

IOWA BICYCLE COALITION



ADVOCACY TOOL KIT

You are doing a bold thing by advocating for Iowa bicycling. It is our hope that this guide will make you comfortable and ready to be a strong advocate.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is for you

This guide has been developed to help advance bicycle advocacy in Iowa. Many bicyclists want to get involved, but don't know what to do or how the system works. In order to advance better bike policy, we need effective advocates who are familiar with the legislative system.

Bicyclists will be able to use this guide to contact their legislators along with other elected officials and know what to say when they talk with them. Advocates learn about the legislative process and how to navigate it in order to advance better bike policy.

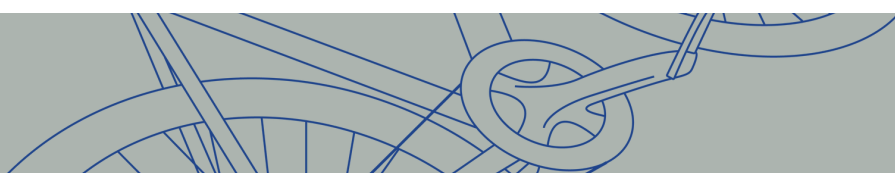
if you wish to learn more please visit our website at www.iowabicyclecoalition.org.

Made Possible By

This ebook is made possible by the members and supporters of the Iowa Bicycle Coalition. This organization is a grassroots movement of bicyclists from across Iowa to make bicycling safe and accessible for all. The mission of the Iowa Bicycle Coalition is to promote safe and enjoyable bicycling in Iowa through education, events, better policy, and growing a community of supporters. You can donate today at: www.iowabicyclecoalition.org/donate



Scan the QR code
to make a
donation and
support our work.





REMEMBER

Your elected officials represent you.

They need you to tell them what is important to you so they can do that.

Your opinion is vital and important.

We all make government better through our involvement.

You can do this.

It can be intimidating at first but you will be equipped to go in and speak to your legislators with confidence.

Be confident.

You are the expert here, they are learning from you.

Your voice can be effective.

Professional lobbyists get the headlines, but voters can often have a more effective voice.

Advocacy is vital.

Without voices like yours speaking up important issues could be forgotten.

There's more than one way to advocate.

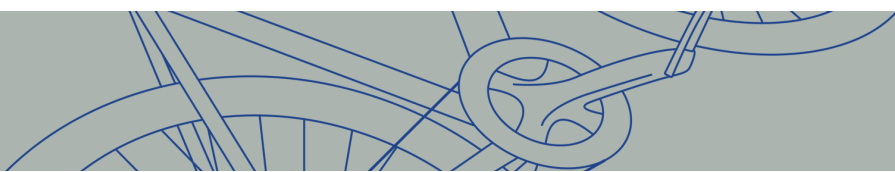
You can use all the tools available, not just face-to-face meetings. Use mail, email, phone calls, social media, and write to the local paper.

It's about relationships.

Don't make it just a one-off meeting, building a long-term relationship with legislators is key to having issues heard.

Your legislators need you.

It can be overwhelming and intimidating for elected officials too! With so many decisions to make, they need your voice and support to know what to do.



HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCATE

Know your elected officials

- You can find who your elected officials are for Iowa at: <http://legis.iowa.gov/>
- Follow your elected officials on social media.
- Sign up for their newsletters.
- Make sure to attend the events they list in the newsletter.

Know your issue

- Gather the facts.
- Propose a solution to the problem.
- Learn the legislative process.

Develop the message

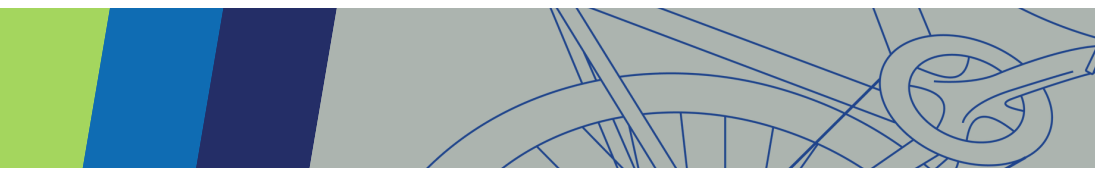
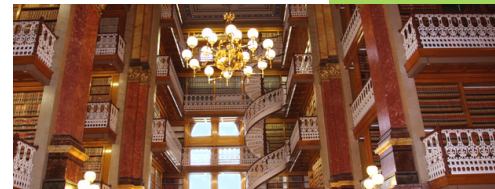
- State the issue & offer your solution.
- Share your story (or another personal story).
- Ask for their help.
- Don't make it political (the issue is bipartisan).
- Short & sharp (think elevator pitch).
- Always be polite.
- Always thank people.

