your event and how they can support people with disabilities through you and the organization. By connecting the donor to your passion for serving the mission will help drive donations. Try to keep your letter to a single page, but make sure you include these key items:

- What you are doing this summer and why?
- Brief description of The Ability Experience and Pi Kappa Phi
- Mention that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit and all donations are tax-deductible
- A connection with serving people with disabilities
- A call to action (i.e. make a donation) with a deadline to create sense of urgency
- The link to your fundraising page and/or instructions for mailing a check donation
- Your signature

A sample fundraising letter is provided in your Participant Center. Please do not copy this verbatim, as it has been used in previous years. It should be used as a resource in creating your fundraising letter. The form is important, but it is more important to personalize it for why you want to do this trip.

## E-mail Campaign

This is where the magic happens for most team members. You have done all the work, so this section will be surprisingly short given the priority it takes. To recap, you have built out your list, added their contact info, and prioritized people that won't receive emails because you are using a different means of soliciting a gift.

For emails, you have two tools; your fundraising page and the fundraising email. Use a solicitation e-mail and your profile as fundraising partners. Don't write your emails as mirror images of your online profile. Use the e-mail as a hook to get potential donors to your page. Close the deal with the content of your profile and your fundraising page.

You should also use e-mails as a follow-up for your letter campaign. Send a brief email to those on your donor list who you sent a letter but have not donated. They should know about your fundraising page from your letter; now they have the link and no reason not to visit your profile page.



You can also use emails to update everyone on your progress leading up to, and during the trip. Your donors will love hearing from you, knowing that their support is helping you have this experience. Be sure to send a personalized thank you email to each of your donors.

**PRO TIP:** *Be sure to include the link to your fundraising page on every email and always ask recipients to forward your e-mail to others they think would be willing to support you!*

**Note:** When someone makes a donation through your fundraising page, they will automatically receive an acknowledgement email from the system thanking them for the contribution on our behalf and providing them with a donation receipt.

## Social Media

Using social media is a great way to keep people interested and informed of your progress. Think of social media as a great compliment to the work you are doing from a donor awareness standpoint. It is not something that should be relied upon as a driver for raising funds.

### The Ability Experience Social Media Accounts

Tag The Ability Experience or other organizations of which you may also be a fan or follower to increase who sees your posts.

- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/abilityexperience](http://www.facebook.com/abilityexperience)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/abilityexp](http://www.twitter.com/abilityexp)
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/abilityexp>
- Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/abilityexperience>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/abilityexperienceorg>

## Maximizing Social Media

To really maximize social media, you need to think of yourself as a content creation company. Every week you need to look at ways to give your followers a way to experience and engage in what you are doing. Pushing out updates on multiple platforms and showing everyone your commitment through your *actions* will help to make receiving a donation from them much easier.

An update that includes the link to your fundraising page once a week will go a long way in spreading the awareness of your event. Mix it up and make sure that you are not talking about your fundraising every time, but don't neglect it either.

Here are some ways you can give an inside look to everything you are doing:

- Shoot a quick video after a tough training ride.
- Snap a pic of your first flat tire.
- Screenshot when someone makes a generous donation or puts you over a fundraising milestone.
- Include facts about the organization.
- A quick thank you video to supporters after reaching a fundraising milestone (and then encouraging others to donate to reach the next milestone)
- Tell stories about what you or your chapter are doing locally to impact people with disabilities.
- Share a pic or video from a Friendship Visit you attend!
- You can also ask other organizations, sponsors and supporters to share your page to increase exposure.

## Purchase a Domain Name

Some team members have had success purchasing a domain name to make it easy to refer people to their fundraising page. Here, you can do even more to promote your efforts like making frequent blog posts, adding lots of pictures, and sharing details of your journey over the summer. Just make sure that a link to make a donation on your fundraising page is front and center. Some guys have linked to their own URL to their fundraising page before the trip and changed it to their blog site instead when it's time to hit the road.

## Make a Video

As we look to create more content to support our fundraising efforts, video is driving much of the social media interactions. Visually showing your supporters what you are doing is very powerful.

Keep in mind, much of what is getting shared today is pretty raw. Have a balance of raw video and video that you or a chapter brother with simple editing skills makes into something that can move the needle on your goals.

Here are some ideas you can use to create some great videos.

- Take a Saturday and make a video. Talk about why you are taking on this challenge and what it means to you. Have a friend record some of your activities, i.e. training and/or at a Friendship Visit.
- Split up some of the shots mentioned above and shoot quick videos that are raw to speak to why you're doing the trip. They can be quick 30-second updates that speak to your fundraising, training or volunteer efforts.

- Make thank you videos. Post them to FB or send them out via messenger to show your appreciation. You can make these as you take breaks on training rides.
- Share some video on a tough training ride, especially if you overcame tough conditions and/or situations. These are a great way to make people part of this experience.

You can also add pictures that you may have from your work with people with disabilities or pictures and videos that you enjoy from The Ability Experience Flickr, YouTube and Vimeo accounts. Simple editing programs can make an impressive video. When it's completed, upload it and send the link out. This is one more way to spread the word about your journey!

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/c/abilityexperienceorg>

Vimeo: [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com) and search for The Ability Experience, Journey of Hope, Gear Up Florida, etc.

### Make a Facebook Page

Creating a Facebook page is a great way to update your friends on your progress before and during the trip. You may also be able to reach people that were not on your donor list and raise a couple extra dollars from it. This is great for sharing pics, videos and posts that will help everyone feel like they are a part of this experience with you!

Some examples of pages created have been, "Diego's Journey of Hope," "Journey with Nick," "Michael's Journey of Hope: A Cycling Trip Across America," "Support Sean for Journey of Hope," and "Evan's Gear Up Florida." When creating a page make sure you keep it active and up-to-date. You can tag it in posts along with other people or organizations that you may want to highlight or solicit support. You can also ask others to share the page on their social media for a way to follow your experience and make a donation.



### Instagram Account

Instagram is a great way to visually showcase what you're doing, but fundraising can be a little tougher. Give an inside look to the work you're doing. When sending out a few letters, snap a very artsy pic of the return address and talk about the letters going out. When you're cleaning your bike after a tough ride, snap a pic of the process. Most of all, just make sure you engage with the experience as you normally would.

For fundraising, the easiest way is to add your fundraising link to your bio and reference it every once in a while. Don't be afraid to mix it up. If you make a video, go ahead and change your bio link and let people know. Just don't forget to come back to update it to your fundraising page.

### Create a Hashtag for Yourself

Hashtags can be a great way to keep your content searchable and organized. By using a hashtag in all of your social media posts, people can click that tag and see all of your other posts. Feel free to also use #AbilityExp, #JOH2019, #GUF2019 as well to get more followers. A couple of example hashtags you could use could be #BenCyclesJOH or #EvanCrewsGUF, etc.

***PRO TIP: There are services and apps out there for automatically sharing posts to multiple social media accounts. This will maximize your reach without adding much time and effort for you.***

## Fundraising Events

Fundraising events are a great way to raise some funds while you're waiting for responses on your letters and emails. If these are planned and executed well, you can see a great return on your efforts. Your fundraising events can range from a simple benefit/percentage night at a local restaurant to tabling-style events on campus to a donor event hosted by a family member.

### Steps for Effective Event Planning

What will make or break your event, is not the event you choose, it's how well you plan and execute it. Although events will not be your go-to for fundraising, here are some steps that will help you in the planning of your event. Remember, The Ability Experience staff are here to walk you through these steps and can help ensure your success.

#### 1. Know Your Event

Choose an event that you feel confident that you can plan & execute. Be sure to keep in mind the amount of time and money it may take to put into planning the event.

#### 2. Know Your Audience & Build Your Guest List

Your guest list may include students, alumni, faculty and staff at the university, local community VIPs, family members, members of the community, and the disability community. The type of event you do will then determine your audience.

#### 3. Set Your Goals

To ensure your event is successful, set your goals for how much you want to raise and how many people you want to attend.

#### 4. Set the Date & Secure the Venue

##### Cross-Referencing Calendars

If doing an event on campus, be sure to cross-reference your chapter calendar, academic calendar, university athletic calendar, intramural calendar, and fraternity/sorority community calendar to avoid any conflicting dates. Avoid hosting your event at the same time as any other major events on campus and be sure to consider exam schedules and breaks.

##### Selecting an Ideal Venue

Your venue will depend on the event and your audience. If holding it on campus, most locations should be free to reserve as a student. If off campus, you will want to find a location that will be free to very cheap so that you are not out a significant amount of money for your event. When approaching an off-campus venue, be sure to explain the event and the mission of The Ability Experience. Then ask them to either donate the use of the facility or offer a discount on the fee.

##### Planning in Advance

Most of the ideal venues for your event must be reserved well in advance. To ensure you get the venue you want for the date and time that you want it, make your reservation as far in advance as possible. This also gives you more time to advertise your event.

##### Minimizing Costs

When gathering supplies for your event, you should also keep in mind the cost of the necessary items. Many times, businesses can donate items or services to help benefit your event. This can include grocery stores donating supplies/gift cards, catering companies providing food and/or services, and local businesses donating merchandise or gift cards. Minimizing the cost of your event will maximize its effectiveness and therefore the amount of funds that will go to support people with disabilities.

Here are some other things that you will need to consider when planning your date and venue:

- What supplies will you need?
- Does the venue require a contract?
- Will you provide food and beverages?
- Will there be tickets sold?
- What technology will you need?
- Will you have entertainment at the event?

#### **5. Create an Event Planning Checklist/Timeline**

Using all of the plans and ideas that you want to move forward with at the event, put together a checklist of items that you need to complete and corresponding deadlines. The more organized you can be in planning/setting up your event, the smoother it will be to execute it.

#### **6. Promote Your Event**

Once the event is planned and you have all of the details lined up, you will want to get the word out about the event itself. Again, how you do this, will depend on your audience and the event itself. Here are a few different ways to promote your event:

- Email / Letters
- Newspaper articles (campus and local)
- Presentations (i.e. Fraternity/Sororities, campus orgs, place of worship, civic clubs, etc.)
- Phone Calls
- Print (i.e. posters, flyers, handouts, etc.)
- Social Media
- Tabling

#### **7. Execute the Event**

This is it! You've done everything to be prepared and set yourself up for success. Now go out there and make it happen! Relax, have fun, and talk to as many people at the event as possible. As much as you can, try to keep track of everyone that attends (and collect their contact information if you do not already have it), so you can follow up with them after the event.

#### **8. Event Follow Up**

Once the event is over, you will want to follow up with those that attended as well as though that were invited but unable to attend. You should aim to complete all follow up within 10 days of your event.

- Send thank you to all attendees. If they did not donate, include link to fundraising page.
- Send update to those that were invited but unable to attend to inform them about the event and include an ask with the link to your fundraising page.
- Thank you note to everyone that help you in the planning and execution of the event itself.

## Sample Event: House Party

No, this is probably not the type of house party you come across around campus. This type of house party is where a parent, family member or close friend will host an event at their home. It is one event that has been greatly effective for team members over the years, with relatively low expenses/overhead. You would work with your host to invite family friends, neighbors, business colleagues of theirs, etc. over to their house. During the event, some foods and drinks would be provided, and then you would speak about the upcoming event (i.e. give an elevated/ extended version of the pitch) and ask everyone in attendance to donate. Let's walk through the planning steps with you:

### 1. Know Your Event

Come up with a name for your event that will give people an idea of what you will be doing.

### 2. Know Your Audience & Build Your Guest List

You should start by determining how many people you want at the event. This will then help guide you to how many you will invite and, more importantly, **who** you will invite. For an event like this, you will want to target people that will be able and willing to donate at least \$100. Think of neighbors, family friends, business contacts of the one hosting your event. You will want to invite more than the number you wish to attend as some people will not be able to make it.

### 3. Set Your Goals

You should set a fundraising goal that is lofty, yet attainable. You want to make it large enough that those attending the event are inspired to give a larger amount than if you had a lower goal.

### 4. Set the Date & Secure the Venue

You will first need to determine where you want to hold the event. Most team members in the past have had the event at a family member's or a close family friend's house. By doing the event at a house, you are able to save on food and event space. A house allows you to prepare food on site in the kitchen or have the event catered without having to pay a facility rental fee. If you choose to hold the event at a restaurant or other location, try to work out a deal on any reservation fees and/or food costs.

### 5. Create an Event Planning Checklist/Timeline

Now that you have a date and venue set, you will want to start building out your to-do list to prepare for your event. You will want to focus on details for the event like invitations, decorations, drinks, and any post-event follow up items. A part of your checklist should include finding family and friends to help with these different aspects of the event, such as decorating, cooking and serving food, serving drinks, and welcoming guests.

You will also want to work on a presentation that you can give to everyone in attendance. This presentation should include pictures and videos from previous events that will give your attendees an idea of what you will be doing during your trip. At the end of the presentation, you will want to ask everyone to make a donation. You should provide a shortened link to your fundraising page so that everyone would be able to give via check or credit card. If they cannot donate at the event, ask for a pledge amount and a time that you could follow up with them.

### 6. Promote Your Event

For an event like this, most of the promotion will be in the form of letters (email if you have to) and phone calls. You will want to make your invitations personal as your pool will be a smaller group. An invitation in the mail normally works, but don't forget to ask them to RSVP. If you do not hear back from them, don't be afraid to follow up with a phone call to make sure they received the invitation and ask if they will be able to join you for the event.

## 7. Execute the Event

Now it is show time! You have put in the work, have help lined up for the food and drinks, and have a great presentation that you have practice. Now it is time to have fun and put on your charm.

Before everyone begins to arrive, you will want to make sure all of your volunteers have a role and know what that role is throughout the evening. It could be greeting people as they arrive, helping keep the food stocked, serving drinks, collecting trash or just walking around to ensure everyone is having a good time. Having volunteers do all of this work will allow you the opportunity to walk around and speak with everyone throughout the evening. After all, they are at the event for you!

