



2026 Cycle the Erie Canal Buddy Program

The Cycle the Erie Canal Buddy Program connects new riders with experienced community members to provide support and guidance on their first bike tour and ensures that new riders know a friendly face when they start the tour. This program is for all first-time riders, including BIPOC, Women, Non-Binary and Trans tour participants.

Please complete [the application](#) to apply to be a mentor or request to be matched with a mentor by **April 30, 2026**. We will be in touch in May to let you know if you have been matched.

How it works:

- PTNY will receive applications from potential mentors and first-time riders through April 30, 2026 and will match up buddies based on the applications submitted.
- PTNY will host a virtual training session for all of the selected Mentors in May to ensure they are prepared to successfully serve as a Mentor.
- PTNY will send a welcome email connecting the Mentor and the First-time Rider, providing contact information and the answers to the questions from the Application Form to help the buddies get to know each other.
- During the spring and leading up to the tour, the Mentor should be responsive and available to answer questions from the First-Time Rider as they come up.
- Buddies should make plans to meet up in Buffalo on Saturday, July 10 (Day 0) to put a name to a face. PTNY may help facilitate a time and place for all buddies to get together.
- On the ride, enjoy the camaraderie of a new friend!

Mentor Expectations:

- Have ridden Cycle the Erie Canal with PTNY at least one time.
- Be familiar with the Cycle the Erie Canal Rider Handbook and know where to go for answers when a question comes up (PTNY website, Cycling the Erie Canal Facebook Group, email cycletours@ptny.org)
- Attend the Mentor training meeting in May.
- Be responsive and available to answer questions by email or phone leading up to the tour.
- Arrange to meet up with their assigned buddy on Day 0 in Buffalo.