Get the word out

- Invite legislators to your events.
- Attend city and county meetings.
- Visit your state capitol.
- Write letters, emails, and social media posts.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.

Don't quit

- Celebrate your wins.
- Be persistent.
- It's not personal.
- Change takes a long time.
- Stay committed.



TELL YOUR STORY EFFECTIVELY

Be polite

Have you ever had to listen to a rude person? Did you want to help them? Respect everyone, even those who disagree with you.

Prepare

Think about what you're going to say before you speak to legislators.

Practice

Write your story out, rehearse it, and try sharing it with others.

Be clear

Make your message as simple as possible, it'll be easy to understand.

Be personal

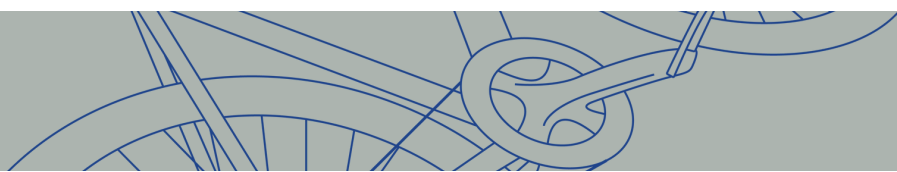
Personal stories have a bigger impact than numbers, share your story.

Be honest

Don't just make up a story, be a truthful source for legislators.

Be persistent & patient

The legislature moves slowly, everything takes time, keep it up and be patient.



WHO SHOULD I VISIT?

You should start with your local member and senator. After all, they work directly for you.

Iowa Bicycle Coalition action alerts will always try to connect you with your legislators. We don't believe it is effective to contact anyone but the senator and representative from your legislative district.

If you don't know who your legislators are you can check at the Iowa Legislature website: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find/> and search by your address.

Your legislators may be on the committees that are relevant to our campaign issues. One important committee is the House and Senate Appropriations Committees which handle money and potentially trail funding. Another likely committee will be the House and Senate Transportation Committees which handle things like roads and bike lanes. Your legislator's committees will be listed on their legislative website profile page and each committee's webpage.



ADVICE FOR MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS AT THE CAPITOL

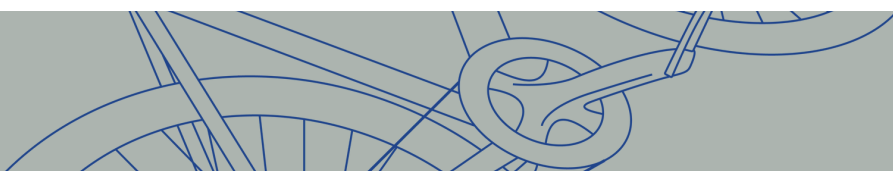
Legislators have a lot to do, they're busy with debates in the chambers, caucuses (which are not open to the public), and committee hearings (which are open). Be patient.

Unlike what you may have heard about federal legislators the state legislators in Iowa do not have a big staff force or an office in the Capitol. They have their desk on the floor and a clerk who helps them keep up with paperwork. The clerk can help you if the legislator is not available.

How to get time with a legislator

Head to the House or Senate: They're both on the second floor, the House is to the right and the Senate is on the left. You cannot walk right into the chambers, everyone needs to be accompanied by a legislator. To leave a message for your legislator you need to fill in a message slip to have sent to your legislator. Slips are located on a table in front of the chamber entrance and are color coded (yellow for the House and pink for the Senate)

- Fill in your name, the name of the legislator you want to speak to, and their seat number – you can find the seat number on a list at the table, it is not the same as the district.
- If you come as a group you only need to fill in one slip for the group as a whole listing the organization you are from.
- Circle the “wanting to see you” option and include your phone number.
- Give your slip to the doorkeeper and wait for a response. It may take some time.
- Wait at the front of the chamber, listen carefully it can be noisy.
- If the legislator you want to see isn't available the doorkeeper will call your name. If they don't that means your legislator was available and will speak to you soon.