After everyone has had time to mingle and interact with each other, you will want to have them gather around a television or projector screen so that you can give your presentation. This should be an extended pitch and include information about the event and The Ability Experience, why you have signed up for it, the impact that you will have on the team and the impact that those in attendance can have by supporting you. Then, of course, you want to wrap up the presentation by asking them to make a donation. At an event like this, you should be safe asking everyone for at least a \$100 donation.

As the event wraps up, try to make yourself available to everyone for any questions and to thank them one more time as they leave.

## 8. Event Follow Up

Even though the event is done, the work is not. There are four groups with whom you will need to follow up after the event:

- a) Donors – for everyone that donated, you will want to send a hand-written thank you note thanking them for attending and supporting you for this event.
- b) Attended but no donation – for everyone that attended the event, but did not donate, you will want to send a hand-written note thanking them for attending and asking them to make a donation again.
- c) Did not attend – for everyone that you invited but was unable to attend, you will want to send a letter to let them know how the event went and how much you were able to raise. Don't forget to ask them for their support and joining in on the event's success.
- d) Volunteers – remember to thank everyone that helped make your event such a success!

## Fundraising On Campus

While campus fundraising may seem tough because as a college student you know that your friends aren't exactly walking around with fat wallets waiting to donate to your cause. There is some opportunity on campus, however, that can help make a dent in your fundraising goals.

### Sorority Presentations

Sororities are hit up all the time from fraternities, right? War of the Roses, Derby Days and just about every other fraternity sponsored philanthropy. This is where the "no chapter help" rule can help you. You are asking for their support of your individual commitment.

The best way to fundraise is to attend their chapter meeting or dinners. Bring props with you (bicycle, maps, etc.) and have personalized brochures to pass around. Ideally, you will create and give a PowerPoint presentation, so you can show them exactly what you are doing rather than just talking about it. Some of The Ability Experience videos will hit home on what the experience is about as well.

For any sorority that donates a certain amount, you can offer to take pictures with the sorority's flag during your trip. Be sure that if you commit to this, you follow through or it will make it nearly impossible for the men who do trips after you.



When you are done presenting, be sure to ask for any help or ideas that the women have of people they could connect you to for fundraising support. Individual members may be able to help you network with other businesses and organizations.

Another great idea that can help you boost your fundraising is to ask the sorority's president if you can pass around letters at the end, so members can address them to their parents. Many team members have found that the parents of sorority members are supportive and willing to contribute to a worthy cause. All you need to do is ask. The best way is to pass around an envelope with a generic letter and ask the women to write a note on the letter and put their parent's address on the front. Be sure to include a return envelope (no stamp needed) and make sure your fundraising link is easy to navigate.

### Sorority Events

If your campus is not tapped on sorority events, why not try and get the sororities on your campus to help with, or even, hold an event for you? A few team members have even had sororities make their event fundraising their own philanthropy for the semester! Car washes, toll roads and raffles are all examples of events sororities could host.

If you do something with a sorority, try to get the event in the local or school newspaper to recognize their efforts. Also, make sure and follow up with a proper thank you.

### **Helpful Hints:**

- Start a competition between the sororities on your campus.
- Offer prizes to the sorority that contributes the most to your cause: put the sorority's letters on your bike or take a picture with its letters at every state line.
- Have fun and be creative! In both your presentation and your fundraising event involving sororities, be creative and you'll be surprised at the results.

### Interfraternity Council & Panhellenic Presentations

Much like sorority presentations, your school's IFC and Panhellenic are great resources for your fundraising. They open you up to a large base of potential donors and make for positive campus relations. Refer to the sorority presentations section on the previous page for tips. These presentations will be very similar.

Many times, team members will write off reaching out to IFC. Remember, this is an effort independent of your chapter's philanthropic efforts. While fraternities compete like crazy, they may have a tough time saying "no" to another fraternity when it is done face to face. A few hundred bucks for one presentation is well worth your time. And if you receive any individual fraternity donations, be sure to find a way to publicly give that group shout outs on social media or write an email to your Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor and cc that chapter's president.

## Student Government & Other Campus Organizations

Student Government Associations are a great fundraising resource. Many SGAs are required to donate a certain amount of money away to student organizations or charities that students support. We have had team members receive \$1,000 grants from their student government in the past. Making a presentation to the SGA will not only reach each representative present, it will reach the organization that each member represents.

Many other campus organizations will give to charitable causes. They only need to be asked. Make sure to start with any campus organizations that you belong to and go from there.

## Classmates and Professors

Your classroom is a great place to fundraise. Not only are classmates often willing to make donations, they are good people to ask for help in other fundraising events. Professors are often a good source of larger donations, especially if you have a strong relationship with them.

You can start by asking the Professor if you can make a one-minute talk at the beginning or end of class. When you make your presentation, give the class your best pitch and let them know that you will be standing at the main exit (recruit friends to cover other exits if applicable) collecting donations on their way out. Let them know that a donation of any size will go a long way to reaching your fundraising goal. If you get a couple bucks from most of the students in that class, you will be amazed how fast that will add up.

## School Size and Strategy

Colleges and universities differ in size across the country, and this may impact your fundraising approach on campus. If you are attending a university with a large Greek community, you will have a better opportunity to obtain fundraising donations from other chapters on campus. If your school is in a small town, your fundraising strategy may need a different angle. Analyze your surrounding community at school to develop a strategy for local efforts. Remember to reach out to The Ability Experience staff if you feel like you are running into any unique issues. Chances are we have helped someone through a similar situation and we can make the process easier for you.

# **Fundraising in the Community**

## **Chapter Alumni**

Your chapter alumni are some of your best contacts when fundraising. They are likely to already know about The Ability Experience and what you are doing. This will make for a much easier sell. If alumni are unable to donate themselves, they will have many contacts that may be able to help you in your fundraising efforts. Do not be afraid to utilize the network your fraternity has provided you.

## Alumni Events

Alumni events are a great place to solicit a lot of alumni in one place. Events around Homecoming, Founder's Day and Rose Ball are three times during the year that many team members use to talk to alumni. Make sure you talk with your executive council or the event organizer before the event so they can put you in the schedule of events. Remember that what you are doing is a source of pride to the entire chapter, both alumni and undergraduate. You can also make presentations at similar alumni events (golf tournaments, barbecues, etc.).

## Alumni Letters

Knowing how often alumni move soon after graduating, you may not have the most updated mailing addresses for alumni. Therefore, this will be one of the only times we recommend going with email solicitation over mailing a letter. If there are more prestigious alumni from your chapter that you think would be capable of a larger gift, you should plan to mail them a letter and/or try to ask them in person.

## Alumni Newsletter and Facebook Page

You should also work with your chapter's Historian and/or the alumni that put together your chapter's alumni newsletter to include a story about your participation. It is another way to get your story in front of a majority of your alumni. Many alumni groups also have a Facebook group/page that you can post the link to your fundraising page!

## Civic Clubs

A civic organization is any club or group that exists to provide community service activities. Civic organizations are a terrific fundraising source because they raise money throughout the year to support charitable efforts.



The prominent businessmen and women of your community are most likely members of a civic group. They contribute money to various causes and organizations in your community and love to hear local success stories. Not only may a club support you, but its individual members may as well. If you are looking for a way to take large chunks out of your fundraising goal, this could be the key!

On your trip home during the year, like winter break, spring break, etc. try to meet with many clubs. You can even give an update to your donors and ask if anyone has any contacts. While you wait for these breaks to head home, you can do the same in your university town.

At the meeting, be yourself. It is okay to be nervous! They will appreciate your effort and realize that you are not giving them a 'canned pitch.' It is important for you to be enthusiastic! Stress the adventure involved with your endeavor and how you're excited to help those with disabilities. Finally, don't forget to ask for their financial help and be sure to follow-up with a thank you note!

When setting up your presentation, be sure to find out how much time you have. Sometimes they will just have you say a few words at the end of the meeting, other times you will be the keynote. If the latter, be sure to allow enough time for questions. If you don't know the answer to something, don't try to talk your way through it. Inform them that you can find out and get back with them.

Sample request at the end of your pitch/presentation:

*"Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I am extremely excited about the adventures that await me and I look forward to representing the University of Washington and the city of Seattle this summer. I believe strongly in what I am doing and I hope you will join me in my efforts on behalf of people with disabilities. To date I have raised \$\_ from family, friends, and my peers at school. I am hoping to raise an additional \$1,000 from clubs and organizations in the Seattle area. A donation of \$500 by your organization will be a huge step in helping me reach this goal. Only \$5 from each person in this room will have a tremendous impact on the lives of some very special people."*

Many team members have received donations from the organization and from individual members. Make sure they realize that a small donation from each member will make a difference in your fundraising efforts.

### Helpful Hints:

- Follow up is very important. Send a letter thanking the club for giving you the opportunity to speak. Let them know they can contact you if they have any more questions.
- Schedule a time to check back with them if they need more time to decide. Nothing is more frustrating than waiting to hear back.
- Always find time to practice your presentation. The more time and effort you put into your presentation, the more effective you will be!
- Don't limit yourself to Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions clubs. Any organization is a candidate for sponsorships. If they don't give as an organization, at least you have a large group of individual donors you have now spoken to. You will find there are many, many more organizations out there!
- Bring extra business cards, brochures and/or letters that have your contact info on it so you can hand them out to people that are interested individually in supporting you.
- Bring your bike! It is always fun to have a prop and is an easy icebreaker. Be sure to get there early and put it in a spot that is easily accessible for your presentation but is out of the way.
- Remember, if you are curious whether a group would donate, the best way to find out is to ask! Don't get discouraged, not every presentation will be successful. However, hard work and persistence should pay off in the long run. Each year many team members receive up to \$500 from civic organizations. You can too!
- When you're done with the trip, be sure to contact the club to do a follow up presentation. If you are in your college town, you're paving the way for some easy funds and if you're in your hometown, you will be a point of pride!

## Media and Public Relations

There are four basic mediums used in public relations: newspaper, radio, television and internet channels. The following step-by-step guide will not guarantee success, but it will increase your odds of a network picking up your story when you put in the effort.

1. Search for a list of local media outlets. Put their info into a spreadsheet. Include the name, address, telephone numbers, email and special instructions.
2. Once your list is complete, call the media source and get the numbers for the assignment editor/producer.
3. Email a copy of your personalized press release and the fact sheet to the editor/producer.
4. **Don't forget your school newspaper!** This is a great way to get a win early. Ask friends if they know any writers that may help get your story published. This is also a great opportunity for a follow-up article (that happens to coincide with fall recruitment).
5. Take an extra step for television outlets and look for shows or segments that could be a good match. Many times, local stations have a "Today Show" format that are looking for great stories to share. Search online or call the station to ask for the name of the producer. Emailing the producer directly will get you past the newsroom, which does not typically schedule interviews.
6. Follow up that day with a phone call if you're emailing general email boxes or news desks. Once the small talk is done, ask for the interview. As they say, if you do not ask, you do not get! **This is the most important step!**

7. If you can't get the interview, offer to drop by their office. If that isn't an option, simply ask them to run a story on you from the information you have provided. This is great especially for newspaper. Be sure to provide a picture of yourself with your bike.
8. Within 2 to 3 business days write a short, handwritten note thanking the editor for their time on the phone or for the interview. If you didn't get the interview, this touch might be what gets you in the door.

This system is not guaranteed, but it's the way the system works. **Remember, the follow up call is essential to the entire process.** Don't send out your information and wait for the media to come banging on your door, because they won't.

#### Helpful Hints:

- Make sure that you are using people first language when referring to people with disabilities.
- Do not make up answers to questions you don't know the correct answer to. Simply tell them you do not know but you can get them the answer right away. Be sure to follow up.
- Meet with your school's public relations department. They can be extremely helpful in finding contacts for each newspaper, television and radio station. Many departments will also help you write your press release and circulate on news wires and through faculty and alumni publications. Remember, positive media exposure for you is also good Public Relations for your university.
- Ask the reporter to add your contact information and fundraising link. Many times, they will mention major sponsors that have already helped you out.
- While the challenge of your trek is what many will focus on when asking your questions, be sure to tell the reason why you are taking on the challenge.



#### How does getting my cause in the news help me?

Getting your name in the media accomplishes many different goals, and we have discussed a few. Here is a recap with a few additions:

1. Raising awareness for your efforts
2. A reliable source of information that can be used in other fundraising efforts
3. Thanking sponsors

Should you have any questions or need any support when dealing with the media, please contact your Regional Director who will work with you and the Pi Kappa Phi communications team.

**Sample press release provided in your Participant Center**

## **Business Solicitations**

Reaching out to small businesses is a great way to raise funds while you're waiting on your fundraising emails and letter to do their work. This is also a great way for family and friends to be supportive as well. A family member or friend can go to the list of businesses you brainstormed earlier (think about where you spend your money the most) and make an initial introduction and see if they would be interested in supporting you. If they are, then they can see when the best time would be for you to follow up with the manager/owner to answer any questions and make the ask for a donation.

When you arrive at a place of business, ask to speak to the manager or owner, give your name, and explain what you are doing. Sell them on the commitment you have made and ask if they could make a contribution to help serve people with disabilities.

You may find that many businesses will say you need to speak with a different manager or owner. If this is the case, be sure to get that person's name and ask when they will be in. If they ask you to come back at another time, see what time would be best.

If you are able to secure a time with a manager/owner that will be able to ultimately make the decision, be sure to be prepared and professional. Also be sure to make a good first impression by dressing professionally and treating anyone you speak to with respect. We also recommend that you bring handouts with you to help tell your story, plus it makes you look more professional:

- The Ability Experience's Story sheet
- Personalized brochures
- Copies of any newspaper articles, especially a local paper
- The Ability Experience's IRS letter
- A copy of your fundraising letter

If a business gives you a check, be sure to thank them right away. Leave them with a personalized brochure and a copy of your letter. Be sure to send a prompt thank you note.

If they say no, leave them with a personalized brochure and fundraising letter anyway. You may find that when they take the time to read the information, they may send you a check! At the very least, you have shown that you are a professional!

## **Bicycle Clubs or Bicycle Shops**

Bicycle clubs or shops are a terrific resource for two reasons. They can be of value in your fundraising, and they can help you learn more about your bike and offer group rides that will give you experience for the summer. Go to different bike shops in your area and ask a manager if they would be willing to donate. If they can't donate, see if they can give you free or discounted equipment. You can also ask about joining in on group rides, which will get you additional support with your training and introduce you to more cyclists that may be willing to donate to you. (Make sure you join a couple rides before asking other cyclists for donations. It will be easier to get them to donate if they can get to know you first).

## **YMCA / Health Clubs**

Like bike clubs, you'll find other athletes and another great network of people in health clubs, recreation centers and YMCA's in both your campus community and hometown. Perhaps you can set up a display in the lobby or post a fundraising brochure on the bulletin board. Set up a meeting with the manager and ask the club or center for a donation. You might even ask them to match the contributions given by members.

## **Your Place of Work**

Your job is a great place to fundraise. Not only may you get a large donation from the company or the owner, you can also solicit your co-workers. See if your manager or owner would allow you to post a brochure or host a fundraising event.

## **Businesses You Frequent / College Area Businesses**

Any business that you have a personal tie to will be a great opportunity for fundraising. Most businesses give to charitable causes in some way. Many college area businesses would rather support a student from their campus than someone that is not at all associated with them.

## **Hometown Businesses**

Hometown businesses are a great resource because everyone likes to hear about the hometown boy that made it big or did something great. What you are doing this summer is amazing and you will be a great source of pride for all the people from your hometown as you represent them this summer.

## **Businesses Where You Have Contacts**

Never be afraid to ask your family and friends if they know someone that is high up in a business. Utilize your chapter brother's parent who is President of a big company or your parent's boss. If you have contacts with influential or affluent people, don't miss the opportunity for a large donation.

## **Sponsorships & In-Kind Donations**

The best way to secure the bigger gift is by "knowing someone who knows someone" in a corporation or business. Quite simply, you need to ask people who they know. Once you have a way in, set up an appointment with the key person in a company, and bring a packet of information for your potential sponsor to keep and review once you've left. If possible, have your contact join you during your meeting, since he or she will know the person and can strengthen the personal rapport.

There are two routes you can go with sponsorships. You can get a company to sponsor you individually. You can offer a company access to blog stories they can share with their employees or pictures with a company flag or apparel from around the company.

If you plan to approach a corporation for a larger corporate sponsorship, please contact The Ability Experience office for guidance and check out the corporate sponsorship section on The Ability Experience Web site. If you are in a city that one of the teams will pass through, opportunities exist for getting your sponsor involved with the team.

Remember, The Ability Experience staff is here to help you through the process of obtaining a corporate sponsor. These sponsorships tend to be very detailed and typically involve contracts and/or sponsorship agreements. National sponsorships are more expensive but offer companies many exciting marketing and advertising benefits.

Don't plan to hit your fundraising goal by helping secure a corporate sponsor. Although we hope this happens for you, the chances of going to XYZ Corporation, asking for and getting a \$5,000 contribution without a significant personal connection with the decision maker is slim at best. We have had team members that have not accomplished their goals because they held out for the big donation (and didn't do any other work). Don't let this happen to you! You need to be continuously planning and implementing other strategies to reach your goal. That way your fundraising commitment will be reached, and if a corporate sponsor comes through, you'll go well over the top and enjoy some of the fundraising incentives available to you!

### **Corporate Sponsor Policy:**

If a corporate sponsorship is initiated by a current team member of an Ability Experience team event, the team member will receive up to **100%** of the cash sponsorship towards their individual team member fundraising goal that is stated by the team events staff.

In-kind or non-cash donations do not count toward a team member's fundraising goal unless they are budget relieving for the organization and align with the gift acceptance policy.

### **Signage**

Each year we receive several calls regarding placing the logos of individual sponsors on team events promotional materials (i.e. jerseys, t-shirts, brochures, etc.).

**Signage on all team event sportswear and banners is reserved only for the national event sponsors (contact The Ability Experience office for more details).**

Team members can put the logos of their personal sponsors on their helmets and bikes. Some have worn the letters or logos of the sorority or business that donates the most money to their cause - creating some competition among sponsors. Just remember not to get caught up in providing benefits to your sponsors. You need to sell them on the cause, not what they can receive.

### **Submitting Donations**

Every donation made to The Ability Experience is tax-deductible. We are a government recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. **Our tax-id number or EIN is 58-1588777.**

Donations to The Ability Experience can be made three different ways:

1. **Online Donations** - Your Classy fundraising page is the easiest way to receive donations. Donors automatically receive an email receipt of their gift that can be used for tax purposes and you can keep track of supporters and send thank you messages.
2. **Checks** - Checks should be made payable to "The Ability Experience" and should have your name and event on the memo line (ex. John Doe - JOH). You or your donor can mail checks directly to The Ability Experience office. Once the check is received and processed at our office, it will show up on your online fundraising page.
3. **Cash or Digital Payments** - **DO NOT** use your credit/debit card online to submit donations given to you via cash or digital payments like Venmo. Simply exchange them for a Certified Check, Money Order, or Cashier's Check and mail that into the office. Include a list of who donated and the amount, as well as their email address for our record keeping. **NEVER SEND CASH IN THE MAIL!**

Mailing Address & Contact Information:

The Ability Experience  
2015 Ayrley Town Blvd. Suite 200  
Charlotte, NC 28273-4068

To donate by phone or for other questions, please contact us at (704) 504-2400.

**All donations not made through your page will show up on your fundraising page after we receive it in our office and process it. This is the best place to see an up-to-date total of your fundraising.**

## Special Considerations

### **What if a check is made out to you personally or to Pi Kappa Phi?**

All you have to do is send it in—super easy! Please do not cash checks written out to you and then make a donation online. If someone makes a check out to you, simply write “Pay to the order of The Ability Experience” on the back of the check in the signature block and sign it. If someone writes a check to Gear Up Florida, Journey of Hope or Pi Kappa Phi, go ahead and send it in as you normally would, and we will take care of it. We have not had any issues depositing checks made to affiliated organizations.

### **How do I handle donations to multiple team members?**

If you have a check that is intended to support multiple team members, simply include a note with the check stating the names of the team members and how you want the check divided.

### **What should I tell donors outside of the United States?**

Our payment processor accepts donations in other countries and currencies through a feature called Classy Passport. A special donation page is available for donors to support you by automatically converting the currency at a competitive exchange rate. We will credit donations to your event fundraising page after we receive them. The final donation amount will show up in US dollars on your page. Visit <https://give.classy.org/AbExInternational> to use this feature and notify your Regional Director of an upcoming international donations.

## **Matching Gifts**

When brainstorming your list of potential donors, try also to remember what your relatives, friends, neighbors, or chapter alumni do for a living. Many corporations have a matching gifts fund. For every donation that you receive from an employee of that corporation, the corporation will match the gift. You need to ask everyone who contributes if they work for a matching gift corporation.

You need to follow-up with the matching gifts early. Many matching gift programs only make donations quarterly or semi-annually. **Matching gifts are viewed as a pledge and cannot be counted toward your fundraising total until we receive the check at The Ability Experience office.**

### **How to Make a Matching Gift**

Provide these steps to anyone looking to make a matching gift for your fundraising:

1. **Make donation to The Ability Experience** - Please save your tax receipt or email confirmation.
2. **Contact your HR department** - You will be asked to complete an online or paper matching gift request form.
3. **Company contacts The Ability Experience** - Your company will contact The Ability Experience, via mail or email, asking Ability Experience to confirm your donation.
4. **The Ability Experience confirms gift** - It can take up to 2 weeks for The Ability Experience to confirm a gift.
5. **Company sends matching gift** - Check distribution cycles vary greatly for companies. (e.g. monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual payouts). Allow 30 - 120 days from mail date to process and display in your fundraising account.

## Tax Deductibility

### What does “tax-deductible” mean?

A tax-deductible contribution is a payment a donor makes to a charity. For your purposes, it is any donation The Ability Experience receives to benefit your fundraising efforts. The payment is received and recognized by The Ability Experience for the donation to be considered tax-deductible.

Essentially, in order for a contribution made to The Ability Experience to be tax-deductible for the contributor, he or she cannot receive in return any item, service (car wash, lawn mowing, etc.) or privilege (admittance to a theatre, concert, banquet, etc.) which has a fair market value that equals or exceeds the amount or value of the contributions. Only the amount of the contribution above fair market value of the item is considered to be tax-deductible.

This also means that The Ability Experience must be the recipient of the gift, not you as a team member. Therefore, for example, if a bike shop donates equipment to you for the trip, that would not be tax deductible.

### The IRS Letter

The IRS letter does two things. First, it recognizes The Ability Experience as a **501(c)(3)** organization. In layman’s terms this means that The Ability Experience is a nonprofit organization and individuals who donate can receive tax benefits from their gift. The second thing the IRS letter does is state our Employer Identification Number (EIN). Our EIN is 58-1588777.

Some potential donors may ask for proof of The Ability Experience’s non-profit status before they make a donation. If they do ask, simply provide them with a copy of the tax letter and that should address any concerns about the tax-deductibility of their gift.

*You can find a copy of The Ability Experience’s IRS Letter in your Participant Center.*

## SAFETY, TRAINING AND BICYCLE CARE

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### Visibility

Safety is of high importance on any one of our summer events. However, there is no guarantee of safety. In a constant changing environment out on the road, anything can happen. The Ability Experience puts safety at the forefront in all of our decisions. That is why we work to control as many factors as possible to create a safe experience for cyclists and crew. It is important that team members understand the importance of the safety measures we have in place in order to mitigate risk to the best of our ability.



Each cyclist will be equipped with a fluorescent safety triangle and ankle band. Both of these are part of the required uniform each cyclist will wear at all times on the road. Cyclists will receive them as part of their welcome packet after being accepted onto the team. Once it is received, get in the practice of wearing these items. It is important for all cyclists to understand the significance of these two items. Cyclists are **SIGNIFICANTLY MORE** visible with these on compared to cyclists that do not wear fluorescent and reflective gear. We live in a time where there are a million and one distractions out on the road. Distracted driving is one of the biggest dangers to cyclists out

on the road. To combat this, cyclists must do everything to make ourselves as visible, and “big” as possible on the road. Wearing high reflective gear, like your ankle reflector and safety triangle, help achieve just that.

Trek Bikes published an online article about the ABC’s of Awareness ([https://www.trekbikes.com/us/en\\_US/abcs\\_of\\_awareness/](https://www.trekbikes.com/us/en_US/abcs_of_awareness/)) and why it is so important for cyclists to be visible on the road. Research suggests that cyclists extremely overestimate their visibility level to motorists, which is why we want to do everything possible to make our cyclists more visible to vehicles (cite).

The safety triangle’s fluorescent and reflective features create a contrast of color to the eye. When riding, these triangles help drivers’ eyes notice cyclists on the road sooner than they would without them.

The anklebands, worn on the left ankle of our cyclists, create a sense of biomotion. When cyclists pedal, the fluorescent and reflective up and down motion also draws more attention to drivers’ eyes. It allows the driver to notice a cyclist much more quickly.



It is also recommended that you purchase a front and rear bike light and use at all times while on the bike.

## Pre-Trip Training

All cyclists will be required to properly train for your event and will be held accountable for your training progress. Full details about your training program can be found on the Training Center page of your Participant Center. This page outlines the steps to set up your training profile and reviews pertinent details regarding your required monthly training totals.

In a nutshell, you will need to do the following once you've visited the webpage:

- Complete the Benefitness Partners waiver
- Fill out the Health and Activity Questionnaire
- Create a TrainingPeaks account

Once your TrainingPeaks account is set up, you will notice a series of workouts appear on your account that our Benefitness coaches add. You will want to download compatible apps that will track your workouts. More specific details about these can be found on the Training Center page.

### Verifiable Miles and Workouts

As stated on your Training Center webpage, all training miles must be tracked in real time (preferably with a GPS like a bike computer or apps like Strava, Wahoo Fitness or a smart watch) and uploaded to your TrainingPeaks account with an attached workout file. You cannot make up numbers here. You will only be doing yourself, and your teammates, a disservice if you do not train.

When you train, we highly encourage getting your miles outside on the road (even when it may be cold or rainy outside). Training outside on the road helps you gain experience navigating through various scenarios and build up your situational awareness.

- **Attend group rides** - Riding in a group is vastly different than riding by yourself. Since you will always be in a group this summer, we want you to find a group ride to join. You will learn and be able to practice the various forms of communication cyclists have when riding in a group.
- **Ride in the rain** - At some point along your trip you will encounter rain. It is inevitable. Getting practice on the road in wet conditions will help you on the trip. Keep in mind that roads may be slick in spot so be extra careful, especially on curves and making turns.
- **Climb a few hills** - All of our routes have hills or mountain ranges at some point. Yes, even Gear Up Florida. Gaining experience climbing hills will vastly improve your cycling strength and endurance for your trip this summer.

For indoor rides and workouts, if you have sensors for speed, cadence, heart rate, or even power that connect with a device, then go ahead and record this data and upload it to TrainingPeaks. If you don't have any sensors, still begin an indoor cycling activity in an app and enter the time and distance at the end when you finish recording. If you're not sure how far you went, estimate 12-15 miles per hour for each ride, depending on your effort.

For strength training workouts, we prefer to see your heart rate data if you have a device such as an Apple Watch, Garmin, or Fitbit that can record this during your workout. If you don't have one, that's okay. We don't require it, so in order to get credit for these workouts, just begin an activity when you start working out and upload the activity with the timestamp to TrainingPeaks. We recommend Wahoo Fitness because it will automatically upload your activity to TrainingPeaks.

***You will not receive credit for workouts that are entered directly in TrainingPeaks without a file associated with it.*** You should be uploading workouts as you record them and not entering data of exercise you claim to have done at the end of the month.

Even though you are able to record workouts using GPS in your phone or watch, it's important to have your current speed and distance in front of you while you ride. In fact, ***we require cyclists to have a dedicated handlebar-mounted bike computer*** on Gear Up Florida and Journey of Hope. This will help you train, develop as a cyclist riding in a pace line, and ultimately help keep you safe on the road. Cateye and others make simple, inexpensive, and reliable devices that work on any bike.