When you meet your legislator

- Be confident. Legislators work for you! There's no need to be nervous.
- Greet your legislator warmly: smile!
- Identify yourself: Tell them your name, where you are from and what group you represent.
- Call your legislator by their title: This comes back to showing respect.
- Be brief: legislators are very busy.
- Focus on one or two issues.
- Be courteous and thank them.
- Don't burn bridges: You may need their help on the next issue even if they don't agree with you on this one.
- Follow-up with a note: Email or snail mail a small note to follow up, thank them and remind them of your visit.

If your legislator is not available

- Get another slip and write a note explaining what you wanted to talk about.
- Select the "left the following message" option.
- Leave the date, time, and phone number.
- Ask to have it left on their desk.

THE SENATE

Date: _____ Time: _____

To: _____

Seat No.: _____

Message:

_____ is at the rear of
the chamber and requests to see you:

_____ in the lounge

_____ at the door

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Representative:

Seat Number:

Mr. Mrs. Ms.

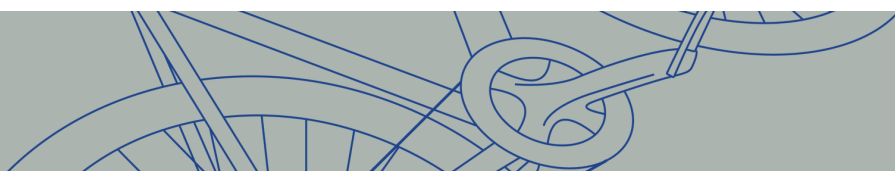
Of:

1. Is waiting to see you 2. Has Left Literature

3. Has left the following message:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Delivered by:



CONNECT WITH LEGISLATORS IN OTHER WAYS

Visiting and speaking with your legislators in person isn't the only way to advocate. You can contact them through phone, email, or letters.

Phone

Call while they are in session working at the Capitol:

Representatives: 515-281-3371

Senators: 515-281-3221

When they're not at the Capitol you can usually find the number to their office on their website, or get the number from them when you call the Capitol or visit in person.

Call the Governor at 515-281-5211

Write

Send a letter to your legislators:

Sen./Rep. <Name>

State Capitol

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Most legislators will have their contact address on their website for their office or a contact form/email contact on their website.

Or write to the Governor:

1007 East Grand Ave.

Des Moines, Iowa 50319



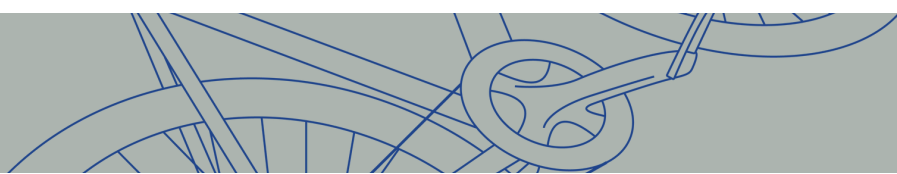
AMPLIFY YOUR VOICE INVOLVE MORE BICYCLISTS

It's important to not go about this work alone. It's difficult work and emotionally taxing, no one can do it alone. So getting others involved is vital for your own well-being and also for successful advocacy. The adage "strength in numbers" applies to legislative campaigns in a big way.

There are many ways to get others involved:

- Think of your "Call To Action". Do you want people to sign a petition, email their senator, or attend a meeting?
- Write a letter to the editor in the Des Moines Register or your local newspaper.
- Talk to friends and family, local bike clubs/teams, or community groups to build support. Directly ask for their involvement: People often don't know that they're needed.
- Refer friends to our petition on the campaign you are working on. Hint, use text messaging for quick responses.
- Use social media to refer people to your call to action. Templates are available on our website.
- Organize and host your own town hall events. Invite people who may be interested in taking action. Invite your elected official to attend too.
- Attend legislative forums and invite your bicycling friends. Ride bikes to the forum or hold a group ride following.

Remember this: people are more responsive when they are knowledgeable and when they have been given the tools to do the job.



THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Iowa General Assembly is the state legislature of Iowa. The General Assembly convenes within the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines. It is a bicameral legislature composed of an upper house, the Iowa State Senate, and a lower house, the Iowa House of Representatives.

The General Assembly is to convene its regular session on the second Monday of January of each year. The General Assembly can also be called into special session by a proclamation of the Governor of Iowa or by a written request of two-thirds of both houses of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly is divided into the 1st and 2nd sessions.