## Training Benchmarks

All cyclists will be required to hit various training benchmarks throughout the year leading up to your trip. These benchmarks are set to prepare you as cyclists, both physically and mentally for your trip ahead. Safety is a top priority of The Ability Experience; therefore we expect cyclists to take time to prepare, train and gain proper experience to be safe and effective cyclists out on the road.

	Time (Hours)	Verifiable Miles
November	10	90
December	15	150
January	18	180
February	20	200
March	21	210
April	22	225
May	24	250
Totals	130	1,305

Every month, cycling coaches Alan and Corey, and your Regional Director will be reviewing your verified miles on your TrainingPeaks account. ***If you fall behind on training, you are putting your position on the team at risk.*** There are consequences implemented throughout the Spring for any cyclist that falls behind on training. Make training for your event a priority. The Ability Experience staff and cycling coaches will take you off the bike if your level of cycling ability poses a risk to you or your team's safety.

## Training Webinars

Every month our Benefit Fitness Partners coaches, Alan and Corey will host webinars that review various topics to help cyclists prepare both mentally and physically for the summer. These webinars are meant to provide educational resources about cycling, proper training techniques, safety on the road, and nutrition. Each month, cyclists must also take the webinar's corresponding quiz (due dates are outlined in the requirements section). Don't remember something that a coach talked about in the beginning of the training process? You can always go back and watch any video to refresh your memory on the content or reach out to the coaches directly.

## Pre-Trip Nutrition

Preparing for your event as a cyclist takes more than just logging in the miles on the bike. Nutrition plays a huge part in making everything come together. Coach Alan Greening from Benefit Fitness Partners digs into the details of how you can work on your nutrition pre-trip to get your body in a better, healthier, and stronger spot when beginning your journey this summer.

### General Nutrition for Cyclists!

A lot - and I mean A LOT - has been written over the years about nutrition in sports. It all pretty much started with the invention of something called Gatorade at the University of Florida (ah, so that's where the "Gator" thing came from) in 1965 when a bunch of guys (football coaches, doctors and other assorted scientists) noticed that players' performances suffered late in games and practice sessions, especially on particularly hot days. It didn't take them all that long to figure out that the players were **burning sugar and losing water and salt and other electrolytes** in their sweat. So, the solution was

simple: invent a drink made up primarily of water but containing sugar and salt and a few other minerals. Job done. End of story. Well, not quite.

Fast-forward over 50 years and there are literally hundreds of gels and bars and powders and drinks all claiming to work wonders for sports performance, and yet we still see people 'hit the wall' in marathons or throw up in triathlons or run off the football field to - ahem - evacuate their bowels. I guess the answer wasn't so simple after all. We're still searching for the perfect (legal) performance enhancer that will allow us to finish strong no matter how tough and long our day has been while, at the same time, never giving us even a flutter of gastrointestinal discomfort...

You won't be surprised to learn that every sports doctor, exercise physiologist, personal trainer, or gym-rat will claim to have found 'da bomb', or at the very least something that works for them. I guess I'm no different, so here's my advice: ditch **ALL** the sports nutrition products and **EAT REAL FOOD** instead (at least for now).

Let me explain. The body and brain work very efficiently and effectively if you feed them the 'right' foods. Figuring out what those are is obviously the crux of the matter, but I can tell you unequivocally that it's not Cinnamon Toast Crunch, pumpkin spice lattes, or Krispy Kreme doughnuts. In other words, we **DO** know that *the more minimally processed your food is, the better it's received and used and stored in the body*. That's just a simple throwback to our ancient ancestors, who were hunters and gatherers and foragers for thousands of years before the introduction of modern agriculture and Dairy Queen drive-thrus.

*So, in a nutshell, we should be eating fruits and vegetables and beans and legumes and eggs and steak and chicken and fish and pork - basically everything that grows in the ground or has (or had) a face. They should be in as natural a state as possible (preferably fresh but occasionally frozen or canned) with zero or few additives.*

But "how does this relate to me riding a bike?", I hear you ask, and "how do I specifically fuel up for these crazy hard and long training sessions?" The answer is simple: you **DON'T** specifically do anything. Let me give you some of the science. All of you will know that food is made up of proteins and fats and carbohydrates. You will also probably know that all three of these macro nutrients are used in the body every day to provide energy, rebuild muscle, and keep the vital organs working properly. If we focus for a moment on the concept of energy then you'll also intuitively know that what we're all trying to do every day is balance the equation: we all burn energy (call them calories if you must) going about our normal tasks, and then burn a little more if we are running (or cycling) around. At the same time, we replace that burned energy by eating food, and **IF** we eat real, natural foods, our body is very good at balancing the energy equation without us having to give it too much thought.

Okay that's simple enough, but I still haven't answered the training question, so here goes. We can balance the energy equation in lots of different ways, but if we only eat fat, for example - like slamming bottles of olive oil - then we will feel really, really bad most of the time. Same goes for protein, but it's a lot more expensive and causes a lot more constipation! We'll feel pretty good in the short term if we just eat carbohydrates all day: pasta, rice, chips, candy, cookies, cereal, etc. but we run the risk of putting on a ton of weight (it's a hormonal thing that I'll talk about another day) and will most likely develop diabetes. So of course, the answer lies somewhere in between these extreme examples.

The science tells us that the body prefers to burn carbohydrates as a fuel, particularly during high intensity exercise, and that you'll also always be burning a little fat and some protein. It also tells us that we don't need nearly as much in the way of carbohydrates (including sugar) as we think we do, and that the body will adapt over time and be better at burning fat if we 'ask' it to. So, the modern approach to both exercising **AND** health in general has become much more about reducing carbohydrates in the diet and increasing both fat and protein.

From a practical standpoint there are two different approaches to getting your nutrition right and they are not mutually exclusive, so you can do them both at the same time! On the one hand you have to give up or avoid simple sugars. Think about all the obvious stuff like soda, Gatorade(!), cookies and cakes - they are nutritionally useless whether you're training or not. On the other hand, you have to add more protein, especially things like eggs and chicken and fish and steak, and more fat: cheese and bacon and olives and avocados. If you do both of these things, you'll feel better and have *more* energy and be able to work out whenever you like.

In summary, what I want you to do is avoid all specific sports nutrition. I want you to 'fix' your current diet by cutting down on sugar and carbohydrates in general and increasing the amount of fat and protein that you eat. Eat real foods, the kind that you find in the produce section and at the butcher counter. Because you are exercising a lot your body will want more food. Give it more food but just keep to these same basic principles.

And finally, when you start getting to the point where your training rides are two or three or even four hours long, take some food with you. Real food. You'll figure it out.

## Regional Team Training

The purpose of Regional Team Training (RTT) is to ensure cyclists are ready for the summer ahead. ***All team members are required to attend an RTT***, which are held in locations across the country during the spring semester. Cyclists should feel trained, comfortable and ready to ride by the time you attend your RTT. You will work with a cycling coach and/or Ability Experience staff member at these.



### What to Expect

The official schedule is still being finalized but expect to complete and receive a grade for a cycling skills assessment. Think of it as putting your training to the test in drills that will demonstrate your ability to handle bikes and various potential situations on the road.

The skills assessment is comprised of drills that demonstrate cyclists' Some of these drills will include:

- Agility exercises - demonstrate bike handling ability when avoiding obstacles and communicating to riders at the same time
- Acceleration/deceleration - demonstrate clipping in and out of pedals, shifting gears, and braking on target
- Maintaining a straight line - demonstrate the ability to ride in a straight line when looking back over your left shoulder, drinking water, etc. This skill is essential to cyclists' safety to ensure you are able to look back and check traffic safely without swerving into traffic.

All cyclists will also go on two long group rides (averaging 40-60 miles per ride) over the course of the weekend.

Any cyclist that shows up to a Regional Team Training with visible signs of unsafe cycling behavior, or strong evidence of not training, you will be subject to removal from the team.

## Gear Guide

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Having the right gear is important for any trip that you take and doing Gear Up Florida or Journey of Hope is no different. From having the right bike to not overpacking when you head to Orientation, this section will help guide you as you get the gear you want for the trip.

### Getting a Bike

Cyclists on Gear Up Florida and Journey of Hope are required to provide their own bike, as well as maintain it throughout training and during the trip. If you have not figured it out already, cycling can be a very expensive sport, but there are ways to cut down the costs. Buying a \$3,000 bike will not get you across the country any quicker. The important thing is to get a bike that is the right size for you and that is dependable. Finding a bike with the right fit will make all of the difference when riding 70+ miles per day. You don't have to spend thousands of dollars either. There are many ways to get your bike at a reasonable price.

#### What to Look for When Getting a Bike

Bikes are made up of many different parts. Some last for the entire lifetime of the bike, others need to be replaced regularly, and others you might even want to upgrade on your own. Here are some basics to help guide you to the right bike for you...

**The Frame** is the most important aspect when deciding on which bike to get, both size and material. The size of the bike is determined by the frame. More times than not, you can get "sized" at a bike shop for free. Most bike manufacturers size their bikes by the height of the seat tube (typically 50-62 cm). Some use a system of S-XL, though. There is no industry standard, so it's important to always take the bike for a test ride before buying.

Most bikes today are made of either aluminum or carbon fiber, each of which have their own pros and cons. Aluminum bikes are more affordable. They are durable and will definitely get the job done. Aluminum bikes tend to weigh more and have a slightly rougher ride than the carbon fiber. Carbon fiber will provide a smoother, more responsive ride and is lighter than aluminum, but it is much more expensive. Carbon fiber is also more fragile, which leaves it vulnerable to being damaged. If the frame cracks or becomes compromised, it will be unusable. Either will work well but realize that the more you spend on your bike, the more you are investing in biking long after your trip.

**Components**, also known as a groupset, include your shifters, derailleurs, cogs/cassette, bottom bracket, crankset, and brakes. Shimano Tiagra or 105 groupsets will be the most common and are definitely good enough to do the trick for your trip. They are relatively low cost, reliable and easy to fix or replace in bike shops across the country. Top of the line components would include Shimano Ultegra or Dura-Ace, SRAM Red, and Campagnolo Chorus. These will be more expensive and more difficult to find on the road. They are more reliable and have better performance, but replacement costs will be more expensive if something breaks.

**Brakes** are also a big decision. There are two types, rim and disc brakes. Rim brakes are simpler to adjust and maintain, and typically cheaper. Disc brakes are newer technology and have greater stopping power and performance in the rain but are more difficult to fix and aren't always compatible with roof bike racks. The industry is trending towards more disc brakes, but cyclists that do a team event seem to prefer rim brakes for their simplicity.

**Wheels** are also available in aluminum and carbon fiber. Most stock wheels that come with new bikes are aluminum to keep the price down and allow customers to upgrade their wheelset at their own discretion. Buying better, lighter wheels is considered the biggest upgrade you can make to a bike because they account for so much of the weight. However, it is not a good idea to bring expensive "race" wheels on the trip. They are less durable and more difficult and expensive to fix.

For our purposes, you will be better off using stock wheels and buying a nicer set of tires that are puncture resistant and meant to last for thousands of miles in many weather conditions.

**Pedals, Shoes, & Cleats** are all necessary to begin riding. Believe it or not, many new road bikes do not come with pedals - so you may have to buy them separately. The most important choice comes between the two types of clip-in (aka. Clipless) pedals, which are road and mountain bike style. There are many advantages between road pedals and mountain bike pedals. Road pedals are more efficient by transferring power better. Mountain bike pedals are more durable, and the shoes allow you to walk around more without wearing down the cleat on the bottom. Most cyclists on our trips prefer road, just be careful not to walk around in your cycling shoes as they will wear out faster. Shimano SPD is the most common pedal/cleat system and they offer many choices at different price points. There are also other options from Look and Speedplay. The important thing is that your cycling shoes are compatible with your pedals and cleats.

Our advice is to buy a reliable bike with commonly-available parts to help prevent you from missing any miles on the road. You don't have to break the bank to make it happen either. Feel free to contact your Regional Director or Benefitfitness coaches if you have any specific bike questions.

### Other Equipment

- **Cycling Shorts** - You will need a good pair of cycling shorts to train in, trust us. It's also a good idea to get a cycling jersey with pockets in the back to keep your phone, wallet, or snacks safe and secure while riding.
- **Helmet** - Purchase a correct sized helmet for your head, preferably a high-viz one from a trusted vendor (we encourage MIPS certified helmets). Helmets have a lifespan of five years or less, so you want to make sure you have one that has not deteriorated. Stay away from borrowing a helmet as well. You do not know for sure how much it was cared for in the past, or potential cracks it could have. Never get on your bike without your helmet. For a Helmet Buying Guide check out the link on your Participant Center.
- **Sunglasses** - Sunglasses will make your ride more comfortable and keep dust and bugs out of your eyes.
- **2 Water Bottles & Bottle Cages** - Most bikes don't come with bottle cages or bottles, so don't forget to add them before your first ride and stay hydrated.
- **Bike Pump** - It's very important to pump up your tires to the proper pressure (typically between 90-120 psi for road bikes) before every ride. The skinny, high-pressure tires on road bikes require a pump with special valve called a Presta Valve. It's dangerous (and slower) to ride on tires that aren't inflated correctly.
- **Saddle Bag with Spare Tube, Tire Levers, and CO2 or Frame Pump** - What happens if you get a flat during a training ride? You need to be self-sufficient. There are plenty of videos on YouTube to teach you how to change a tube on the road. You will need to be able to change a flat tube before the trip.

When buying equipment, we recommend buying **high-visibility designs** whenever possible to help improve your visibility on the road while training and during the summer. These are just the basics, the things you will need to go on your first ride but will also get you a long way. For a more complete list of things you'll need for the trip, check out the Packing Guide in your Participant Center.

## Where Do I Get My Bike?

- **Bike Shop** - Bike shops are a great place to start because you can see a large selection of bikes available and get sized. Not all bike shops focus on road bikes or carry different brands of bikes. You may have to do some research or drive to different shops to find a bike you're looking for. Go to the bike shop, tell them about what you are doing this summer and ask if they would be willing to donate a bike or sell it to you at cost (this is where having a solid pitch helps). The margins in the bike business are pretty low and this is more of a rarity to get an outright donation, but it's worth a try. They may at least give you some free gear!
- **Ask family and friends** - As long as people know they are giving you money for your bike and not for your fundraising, feel free to ask family and friends for an early birthday or holiday present by giving you money to put towards your new bike. While the gift is not tax-deductible, it will have a huge impact on your summer. You never know, someone might even have a connection to getting you a bike for a great deal. Cycling is known for that.
- **Borrow a bike** - Here is a dirty little secret of cycling events - many guys don't continue to ride after the trip, which makes borrowing a bike a really smart move. Even if you fall in love with cycling, you can then buy a nice bike after the trip that isn't beat up from all those miles.

Some chapters have bikes that are passed down or you can connect with family and friends who have unused bikes that could be perfect. If you go this route, it is important to get a tune up and make sure the components are in good working order. Sometimes you may get components that needs to be replaced, which can cost a lot. Most of the time, there are easy fixes like new cables, repacking the hubs and getting a new chain.

If you borrow a bike and return it to a friend or family member, you should take it in for a tune up after the trip to make sure it is returned in good condition.

- **Find one online** - Seeking a bike online is another way to find a great deal on a bike when starting out. Join the "Ability Experience Bike Market" on Facebook where you can possibly borrow and/or purchase cycling gear from Pi Alphas.

There are also some Pi Alphas that manage or own bike shops around the country that may be willing to sell you a bike at a discount and ship it to you. If this is something you would be interested in, let your Regional Director know and we can make the connection for you.

Craigslist and other local buying/selling platforms usually have good deals on bikes available too. Be sure check that the bike is in good condition and that it is the right size before you buy. It's a good idea to find someone with more bike experience to see it in person with you.

## How Much Should I Spend?

You should easily be able to find a quality bike capable of getting you thru your training and event for \$800 - \$1,200. You will also need to determine how often you think you will ride after the trip. If you don't think you will ride again, then you don't want to spend over \$1,000. You should also expect to spend at least an additional \$300 on other equipment like a bike computer, rain gear, new tires, gloves, etc.

There's a lot that goes into cycling. You won't need it all right away. Likely, you will want some of these things down the road. So, budget a couple hundred dollars for them or ask for them during your birthday or the holidays.

## Should I Get a Bike Fitting?

The short answer is, **ABSOLUTLEY!** Having the correct size bike is one thing but making sure it is set up for you correctly is just as important. It may sound as simple as raising or lowering your seat, but there is a lot of science and skill behind bike fittings. Many bike shops will include this with the purchase of the bike. If they don't, then ask them if they would donate that service to you.

If you have bought or borrowed a bike, it is tougher to get the bike shop to donate this service, but you can always ask, especially if you buy the rest of your equipment from them. A certified bike fitting runs between \$100 and \$200. It will save you lots of pain down the road. An improper fit will cause pain in your hands, arms, shoulders, back, and knees. It's one of the biggest causes of injury from cycling. Often, your bike will feel strange or even more uncomfortable after the fit, but it's important to keep riding and allow your muscles to adjust.

Before you pack your bike, it is important to mark the following locations of your equipment: seat height, handlebar angles, and stem height. This will make a tremendous difference when you go to put your bike back together at orientation.

## Bike Insurance

During the event, you are responsible for the care and maintenance of your bicycle including all repairs. However, accidents can happen occasionally that are out of your control. There is nothing worse than having a bike that can't be fixed and having no options.

We recommend first and foremost you protect your investment with bike insurance. It is inexpensive and will give you the peace of mind over the summer. Insurance will protect you in case of an incident such as a bike crash, theft, or other mishap that could put your bike at risk. Some of the more common accidents are ones that happen to components such as a derailleur hangar breaking during shipping or a small accident that compromises a frame (if a carbon fiber frame cracks, it is totally unusable). Accidents happen and this will ensure you don't have large additional costs for the summer.

We recommend getting bike-specific coverage. There are several options, but we suggest Velosurance. They offer coverage on a monthly basis for \$10-\$15 or annual plans based on the replacement costs of your bike. ***We encourage everyone, especially those with more expensive bikes, to purchase bike insurance.***

Sometimes there are incidents where a bike is damaged or compromised that can create conflict on the road. Examples include events like a bike rack strap breaking and a bike falling off the rack, a crew member driving over a bike that was mistakenly left in front or behind a van, or a bike on a roof rack colliding with a parking garage or overhang. These are a few examples where insurance makes these problems go away.

***The Ability Experience will only reimburse up to \$1,000 for any bike issue where the organization is at fault.*** We cannot control the decisions team members make when purchasing a bike and cannot take on the liability for individuals who choose to purchase higher-end bikes. While these incidents are rare, they can happen. ***Additionally, crew members are not held liable for accidents on the road.*** In the examples mentioned above, cyclists are responsible for putting their bikes in a safe location and paying attention while off the bike and riding in a van as to where they are driving to make sure their bike is safe. To reiterate the importance of insurance, these issues on the road can all be instantly mitigated by insurance.

In some instances, bikes can be covered under a homeowner or renter's insurance policy. In our experience, most families do not want the claim on their insurance, or the deductible makes it not worth pursuing. Some insurance companies do offer a similar bike insurance product. It is worth talking to your insurance agent to get specific details. If there is an accident, The Ability Experience will do everything we can to get a bike to you as fast as we can. We have sent our own personal bikes out to

team members to ensure they can continue riding as quickly as possible. Sometimes insurance can take some time, and this ensures that riders can be on the road as quickly as possible.

## What to Pack

All items (excluding cycling equipment) must fit **INSIDE** your bags each day to be transported. This includes bedding items. Extra space should be left for team apparel and incentives received at orientation as well as other purchases during the trip.

Team members who arrive at Orientation with oversized or overfilled bags will be required to ship items home or throw them away. Following this list will ensure you are properly prepared.

### Gear Hot Tips:

1. Before you pack, write your name on **ALL** of your belongings (ex: bike, underwear, sleeping bag, etc.).
2. The more compact your items are, the better they will fit into your duffel. Use a camping-sized pillow as they compress much more than a regular pillow. Invest in a slim thermarest and grab a compression sack for your sleeping bag too.
3. CO2 cartridges won't make it through TSA. There will be opportunities to go to a bike shop at Orientation and along the route.
4. Use mail drops to your advantage - especially with bike gear. If you're unsure you'll need something outside of the required items below, consider holding off purchasing or packing it until you know that you'll need it. Mail drops also allow you to ship any items home you find yourself not needing.

### Official Team Apparel

Cyclists will receive two (2) cycling jerseys, two (2) cycling shorts and two (2) team t-shirts at Orientation. Crew members will be provided with one (1) team polos and three (3) team t-shirts.

Team members will spend majority of time each day in team uniforms. For cyclists, that means your cycling kit (jersey and shorts); for crew, you will be in your 'team tux' every day (team t-shirt and khakis shorts/pants). Once cycling is done for the day, cyclists will then wear your 'team tux' for all remaining programs for the day. Cycling kits should hand-washed in showers/sinks using antibacterial soap following each day's ride.

### Top Five Packing Mistakes

1. Extra Large Bags - They will not be allowed. We have limited space in team vehicles, and over packing will cause problems for your entire team. If it is over our size limits, you will be required to ship some items home and use a smaller bag.
2. Giant Air Mattresses - We **DO NOT** allow air mattress larger than a twin size. If camping pads are used, they should be compact and easily deflate.
3. Too Many Shoes - Besides your cycling shoes, all you need is a pair of tennis shoes and a versatile, comfortable pair of sandals. That's it.
4. Too Many Clothes - Most days, you will only wear two things, your cycling kit and team tux. There are opportunities to do laundry throughout the trip.
5. Expensive Electronics - We understand that we live in a digital age, but this trip is a fantastic opportunity to spend quality time with incredible people. If you plan on keeping a blog or recording lots of GoPro videos, bring only what is necessary. Most team members will not need a laptop and we do not recommend it. ***The Ability Experience is not responsible for any items that are lost, stolen, or damaged on the trip.***

## All Team Members Packing Checklist

### Bag Guidelines

- 1 Duffle Bag (Strict max of 90 liters, approximately 24" x 14" x 16")
- 1 Backpack (Strict max of 35 liters, approximately 20" x 14" x 8")

### Clothing and Shoes

- Plain khaki shorts (2 pairs, required for team uniform)
- Belt (Required for team uniform)
- Pair of khaki pants\*
- Sweatshirt or fleece jacket\*
- Rain Jacket (HV)
- Bathing suit
- Collared shirt/polo
- Casual t-shirts (2)
- Socks and underwear (4-6 pairs)
- Closed toe athletic shoes
- Sandals or flip-flops

### Bedding

- Sleeping pad or air mattress (Twin size ONLY)
- Compact sleeping bag or blanket
- Compact/camping pillow

### Other

- Microfiber/travel towel
- Razor (Team members are required to be clean shaven everyday)
- Lip balm
- Chamois cream and/or Gold Bond
- Toiletries/Personal hygiene products
- Personal medications and prescriptions
- Glasses/contacts
- Wallet (ID, insurance cards, credit/debit cards, small amount of cash)
- Mobile phone with data and cell service
- External battery and chargers
- Watch
- Pen/pencil (Team journals provided at orientation)

## Cyclists Only Gear Checklist

### Cycling Apparel

- Padded, fingerless cycling gloves (HV)
- Headband, skull cap or cycling cap
- Base layer and/or shell jacket\* (HV)
- Cycling socks (HV)
- Arm and leg warmers\* (HV)
- Full-finger gloves\* (HV)
- Toe/shoe covers\*
- Sun sleeves (Recommended for South)

### Cycling Equipment

- Road bicycle (See bike buying guide)
- Clip-In pedals (a.k.a. Clipless)
- Compatible cycling shoes/cleats (HV)
- Cycling Helmet (HV, MIPS safety certification preferred, purchased from a trusted source)
- Sunglasses
- Safety Triangle (sent from AbEx)
- Reflective Ankle band (sent from AbEx)
- Water bottles and cages (2)
- Bike computer (Phones/watches not considered acceptable)
- Saddle Bag
- Bicycle multi-tool
- Tire irons/levers (2)
- CO2 inflator or frame pump (CO2 cartridges cannot be checked on flights)
- Extra tubes (4-5)
- Optional: Collapsible spare tire, patch kit, lubricant, spare spokes (for unique wheels)

### Key:

\*Strongly recommended for TransAm, recommended for North, optional for South, not recommended for GUF

(HV) We strongly recommend high visibility designs such as florescent colors and reflective materials to increase safety on the road.

***All items are required  
unless noted with an asterisk***

### Provided Apparel and Equipment by The Ability Experience at Orientation

- Two team t-shirts
- Two team polos (crew only)
- Two cycling jerseys (cyclists only)
- Two cycling shorts (cyclists only)
- Front and rear bike lights
- Pedal wrenches and other bike assembly tools
- Floor bike pumps
- Bike racks

### Prohibited Items (Do not bring)

- Oversized duffle bags or backpacks
- Hydration packs (i.e. Camelbacks)
- Helmet or body mounts for GoPro cameras (Must be mounted to bikes)
- Triathlon, mountain, cruiser or tandem bikes
- Aero bars
- Full aero wheels
- Bike cases
- Double decker or oversized air mattresses
- Normal-sized pillows
- Cycling kits besides current year's team kit
- More than 1 pair of pants
- Inappropriate clothing (logos, graphics, etc.)
- Formal attire or dress shoes
- Large instruments
- Expensive technology (Laptops should only be brought if necessary, for blogging, videography, online classes, etc.)

## Where to Buy Gear

There are so many options of where you can find, purchase or borrow gear. Here are some resources to check out when you are looking to shop. *By providing these recommendations, The Ability Experience is not endorsing or promoting these companies and is not responsible for the gear they provide.*

- Local Bike shops: Often times your local bike shop is more than willing to help out when you tell them about the great cause you are contributing to. You can generally save a percentage, get items at cost, or if you are really lucky free!
- Performance Bicycle ([www.performancebike.com](http://www.performancebike.com)): Performance has some great deals if you get on the mailing list. They also have a great rewards program that can quickly pay for itself (\$20 membership for the year). This is especially true for new cyclists getting new gear for the first time. They also have brick and mortar stores all over the country.
- Steep & Cheap or The Clymb ([www.steepandcheap.com](http://www.steepandcheap.com)) ([www.theclymb.com](http://www.theclymb.com)): Discount gear sites where you will occasionally see high discounts on helmets, tires, etc. You will have to weed through some things, but you might find some great gems.
- REI ([www.REI.com](http://www.REI.com)): REI has quality, durable gear with a dividend program for their members where you receive a percentage back each year from all of your purchases.