First Session

- Happens in Odd Numbered Years – 2001; 2003;
- The session lasts no more than 110 days;
- Per Diem ends after 110 days;
- Bills introduced, but not passed, are eligible for consideration during the second session.

Second Session

- Happens in Even Numbered Years – 2002; 2004;
- This session lasts not more than 100 days;
- Per Diem ends after 100 days;
- At the end of the 2nd session, all bills from both sessions that do not pass die.



WHAT IS A BILL?

A legislative bill is a written proposal for a law. Legislators, the Governor, or a state agency can introduce bills to the legislature. Anyone can suggest ideas for a bill, but you need to get a legislator to sponsor or introduce it.

TYPES OF BILLS

1. INDIVIDUALLY SPONSORED BILLS

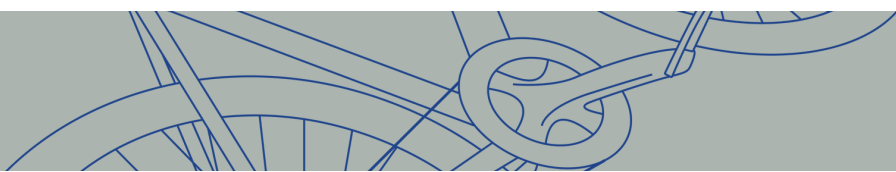
A legislator or group of legislators requests these bills and their names are listed as sponsors. They are House File (HF) or Senate File (SF).

2. STUDY BILLS

Only committee chairs can request these bills. They do not have a legislative sponsor (the committee is the sponsor if action is taken). Bills requested by the Governor's Office and state agencies also come out in the form of a study bill. They are either Senate Study Bill (SSB) or House Study Bill (HSB).

3. RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions do not change the law; they express the thoughts of the Legislature on a topic.



THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

STEP 1. REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

Once a bill is introduced, it is referred to a standing committee in the House or Senate. The House Majority Leader makes these assignments in the House; the President of the Senate does it in the Senate.

STEP 2. SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW

The committee chair assigns the bill to a subcommittee (usually three members in the House or in the Senate). The subcommittee holds an open meeting in which the public, lobbyists, and others can express their views about the bill and ask for changes. These meetings are often informal, but on bigger issues, the subcommittee may do formal hearings that may be videotaped. Subcommittee schedules are posted daily on the website legis.iowa.gov. A bill's chance for survival is often determined at this early level.

STEP 3. COMMITTEE ACTION

If the majority of the subcommittee members approve the bill, it can move on to the full committee for action. The committee can amend the bill or pass it with no changes. If the committee does not act on a bill, it will not move on to the next level (the bill "dies" in committee).

STEP 4. DEBATE

Once a bill passes out of committee, it is placed on the Calendar. The House Majority Leader and President of the Senate decide which bills will be debated each day and place them on a smaller calendar, called the Daily Debate Calendar. Bill sponsors may have to lobby their leaders to get a bill brought up for debate. Bills can be amended at this point in time.

STEP 5. REFERRAL TO OTHER CHAMBER

After the House or Senate passes a bill, it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route to the committee and floor action (Steps 1-4). The chamber may approve the bill as is, reject it, ignore it, or change it.



STEP 6. FINAL ACTIONS

There are several paths a bill may follow after it makes its way through both chambers. If the second chamber makes no changes to the bill, it goes to the Governor.

If changes are made, the bill goes back to the original chamber for approval. Lawmakers can approve the bill as changed (sending it to the Governor), reject the changes (starting the process to send it to a conference committee where a group of legislators works out the differences), or make additional changes (which sends the bill back to the second chamber).

If both chambers cannot agree with each other, the bill can either be tabled (left to die) or sent to the conference committee. Conference committee members work out differences and then draft a report that becomes the new bill. Legislators can only vote for or against it – they cannot amend it.

STEP 7. GOVERNOR'S ACTION

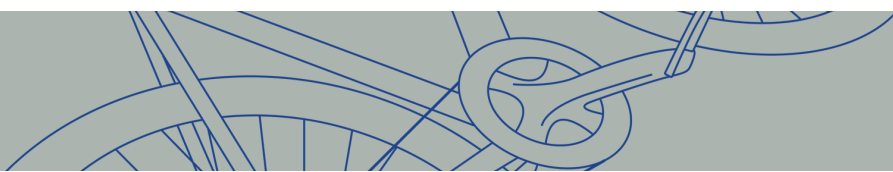
After both the House and Senate have approved a bill in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. If the Governor approves of the legislation, she will sign it and it becomes law. If the Governor opposes the bill, she can veto it (it does not become law). In addition, if the bill is a budget bill (spends money), the Governor is allowed to veto parts of a bill, while signing other parts into law. This is called a “line-item veto” and it is only allowed for budget bills.

STEP 8. OVERRIDING A VETO

If the Governor vetoes a bill, the Legislature may “override the veto.” This requires a 2/3 vote.

BILL RENUMBERING

In Iowa, bills often get renumbered. Study bills get a new House File (HF) or Senate File (SF) number once they are voted out of committee. The committees are then listed as the sponsor of those bills. Bills that are amended in committee usually get a new number. Legislators do this so people will know which version of a bill they are talking about. A three-digit House File or Senate File means 1st session of the General Assembly (HF 123 or SF 123). A four-digit House File or Senate File STARTING WITH “2” refers to the 2nd session of the General Assembly (HF 2123 or SF 2123).



COMMITTEES

A standing committee is a group of legislators chosen by the leadership of each chamber to examine bills relating to a specific subject area. Once a bill is assigned to a committee, the committee chairperson appoints a subcommittee. The subcommittee, usually composed of three members of the standing committee, reviews the bill in detail and reports its conclusions to the full committee. The committee may recommend passage of the bill, passage of the bill with amendment, referral of the bill to another committee for study, postponement of the bill indefinitely, or send the bill to the floor for debate with no recommendation.

Senate Committees

- Labor and Business Relations
- Natural Resources & Environment
- Rules and Administration
- Agriculture
- Appropriations
- Commerce
- Education
- Ethics
- Government Oversight
- Human Resources
- Judiciary
- Local Government
- State Government
- Transportation
- Veterans Affairs
- Ways and Means

House Committees

- Administration and Rules
- Economic Growth
- Environmental Protection
- Agriculture
- Appropriations
- Commerce
- Education
- Ethics
- Government Oversight
- Human Resources
- Judiciary
- Local Government
- State Government
- Transportation
- Veterans Affairs
- Ways and Means
- Information Technology
- Labor
- Natural Resources
- Public Safety

FIRST AND SECOND FUNNEL DEADLINES

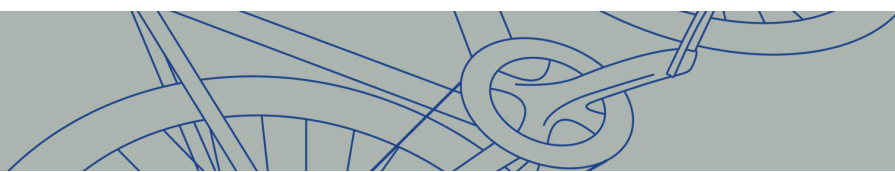
Each General Assembly passes rules which establish two funnel deadlines. Legislators file hundreds of bills during the first two months of the session. These legislative funnel deadlines ensure that only bills receiving significant interest and movement continue to be considered.

First Funnel

During the first funnel, bills in either chamber must pass out of their originating committee in the originating chamber. Any bills that fail to reach this milestone are no longer eligible to be considered at any level during the remainder of the session. There are exceptions to the funnel deadlines. Any legislation assigned to either chamber's Ways and Means, Appropriations, or Government Oversight Committees and a few other less common exceptions are funnel proof, meaning they are not subject to either the first or second funnel deadlines.

Second Funnel

During the second funnel, bills are passed out of committee in the opposite chamber they were introduced in. For example, a senate file passed by the Senate and sent to the House must pass out of the House committee by the second funnel deadline to be eligible for any further debate.





LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT LEADERS

The Iowa Bicycle Coalition's legislative district leader program connects bicyclists with legislators who represent them. District leaders actively seek meetings or attend forums with elected officials in their areas to talk about bicycling issues. We can count on district leaders to share important information, action alerts, and petitions with their bike club, team, or friends they ride with.

Much of the work takes place in the fall following the November election. Local legislative forums occur during the legislative session from January to May. One-on-one meetings with legislators can take place anytime.

District Leader Job Description

- Become familiar with the policy priorities. We provide a campaign worksheet with talking points on each policy.
- The district leader's top priority is to schedule a meeting with your senate and house candidates.
- District Leader Friday Meetings We hold meetings every Friday starting on the first Friday in December at noon. These aren't mandatory to attend, but it gives us an opportunity to share information about our progress. Don't worry if you aren't available. We send out notes.
- Attend the Bicyclist Day at the Capitol or Virtual Day of Action.
- Respond to action alerts and share them with your friends to take action.