**Sites offering a discount for The Ability Experience:**

- **Rudy Project** ([www.rudyprojectna.com/vip](http://www.rudyprojectna.com/vip)): Enter sponsor code: *BENEFITNESS* on welcome page 50% off 2018 Rudy Project Gear, 35% off 2019 Gear
- **XX2i Optics** ([www.xx2i.com](http://www.xx2i.com)): Enter discount code: *BENEFITNESS* at checkout for 60% off all XX2i Products
- **Giordana** ([shop.giordanacycling.com/discount/THEABILITYEXPERIENCE](http://shop.giordanacycling.com/discount/THEABILITYEXPERIENCE)): Enter the discount code: *TheAbilityExperience* at checkout for 25% off all Giordana Apparel (including sale items)

*Visit your Participant Center's Resource section for a link to other gear recommendations.*

Estimated Cycling Gear Expenses		
Initial Bike Expenses	Cost	Notes
Bicycle	\$800+	
Helmet	\$40+	Helmet Buying Guide: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhbnJhQVC-s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhbnJhQVC-s</a>
Shoes with Cleats	\$75+	
Saddle Bag	\$15+	
Tire Levers	\$3 ea.	You will want 2-3 of these
Frame Pump	\$15+	CO2 pump and cartridges work as well
Bike Pump	\$20+	
Gloves	\$15+	Fingerless gloves are perfect
Extra Tubes	\$8 ea.	We recommend having 4-5 extra tubes with you
Bicycle Multi-tool	\$20+	
Chamois Butt'r	\$15	You will thank us later!
Extra/Replacement Items	Cost	Notes
Replacement Tires	\$30+ each	Some cyclists replace before or during the trip.
Chain	\$35	
Tune up	\$40 - \$75	
Handle Bar Tape	\$20 - \$30	Some cyclists replace during the trip.
Chain Lube	\$7 ea.	
Tubes	\$8 ea.	Perfect for family and friends to send to you in a care package during the trip!
Replacement Cleats	\$10+	
Chamois Butt'r	\$15	
*Not all extra/replacement items may be needed. These are items that you can purchase on the road as needed and do not have to bring with you.		
*Giving the pitch can help potentially get you a discount on many items		

## Bike Maintenance

Having a general understanding of your bike, how the different parts work and how to keep it clean will make you a better overall cyclist (and probably save you some money). Whether it is attending a Basic Bike Maintenance class at a local REI store, spending time shadowing a mechanic at a bike shop or learning from an experienced cyclist, it is important for you to know as much as you can about your bike.



### Changing a Flat Tire

Being able to change a flat tire quickly will become very important when you are on the trip. Some days have tight time limits that will not allow your paceline to take its time at crew stops or with bike maintenance issues. By the time you arrive at Orientation, you should be able to change a flat tire in less than five minutes. Below is a step-by-step guide to changing a tire or you can also find a 'how-to' video on changing a tire in your Participant Center.

Just so we are all on the same page:

- The tire is the round rubber circle that actually makes contact with the road.
- The wheel is made up of the tire, rim, spokes and hub.
- The rim is the side of the wheel, where the tire lip rests. (It's also the part that the brakes grab on to.)
- The tube is the rubber thing that's filled with air. So, you see, you don't really have a flat tire, you have a flat tube.

### If you have a flat...

- Stop riding and find a safe place off the side of the road to work. Even if there's still "some" air in the tire, stop riding your bike, otherwise you'll damage the wheel rims.
- Empty the tube. If there's any air left in the tube, release it by pressing on the valve.
- Remove the wheel. It's easier to take the wheel off if you turn your bike upside down first. You will do so by releasing the quick-release level that serves as the axle for the bike. This does not need to be removed completely, just loosened enough to remove from the bike. You will also want to loosen your brakes, so the wheel comes off more easily.
- Remove one side of the tire. Use a plastic tire lever to move the lip of the tire over the rim, on one side of the wheel. Thicker tires are easier to get off and on. It is easier to only remove one side; do not take the entire tire off of the rim.
- Remove the tube. Before removing the tube, mark on the tire where the valve was positioned. That way when you find the leak in the tube, you can check the corresponding place in the tire to see if the culprit is still in the tire. It also helps to line up the stem with tire company logo on the tire when you put your tire on.
- Check the tire. Run your fingers all the way around the inside of the tire to check for any objects or cuts that may have caused the flat.

### Patch or Replace?

Depending on the severity of the flat (size of the hole in the tube), you can either replace the whole tube or patch it. If you go with patches, get the regular kind (black dot with a red border). A properly-applied regular patch will last a long time. There's no limit to the number of patches you can put on a tube, though once a tube has several patches, you'll probably want to replace it because with several patches it's more likely that one of them will come off. Don't try to use a bit of old tube as a patch; it's too thick and will give you a bumpy ride, if it even bonds properly.

### If Patching...

1. Find the leak. Pump the tube up to a slightly over-inflated size so it's bulging. You'll find the leak, and it won't permanently stretch your tube. Draw a circle and an X on the tube to mark the hole.
2. Prep the tube for patching. Release all the air again. Use the sandpaper or metal file that came with the patch kit to scrape the whole area really well. This will allow the glue to bond better.
3. Apply the glue. In a well-ventilated area, apply the glue to the leak area, to an area slightly larger than the patch. Wait for the glue to dry before applying the patch! This may seem counter-intuitive, but you won't get a good bond if you put the patch on wet. Try not to breathe the glue vapors.

Apply the patch. Don't remove the clear plastic on the patch yet. Apply the patch to the tube and press down really hard. Apply pressure for at about 60 seconds. THEN remove the clear plastic. If the patch comes off when you remove the plastic, you need to work on your technique (better sandpapering, more glue, wait longer for glue to dry, apply pressure for longer period of time). \*When all else fails, double check the directions on the patch kit. Once the patch is applied, continue with reinstalling the tube below.



### If replacing the tube...

1. **Find the cause of the flat.** If whatever caused your flat is still in your tire (i.e. thorn, piece of wire, nail, etc.), you will get another flat right away.
2. **Did the tire fail (i.e. is there a big hole on the tire where part of it flaked off)?** If so, you'll need to replace your tire. In an emergency you can place a "boot" between the tube and the tire, by folding a one-dollar bill or cut pieces of an old tube. If using a dollar bill, don't use more than a one-dollar bill in case it becomes unusable. If there is a tear in the sidewall of the tire, it must be replaced.
3. **If the tire didn't fail, find the puncture.** Match the location of the leak in the tube with the location on the tire. If you don't find it, run your finger slowly through the inside of the tire feeling for a tiny bit of glass or wire. If you don't find anything, check the wheel itself for sharp spots.
4. **Install the new tube.** Stick the valve through the valve hole. Put a little air in the tube, just enough to give it a little form, and put it into the tire.
5. **Reinstall the tire.** With your fingers, work the lip of the tire into the wheel rim, on only one side. You may need to use a tire lever for the last bit. Once you've done one side completely, do the other side. Be careful not to pinch the tube between the tire and the rim, especially when you're using the lever. Match the label on the tire with the stem of the tube.
6. **Reattach the wheel.** Put the wheel back on your bike. Make sure you put it on tight enough. It's tight enough when the quick release lever offers some resistance and leaves a mark on your hand. After you put the wheel on, tug on it pretty hard to double-check that it's not loose. Also make sure it's on straight — if it's rubbing on the brakes when it spins, it'll be a lot harder to pedal.
7. **Inflate the tire.** Inflate the tire until it's very firm. You should be able to just barely make a small dent in the tire by pressing on it with your thumb while your fingers hold the wheel under it. Your tire should be inflated to the pressure indicated on the sidewall of your tire (typically 90-110 psi).
8. **Put the valve cap back on.** This will keep the air in if the valve has a slow leak.
9. **Tighten the quick release lever on your brakes.** Don't forget this part! Breaks help when you want to stop.

### Cleaning your Bike

Being able to properly clean and maintain your bike will save you time and money. If you are riding regularly, it is probably a good rule of thumb to wash your bike every two or three weeks. This can vary based on how much you ride as well as road and weather conditions. If you ride in the rain, or wet conditions, then you should wash your bike as soon as possible after completing the ride. Cleaning your bike regularly also gives you the opportunity to inspect all of the components of the bike to make sure they are in good, working order. You can also find a video on how to clean your bike in the Participant Center.

1. **Pre-wash prep:** Fill two buckets with soap and water. One bucket will be for the drivetrain (derailleurs, chain, and cogs) and wheels and the other bucket for the frame, saddle, and bar. Always use the same bucket, sponges, and brushes for the same application. Switching will smear more grease on your frame than there was before you started, or worse, cause scratches.

2. **Remove the wheels:** Check for cuts or punctures in the tires. Wiggle the cassette to see if it's loose and check for signs of excessive wear, such as missing or sharp, pointy teeth. Also, remove computer and saddlebag.
3. **Degrease:** Wet the bike with the hose, but don't use high pressure and avoid spraying directly at the bearings in the headset and the bottom bracket. Then spray the drivetrain with degreaser (i.e. Simple Green, Finish Line, or WD40) and scrub with brushes. Keep the degreaser away from the brakes, brake pads, and bearings. When you degrease your cassette, angle the wheel at 45 degrees to keep grime from your hub and rim. A toothbrush is the ideal tool for cleaning pedals and chains. Mix some degreaser and water, dip the brush and scrub. After cleaning, you should lube the pedal. Rule of thumb: black chain bad, gray chain good, silver chain best.
4. **Scrub:** Using the drivetrain bucket and brushes, scrub the rings, cranks, and derailleurs really good until the gunk is gone and the run-off water is clean. Using the other bucket, start at the top of the bike and work your way down.
5. **Rinse:** When you have given the entire bike a good scrubbing, rinse with the hose using gentle water pressure-again starting at the top and working your way down.
6. **Clean wheels:** Start with the rear. With the cassette facing the ground at a 45-degree angle, shoot it with a bit of degreaser- this way the dirty sludge drains away from your clean shiny hub. Using the frame bucket and a Scotch-Brite pad, give the rest of the rear and the front wheel a good wash. Then rinse. Use a new Scotch Brite pad to clean rims.
7. **Dry off:** Before you put your wheels back on, inspect brake pads for wear. If the pad surface is shiny, buff it with sandpaper. After spinning the wheel a bit to remove water, place them back in the frame. Then bounce the bike a few times on the ground to shake off more water. Use a clean, dry towel or rag to wipe off the remaining water. Give the chain a good spin.
8. **Inspect:** Closely examine your frame for cracks or signs of rust, paying close attention to cracked paint. Lube it up and you are ready for your next ride.



### Adjusting your Brakes

If your bike has **Caliper brakes**, the kind you find on most road bikes, these are among the easiest to maintain components that you will encounter. They usually go out of whack four ways: rubbing, poor stopping, scraping and squealing. Here are a few tips to maintaining your brakes:

***If your brakes are rubbing...*** It's usually one pad rubbing because the caliper has become off-center.

Here's how to check and correct:

1. With your bike on the ground, open and close the wheel quick-release to make sure the frame is sitting atop the axle, which ensures the wheel is centered.

### ***Still rubbing?***

2. Spin the wheels and see if they're true. Not it?
3. Squeeze the brake and release. Sometimes the caliper arm is just hung up on the spring. Didn't do it?
4. Check the pivot bolt. Most tighten with a 5-mm Allen wrench. If yours is loose, center the brake and tighten the nut. Tight enough but still rubbing?
5. Center the caliper arms. Most recent brakes have a small adjustment screw on one of the arms. Simply turn it in or out, watch the space between the pads and the rim, and stop when the brake is centered.
  - a. On older brakes without this adjustment screw there'll probably be a flat spot on the bolt where the brake meets the frame. Apply a 13-mm cone wrench and you can pivot the brake.
  - b. For a brake without either of these centering assists, grab a handful of caliper with one hand and, with your other hand, insert a 5-mm Allen wrench in the pivot bolt nut. Move both hands to gently persuade the brake back to center. Snap the lever to check your work. Repeat as necessary.

***If you are experiencing poor stopping...we are*** talking about in dry conditions. If you have brake performance troubles on wet days, that's not unusual. Simply apply the brakes gently for a few seconds ahead of the stop to wipe the rims dry. Then you can brake normally. But if you're not stopping well on dry days, do this:

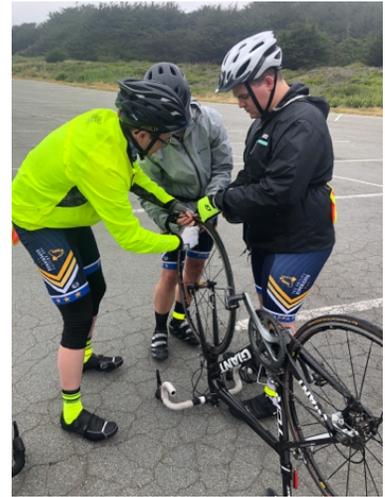
1. Put your bike in a stand or flip it upside down and remove the wheels. Have a look at the brake pads. Pads with remaining life still have water-sipping grooves in the contact surface. (Pads not made with grooves usually have a wear line scribed on top.) If your pads are worn out, loosen the barrel adjuster on the brake caliper to make room for the new pad and go to step 2. Otherwise, go to step 5.
2. Some pads are cartridge type – they slip into the brake shoe. Others are integrated so that the shoe and pad are essentially one piece. Look at the rear end of the shoe. If it's open, you can slide the pad out, so go to step 3. If it's closed, upgrade to cartridge shoes or integrated shoe/pads and go to step 4.
3. If there's a tiny screw in the side of the shoe, loosen it. Slide the pad out. Slide the new pad in and tighten the screw. Repeat three times. Skip to step 5.
4. Loosen the nut holding the shoe to the caliper arm with (usually) a 5-mm Allen key and remove the shoe. Install the new one, making sure any wheel guide (little fin-like protrusion that guides the tire between the pads when you're installing a wheel) is facing downward. Align the pad so that it's parallel to, and able to make full contact with, the rim (without catching any tire above or air below) and tighten. Repeat three times.
5. Long descents can glaze a brake pad's contact surface with a shiny finish that doesn't stop well. New pads can also be too shiny to work right. Deglaze or break-in such pads by sanding them dull with a small square of emory paper and some elbow grease.

### ***If your brakes are scraping...***

1. Check the pads for wear. Brake shoes without pads will make a scraping noise.
2. Got rubber? Then check for embedded objects – small pebbles, metal shards, and anything else not made of brake rubber. Dig them out with a small screw driver and the noise will go away.

***If your brakes are squealing...***

1. The braking surfaces of old rims sometimes load up with rubber and make the pads chatter at a high frequency – like nails on a chalkboard. Clean this residue from the rim with a little acetone on a rag. (Wear rubber gloves and safety glasses, and work outside for ventilation.) If you don't like chemicals, you can use emory paper.
2. New rims can create the same squeal, but usually because they're just a little too shiny. Dull them by clamping a square of emory paper (rough side toward the rim) under each brake pad, applying the brake, and riding about 50 feet.
3. Caliper brakes are generally so high-tech these days as to not need this step. But as a last squeal-silencing resort, toe-in the brake pads by bending the caliper arms with a small adjustable wrench. Slip the jaws just above or below the brake shoe, and then pry gently. Squealing will stop when the front of each pad contacts the rim first as the brakes are applied.