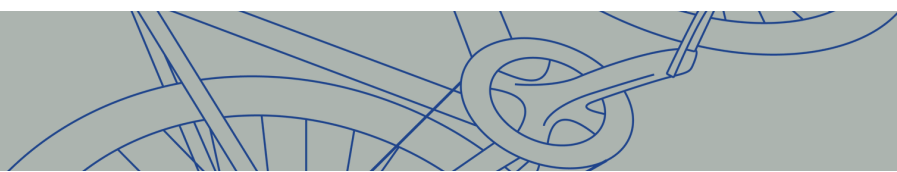
Which District Do I Live and Vote In?

The districts have been redrawn. You may no longer be in the same district as you were last year. You can check at <https://arcg.is/0WK80G>

More information and to sign up

Find additional information, schedules, talk points, leave-behind sheets, and signup form at:

<https://www.iowabicyclecoalition.org/legislative-district-leaders/>



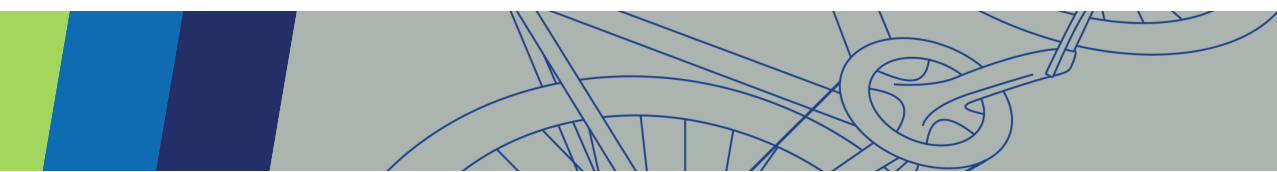
LOBBYISTS

The term "lobbyist" is defined as anyone who is directly attempting to encourage the passage, defeat, or modification of legislation for compensation or on behalf of an association. A lobbyist of the Legislature is required to register with the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House on or before the day the lobbyist will begin lobbying.

Lobbyists will register their client's position of support or opposition on any of the bills in consideration by the legislature. They may also register as monitoring or neutral to show their client is interested in the bill, but may not have a strong position.

The Iowa Bicycle Coalition employs lobbyists to serve as the day-to-day operations at the Iowa State Capitol during the session and outside of the session. Our lobbyists help us navigate complex legislative processes and maintain relationships with key legislators. They also attend functions outside of the session to regularly meet with legislators.

In addition, Iowa Bicycle Coalition staff are frequently at the Iowa State Capitol during the legislative session. Our lobbyists are familiar with our issues, but staff are often better equipped to answer detailed questions on proposed policy.



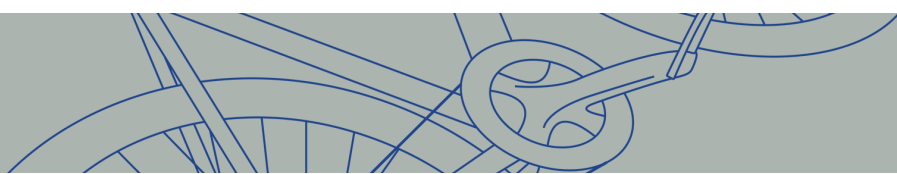


IOWA BICYCLING DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Each year during the legislative session, the Iowa Bicycle Coalition designates one day as Iowa Bicycling Day at the Capitol. The event is a gathering of grassroots advocates like yourself.

The Iowa Bicycling Day at the Capitol allows constituents to meet with legislators and talk about issues important to the constituents. The Iowa Bicycle Coalition reserves a space inside the rotunda that serves as a base of operations. Advocates check in at this space and collect printed information like campaign worksheets, and leave-behind information. Then the advocates go to the house and senate chambers to meet with their legislators.

The Iowa Bicycling Day at the Capitol can be an effective tool to advance policy. Many times, legislators have scheduled subcommittee hearings during Iowa Bicycling Day at the Capitol to allow participants to testify at hearings.





**IOWA
BICYCLE
COALITION**



CONTACT

Iowa Bicycle Coalition
P.O. Box 5562
Coralville, IA 52241
515.309.2867
www.IowaBicycleCoalition.org

DONATE