***\*\* Disc Brake Disclaimer- if your road bike has disc brakes, you MUST talk with the bike shop that you got your bike from, or a local bike shop that services disc brakes. Coach Alan and Coach Corey do not have ample experience with disc brake maintenance, so you will need to seek additional expertise for servicing them.***

## Packing Your Bike and Flights

Getting your bike to your Orientation site safely is incredibly important. There are a couple of ways you can get your bike ready and shipped out. Here are the steps you will need to take to get your bike ready for shipping. Before packing, make sure to mark the positions of your seat on the seat post and handle bars. Using a silver sharpie or electrical tape will help make sure everything is back in the same position (which was hopefully fitted for you at a bike shop) as it was before you packed it up.

**Get yourself a bike box:** Go to a local bike shops and simply ask for a box; they will typically have extra bike boxes they are willing to give out free of charge. You need to make sure you get the right size box so that your bike will fit just right. Be sure to communicate the size of your frame to the shop. From here there are two different ways of getting your bike ready to ship out.

- **Bike shop packs it:** Most bike shops will gladly package up your bike for you. However, it can cost around \$75-\$100 or more depending on the shop. You can always ask them to do it for free! While they will pack it for you, many shops will still require you to handle the shipping.
- **Packing it yourself:** There are a ton of great YouTube videos you can watch that will walk you step by step on how to take your bike apart and put it back together. You will need to make sure you have plenty of bubble wrap and packing tape on hand. This is to ensure that your bike stays in place and doesn't get beat up in the travel process. Once it is all packed you will be ready for the next step.

**Getting your bike to Orientation:** There are two primary ways to get your bike to Orientation, which is shipping it or bringing it with you on the plane. We HIGHLY RECOMMEND and prefer you to ship your bike to your orientation location unless you are arriving to your orientation city early or being dropped off the day of.

- **Ship via Bike Flights:** This is a very easy, and much more affordable way to get your bike to Orientation. In order to make sure that your bikes arrive on time please use the following directions:
  1. Go to [www.Bikeflights.com](http://www.Bikeflights.com)
  2. Click on "Ship" > "One-Way" > Fill in the proper information > Be sure to select "deliver by" and input the first date of your Orientation
  3. Selected shipping price
  4. Print the labels and tape them to your bike box
  5. You will have the option to either drop off the box or have it picked up (pick up cost an additional \$5)
- **On the airplane:** Check with the airline you plan to fly to Orientation as it can be very expensive (up to \$250) depending on the airline.

*\*Shipping addresses for Orientation locations for Gear Up Florida and Journey of Hope will be provided in the spring. Be sure to keep a look out for communication from your Regional Director and check the Participant Center.*

## EVENT BASICS

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Planning for your event is a year-round process for The Ability Experience staff. Countless hours are spent planning and preparing for what we hope will be a positive, impactful experience for you and the hundreds of volunteers that will support the teams throughout the summer.

### Journey of Hope Route Assignments

We know that if you are doing Journey of Hope, you are anxious to find out to what route you will be assigned. While they each travel through different parts of the country, we have tried to make each of them an exciting, unique experience with various sights to see and challenges to overcome. No matter what route you are on, you will have the opportunity to have a truly memorable experience!



We do our best to provide as many team members with your preferred route as possible, while taking into account many factors to ensure a safe and equally great experience for all of you.

Cyclists that meet all servicing requirements and deadlines and have reached an overall fundraising level of \$7,500 by March 15, will receive priority preference when making route selections. Please note that the route that you preference when signing up for the event is not guaranteed.

There is a limit of three (3) cyclists and two (2) crew members from the same chapter on each route. Each route will have approximately 30 cyclists and eight (8) crew members.

### Crew Training and Orientation

It is your responsibility to get yourself to the right place before the trip and back home at the end. We recommend booking flights as soon as possible AFTER receiving your route assignment.

Services like Google Flights ([www.google.com/flights/](http://www.google.com/flights/)) and Skyscanner ([www.skyscanner.com/](http://www.skyscanner.com/)) will allow you to see all flight times and prices available to get you to Crew Training (for Crew ONLY) or Team Orientation on time.

You can arrive to Orientation/Crew Training locations early, but you will be responsible for your own lodging or transportation until the first day of Orientation. On the first day of orientation, team members can either find their own transportation to Orientation or get picked up from the airport along with other team members arriving that day.

#### Crew Training Logistics:

All crew members are required to attend crew training and crew debrief. Crew members are responsible for transportation to Crew Training and back home from Crew Debrief sites. The Ability Experience will cover travel, lodging and meal costs from Crew Training to Orientation as well as travel, lodging and meals during Crew Debrief.

**Crew training dates and locations:**

Event	Begin date	Location	Flights booked to:	Flights arrive by:	If dropped off, arrive by:
Gear Up Florida	Saturday May 4, 2019	Charlotte, NC	Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT)	3:00 PM	4:00 PM
Journey of Hope	Monday May 27, 2019	Gig Harbor, WA	Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA)	3:00 PM	4:00 PM

*\*All Journey of Hope Crew members will travel to Gig Harbor, WA no matter which route you are assigned to. Transportation details for all crew members will be collected at a later date from your Regional Director.*

**Team Orientation Dates and Locations:**

Cyclists, DO NOT book your travel until you have received your official route assignment. The chart below outlines the details for your arrival at Team Orientations. Cyclist check-in with take place 10:00am - 4:00pm at each location.

Event / Route	Begin date	Location	Flights booked to:	Flights arrive by:	If dropped off, arrive by:
Gear Up Florida	Wednesday May 8, 2019	Miami, FL	Miami International Airport (MIA)	11:00AM	12:00PM
JOH TransAmerica	Friday May 31, 2019	Gig Harbor, WA	Seattle-Tacoma Intl. Airport (SEA)	3:00PM	4:00PM
JOH North	Tuesday June 4, 2019	San Francisco, CA	San Francisco Intl. Airport (SFO)	3:00PM	4:00PM
JOH South	Saturday June 8, 2019	Santa Barbara, CA	Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA)	3:00PM	4:00PM

*\*Transportation details for all cyclists will be collected at a later date from your Regional Director.*

**Orientation Preview**

We know that you will be antsy to get the trip started, but there will be some things that you will need to learn to make your trip as smooth and enjoyable as possible. This is where Orientation comes in. Think of Orientation as a time for teams to learn the ins and outs of what to expect for the trip ahead. These few days will consist of meeting your fellow team members, learning about what days on the road look like, and how your team will work together to get from point A to B on a daily basis. Expect team building, practice bike rides, and activities to apply what you have learned pre-trip to real-life situations you will face on your trip.

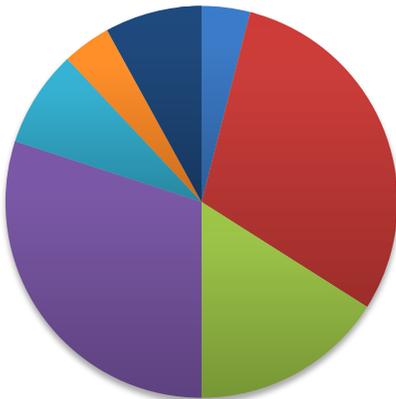


## Day in the Life

Are you eager to know what your days will look like on the road? You know there will be a lot of biking and Friendship Visits, but what else goes on? Eating and sleeping have to fit in somewhere, but what else can you expect? Take a look at what a typical cycling day and a typical programming/off the bike day looks like this summer.

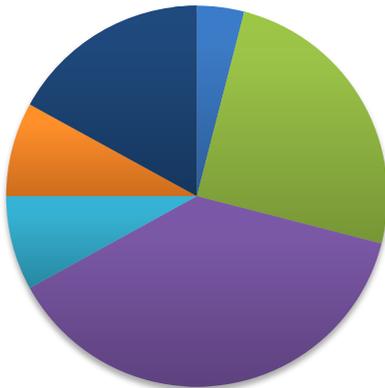
You will have a more comprehensive day in the life conversation at Orientation, but let's shed some light on what to expect for some of these:

### Typical Ride Day



- Morning Prep (1 hour)
- Biking / On The Road (avg 7 hours)
- FVs Meals, Sponsored Events (avg 4 hours)
- Sleep (7 hours)
- Squad Duties (avg 2 hours)
- Team / Crew Meetings (1 hour)
- Free Time (avg 2 hours)

### Typical Programming/Non-Ride Day



- Morning Prep (1 hour)
- Biking / On The Road (0 hours)
- FVs Meals, Sponsored Events (avg 6 hours)
- Sleep (9 hours)
- Squad Duties (avg 2 hours)
- Team / Crew Meetings (avg 2 hours)
- Free Time (avg 4 hours)

#### Morning Prep

You will wake up, suit up, and pack up your belongings before you head to your next city. You will pack your duffle bag in the Project Manager's van and your backpack in your squad van. The team cleans up lodging, eats breakfasts and does a Circle Up meeting before hitting the road.



## **Biking/On the Road**

This is self-explanatory and represents the time that you will spend traveling to the next destination.

## **Programming, Meals, Events**

Team programming is the time that you will spend off of the bike with volunteers, whether that is a meal, Friendship Visit or a local event. You will have at least one interaction every day with a volunteer that is supporting your team. You can expect a Friendship Visit several times each week, along with a few other events mixed in throughout the trip as well. You will also have programming on the days that you are not traveling to another city. Be sure to check with your project manager on the daily schedule for these days.

## **Free Time**

The majority of your free time will come at the end of the day after all programming is complete and the Project Manager has released you for the night. There will be days where you will have some free time between the time you finish the day's ride and leaving for dinner. You will have more free time on your programming days, which will be good for exploring the city you are in, catching up on laundry and maybe grabbing an extra nap.



## **Team / Crew Meetings**

The team will always have at least one team meeting every day, in addition to morning circle up. During these meetings, the Project Manager will share any announcements necessary. These daily meetings will typically be fairly quick. All of the meetings are meant to make sure everyone is on the same page.

The team will also have a longer weekly team member about once a week to review the upcoming logistics for the week and have a discussion lead by the team's Safety Committee. The Project Manager will give you insight into what you can expect over the next several days and give you an opportunity to ask questions about the week's schedule. There will also be discussions around how the team is doing with regards to safety on the road.

The crew will typically have several quick meetings throughout the day. The crew will typically meet briefly before the team leaves for any programming so the Project Manager can give any specific instructions on address changes, where to park, etc. The crew will also typically round up briefly at the end of the day before being released for the night.

## Squad Duties

Squads are the backbone of The Ability Experience summer events. The success of the trip cannot happen without the support from each team member. At Orientation, the team will be divided into squads that will have an assigned task to complete each day to help team prepare for the next day's ride. These sets of tasks, along with breaks, will rotate between all the squads throughout the trip.

The following are a list of all squad duties:

1. **Route scouting:** Each day, the squad leader (Crew Member) and at least two (2) cyclists from the squad will scout the next day's route. The squad will scout the first 25-30 miles, reporting any road hazards and/or direction changes back to the team. The squad is responsible for announcing their observations during the next day's morning circle up.

*Below are some important things to note when scouting:*

- *Construction*
  - *Areas of limited visibility (blind curves, switch-backs, hills, etc.)*
  - *Narrow lanes, roads and/or shoulder*
  - *Busy streets*
  - *Road debris (shredded car tires, areas of glass, rough road, etc.)*
2. **Ice and Water:** One squad will be responsible for filling all of the water coolers with ice and water so that everyone will have plenty of water for the next day's ride. Some lodgings will have an ice machine that squad can use to fill up the coolers, otherwise the squad will get ice donated from a local restaurant.
  3. **Overnight Cleanup/Lodging Check:** Each morning just before circle-up, this assigned squad will do a sweep of lodging to pick up any lingering trash or possessions that team members may have left behind. It is vitally important to ensure that your team leaves lodging in better condition than you found it. Lodgings have been lost because of the condition it was left by the team when they departed for the next city.

## Other Day in the Life Expectations

- **Lodging and Showers** - The team will typically stay in one of three types of lodging: school gym, church or hotel. Churches and school gyms will be the primary form of lodging. With that, shower will look different at every lodging you stay. Some lodging locations will have plenty of showers while some locations may only have access to one or two showers. Some parts of the country will also have limited hot water. No matter what lodging and showers look like, we ask that you be respectful of the space that has been provided to you and respectful of your fellow teammates.
- **Laundry** - You are responsible for your laundry expenses. You should have the opportunity to do your laundry at least once every 6-8 days. Some lodgings may have laundry facilities on site that you will be able to use, otherwise you will be able to use free time on certain days to go to a laundromat to do your laundry. To cut down the cost, you can share machines with other team members. Many teams in the past have also purchased a community bottle of laundry detergent.

## Team/Crew Meetings

Teams have multiple types of meetings throughout the summer. The purpose of each meeting varies (and depending on your role, you might not be included in all of them), but here is a breakdown of team meetings you can expect to see and be a part of this summer:

- **Morning Circle Up:** Each morning the Project Manager will call for a morning circle up to review the day's schedule. This will include the city you are headed to, an overview of sponsors for meals and where the friendship visit will take place. Squad duty rotations, route scout, and are also announced. A team member will give a brief presentation on the "disability of the day" and team members can dedicate the day's ride to loved ones as well. Each morning circle up is closed with a team prayer and a vigilance huddle.
- **Safety Committee Meeting:** Each team has a safety committee led by the team's Crew Chief with both crew and cyclists serving on it. This committee meets weekly to review the team's safety, near-miss forms and brainstorms ways to continue keeping the team safe as they bike across the country.
- **Team Meeting:** Every seven to ten days (or otherwise needed) the team will meet as a group to discuss upcoming logistics, check progress on team goals, discuss team issues, safety reports, and announce other special announcements.
- **Daily Crew Huddles:** In the morning before Circle Up and every evening before the night is complete, the Project Manager will call for a crew huddle. These meetings are meant to ensure all crew members are on the same page for routing directions, and act as a check in for specific role responsibilities.

## Friendship Visits

Prior to signing up for your event you may have heard the term "Friendship Visit" used and not quite understood what it meant. Throughout the trip, you will have the opportunity to visit with local disability organizations and engage in creating meaningful relationships with the individuals at that organization. These visits may include activities like a dance party, bowling, adaptive sports or sharing a meal where you will be able to meet some incredible people and make new friends. These interactions and connections you make at friendship visits are some of the memories that you will carry with you for the rest of your life.

### How often do they happen?

The frequency of Friendship Visits varies week to week based on where you are in the country and what day you are in a particular city. Gear Up Florida typically averages about 12-15 Friendship Visits each year. Journey of Hope will average about 35-40 Friendship Visits on each route.



## Do's and Don'ts of Friendship Visits

You are encouraged to attend a Friendship Visit with your chapter before you get to Orientation. If that is not possible, then you will still get plenty of experience during your trip. Either way, here are a few “Do's and Don'ts” about Friendship Visits to help you feel more comfortable going into them.

### DO

- Be engaged
- Get to know the individual(s) you are spending time with
- Dance like nobody is watching
- Step outside of your comfort zone
- Redirect conversations back to appropriate topics
- If asked, you are always in a relationship
- Be respectful to the volunteers and facilities
- Talk to the person, not to their caregiver, parent, etc. about them
- Understand social cues
- Treat everyone with respect, as if they were another one of your friends
- Learn! Learn about the communities, individuals and organizations that you will visit each day.

### DON'T

- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Don't use inappropriate or crude language (you never know who is listening or watching)
- Don't act in an inappropriate manner
- Don't take pictures unless given approval
- Don't have your cell phone out, other than to take a quick picture or video
- Don't bunch together with other team members
- Don't all focus on a single or small group of participants (spread out and involve everyone)
- Don't leave a mess (always ask and be willing to help clean up before you leave)



## Personal Budgeting for Your Trip

One of the exciting opportunities that come with doing Gear Up Florida or Journey of Hope is the chance to see different parts of the country that you may never have known existed, much less visit. With that, you may find different activities or souvenirs you want to purchase on your trip. All of these 'extras' will be at your cost. These would all be in addition to items that you will definitely need to purchase, such as toiletries, throughout the trip. While all meals and lodgings are covered throughout the entirety of the trip, there are some expenses that team members should anticipate.

*Your budget and expenses will look different from other team members. You can get away with doing the trip by spending a minimal amount, it all depends on your personal spending habits. Here is a list of possible expenses you may encounter that can be used to build out a personal budget.*

### Additional Transportation

There will be plenty of opportunities to go out on your own and explore the towns that you go through. The Ability Experience WILL NOT provide transportation to team members outside of programming and daily squad duties. This means that any transportation to additional sight-seeing or social activities will be covered at your own expense.

### Bike Incidentals

All cyclists will be responsible for their own bike maintenance. Just about everyone can expect to have some maintenance issues while on the trip. While most are minor, such as replacing tubes or the occasional tire, it is not uncommon to have parts needing be replaced such as brakes, derailleurs, wheels, and more. In previous years, cyclists who regularly maintain and keep their bike clean have tended to have fewer bike incidentals than cyclists who don't. A little luck comes into play sometimes as well (especially when it comes to replacing tubes).

### Laundry

As previously outlined, there will be opportunities to do laundry over the summer. Occasionally, you will have access to free laundry, but you should plan to pay your laundry each week. Many laundromats will only take quarters, so having a roll of quarters in your bag may not be a bad idea.

### Snacks

You will be provided with enough food to get you through each day. However, you may want extra snacks to munch on during your free time around lodging or head out for an extra meal or milkshake run at the end of the day. Again, these costs will be your responsibility. One way to have your favorite snacks without having to pay for them is to ask your family and friends to send you various snacks in a care package throughout the trip (mail drop locations will be distributed before the trip).

### Sight Seeing / Other Activities

Part of the adventure of the trip is exploring the different cities and its sites along the way. Whether it is seeing a monument, visiting a national park, buying souvenirs along the way or simply going to catch a movie, you will want to have a plan for how much you want to spend on these types of activities.

### Team Memorabilia

Towards the end of the trip, most teams will have team one or two t-shirts made to help remember their time together. If your team does this, and you plan to buy them, you can expect to spend about \$15-\$20 per shirt, depending on the design. Many teams will also draw names to give each other a gag gift during the last few days of the trip. If your team does this, you will want to budget some money to participate in this as well.

## Family Visits on the Road

The Journey of Hope routes offer the opportunity for your family and friends to visit the team during the summer. Invite your family and friends to attend the mid-summer family weekend in Denver (TransAmerica and North) or Fort Worth/Dallas area (South) for a chance to experience what life is like on the road this summer. There will be programming that they will be able to attend with you along with extra scheduled free time to spend exploring those cities with them.

Family and friends are able to visit you at any time during the trip. We simply ask that you let your Project Manager know a few days in advance so they can let our volunteers know if there will be extra people at meals, Friendship Visits or other events. There are some guidelines around having people visit the team, so be sure to reference the Safety Management Plan for more details.

## Mail Drops

There will be opportunities for family and friends to send you letters and care packages during your trip. For Gear Up Florida, there will be one mail drop around the mid-way point. Each Journey of Hope route will have at least five (5) mail drops throughout the summer. Mail drops dates and locations will be posted and shared with everyone before your trip kicks off.

## Cycling Event Arrivals

### Gear Up Florida Arrival

The 2019 Gear Up Florida arrival will take place on the east side of the Florida State Capitol building in Tallahassee on Saturday, May 25, 2019. Family and friends are encouraged to attend the arrival to



celebrate your remarkable accomplishment. There will be an awards reception to celebrate the accomplishments of the Gear Up Florida team later that evening as well.

The Ability Experience provides team members with hotel accommodations on the evening of Saturday, May 25, 2019. Family and friends wishing to attend the Gear Up Florida arrival festivities should visit Gear Up Florida arrival webpage where they can find up-to-date information about the Arrival, celebration and hotel room rates.

### Journey of Hope Arrival

The 2019 Journey of Hope arrival will take place at the West Front Lawn of the United States Capitol in Washington D.C. on Saturday, August 10, 2019. Family and friends are highly encouraged to attend the Journey of Hope Arrival and corresponding events that weekend.



The Ability Experience provides team members with hotel accommodations at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill on the evening of Saturday, August 10, 2019. Family and friends wishing to attend the Journey of Hope arrival festivities should visit Journey of Hope Arrival webpage where they can find up-to-date information about the Arrival, celebration events and hotel room rates.

## Cyclist and Crew Event Departure

### Cyclist Departure

Cyclists, you are responsible for your transportation back home after arrival festivities have ended. Your lodging will be paid for the Saturday night of Arrival. If you plan to stay any extended nights, you will need to make your own arrangements.

#### Cyclist Departure Details:

Event	Departure City	Recommended departure date	Closest departure airport to arrival location
Gear Up Florida	Tallahassee, FL	Sunday May 26, 2019	Tallahassee International Airport (TLH)
Journey of Hope	Washington, D.C.	Sunday August 11, 2019	Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA)

### Crew Member Departure

Crew members for all events are required to attend Crew Debrief at The Ability Experience office in Charlotte, NC after arrival celebrations are complete. The Ability Experience will cover transportation, lodging and meals to crew members from Arrival to the end of Crew Debrief. Crew members are responsible for transportation back home from Crew Debrief.

#### Crew Debrief Departure Details:

Event	Location	Crew Debrief Ends	Flights booked from:	Flights may depart as early as:	If driving home, crew may leave by:
Gear Up Florida	Charlotte, NC	Tuesday, May 28 at 5:00 PM	Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT)	7PM on 5/28 (crew are able to depart first thing on 5/29)	5:00 PM on May 28
Journey of Hope	Charlotte, NC	Tuesday, Aug 13 at 5:00 PM	Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT)	7PM on 8/13 (crew are able to depart first thing on 8/14)	5:00 PM on Aug 13

*\*Transportation details for all crew members will be collected at a later date.*

## Crew Positions

Great teams are made from great crews. Each route is led by a Project Manager (PM), who spends the Spring training to lead the team across the country. It takes more than just a good leader to have a successful summer though. The crew plays a crucial role in accomplishing the goals of the team and keeping the cyclists safe on the road. Each position has different responsibilities related to the event. We try to pair the skills of each crew member to a position they can excel in.

### Internships

Each year, several crew members are able to get Gear Up Florida or Journey of Hope counted towards a required internship or even college credit. Talk to your academic advisor or professors if you think this could apply for you. It's great professional and leadership experience all while having the best summer of your life.

### Positions

**Project Manager:** The Project Manager is ultimately responsible for everything that goes on during the whole summer. It's no easy job, but they spend the entire spring planning each day, setting up events with volunteers and sponsors, and preparing to lead a team of young men across the country.

**Crew Chief:** The Crew Chief is responsible for keeping everyone safe, well fed, and hydrated on every single ride. They are the right-hand man of the PM, ensuring that the team stays on time and makes it through each day.

**Finance Coordinator:** Keeping a good ledger is no easy task while traveling across the country, but this position works with the Crew Chief and Project Manager to make sure the team stays on track.

**Historian:** Capturing the best summer of your life can be a big job. This position is here to ensure that the team can look back on the memories for a lifetime. They also take pictures of the team with every volunteer that supports you, so they have something to remember us by.

**Public Relations Coordinator:** Our events reach millions of people every year, and it is this position's job to ensure media outlets are able to meet with the team for interviews and news stories. They will work with interns in the office to plan for arrivals and get as much media coverage as possible from small towns to major cities.

**Operations Coordinator:** This position works with the Project Manager to coordinate all the little things that go into making a truly successful summer. From bike shop runs, to directions, to Friendship Visits, they help make sure everything runs smoothly for the team.

**Social Media Coordinator:** What's better than spending your summer sharing inspirational stories, pictures of amazing scenery, and special moments at Friendship Visits? This position gets to do it all so that friends, family, and many others can be a part of your amazing trip from anywhere.

**Volunteer Relations Coordinator:** During the summer, teams meet with hundreds of volunteers and organizations that support you with a place to stay, a meal, a fun activity or a Friendship Visit (sometimes more than one). This position ensures every single one is happy and has a phenomenal experience meeting with the team.

## Cycling Event Lingo

Throughout this manual and on your upcoming trip, you might come across some vocabulary pertaining to the events that are unfamiliar to you. Some of the various event lingo has been defined for you.

Event Lingo	Lingo Defined
<b>Arrival Formation</b>	During friendship visit or event arrivals, the cyclist will ride two by two behind the lead crew car. (sometimes a police escort will also lead)
<b>Corporate Sponsor</b>	An individual or company that support the team and/or The Ability Experience with a significant financial or in-kind gift. Logos can be seen on jerseys, t-shirts, vehicles, etc.
<b>Crew Chief Meals</b>	Meals that are not sponsored by a volunteer. The Ability Experience pays for this meal, and the Crew Chief is in charge of purchasing the food and setting it up.
<b>Curfew</b>	6 hours before Wake Up - the time all team members are in their beds actively trying to sleep.
<b>Disability of the Day</b>	Every morning a team member will volunteer to highlight and educate the team on a particular disability.
<b>Seconds</b>	Either the PM or Crew Chief will signal to the team when it is okay to go up for seconds at a sponsor meal.
<b>Friendship Visits</b>	Any shared experience between the team and individuals with disabilities. Most common FV's include cookouts, bowling, dance parties, crafts, and sports games.
<b>Laundry</b>	This will be sponsored every 10 days on average. Team members are also able to go to local laundromat during free time as necessary. Team members are responsible for paying for their own laundry.
<b>Leapfrogging</b>	The strategy Crew Members use on the road to ensure there is always a van in front of and behind every cyclist on the road.
<b>Lights Out</b>	8 hours before wake up- lights will turned off at lodging to allow team member to get ample amounts of sleep.
<b>Morning Circle Up</b>	Every morning the Project Manager will call the team to a huddle and review the day's logistics with the team: Logistics include (location, miles, sponsors, friendship visit details, squad duties, team prayer, disability of the day, lost and found, thank you note writing, road conditions, weather, etc.
<b>Picture Formation</b>	the arrangement of the team for all team photos.
<b>Pillars</b>	The tallest person on the team, in which picture formation is based around.
<b>Project Manager</b>	The leader of the trip. They are the first one up, and almost always the last one asleep. When you're standing in Tallahassee or Washington D.C., this is the man you can thank for getting you there safely.
<b>Racking</b>	When a cyclist puts his bike on one of the van bike racks. (Example: mechanical issue, illness, disciplinary, weather)
<b>Rack Point</b>	the point along the route where all cyclist must pass before a certain time to avoid being racked for time. Used to make sure the team stays on time for sponsored events.
<b>Red Flag</b>	When cyclists reach the lead van and must stop at that van until another crew members is able to catch up and leapfrog ahead.

<b>Ride Dedications</b>	Honoring an individual for that day's ride.
<b>Rolling Rack</b>	occurs to move the cyclist up ahead on the route (Example: Construction, over a highway, or time)
<b>Rolling Red Flag</b>	When a crew member has to slow each paceline of cyclists down to tell them something about the route ahead.
<b>Single Burger Theory</b>	Take an appropriate serving size that would allow the rest of the group to get food. You do not want to be "that guy" that caused a guest or team member to not get food.
<b>Squad</b>	a concept based on a military platoon. Will be van assignment and crew-duty group for the summer. Consists of one crew member and 4-6 cyclists.
<b>T-Shirt Presentation</b>	post team picture, the PM or team member will present the sponsor a t-shirt and make them an honorary team member. They will also be thanking them for their support.
<b>Team Prayer</b>	Each morning at circle up a team member will lead the team in a quick prayer.
<b>Team Tux</b>	the team uniform that will be worn most of the summer. Team t-shirt tucked in to khaki shorts with a belt and shoes or sandals.
<b>Volunteer</b>	someone who is hosting the team for the night or sponsoring an activity, meal, snack, etc. for the team