



**NICA** NATIONAL  
INTERSCHOLASTIC  
CYCLING ASSOCIATION

Annual Report  
2014





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## Hello NICA Community,

Five years into our mission to bring interscholastic mountain biking coast to coast by 2020, our progress has been impressive. With 15 leagues in 14 states across the country, we are seeing unprecedented demand to create new leagues. The number of registered student-athletes has increased more than 60% over the past year to 5,006 athletes. We now have 395 teams and clubs participating within NICA and the interest from new regions grows.

I've traveled across the country to visit NICA Leagues, attending races, team meetings and team practices and meeting with NICA League Directors, student-athletes, coaches, parents and NICA supporters. I'm amazed by the impact NICA continues to have on the sport of cycling and communities around the country.

Over the years, we have accomplished so much. We have:

- Constructed brand new trails for new NICA Teams
- Provided opportunities for teams like the "Cycle Effect," comprised of young Hispanic, women to compete against students across Colorado
- Built a new generation of passionate and committed trail advocates and environmental stewards
- Attracted tens of thousands of people attending and participating in NICA events
- Drew communities together to support and host NICA races
- And, positively influenced young lives through the NICA experience and our values

It's easy to see why demand has increased. Our biggest challenge ahead will be filling this demand through rallying volunteers and fundraising activities.

Thank you to everyone in the NICA community who has helped us create an incredible new interscholastic sport built around inclusivity and equality and building strong mind, body and character. Please share the NICA story and help us grow!

Jerry Pomjje  
Board President / CFO Quality  
Bike Products (QBP)



# The NICA Community is Strong

With the passing of another year, NICA continues to achieve great success. Over the past year, we successfully launched competitive racing series in Georgia, Wisconsin and Virginia. We also welcomed both Nevada and Idaho into our growing family of leagues and began outreach efforts in these states to ensure robust participation in 2015. All told, over the past year, we have seen a 51% growth in student-athlete participation and an incredible 40% growth in our licensed coaches since 2013.

With fifteen leagues operating across fourteen states, NICA has very quickly established the foundation for cycling to become a mainstream interscholastic sport. Interest from new regions wanting to join NICA continues as stories of our success spread through plentiful media coverage and more and more parents, coaches and student-athletes share their experiences across the country.

As you will see in this document, our efforts are positively impacting the lives of individual adolescents, their families and a growing legion of adults who serve as coaches. Moreover, the success of the program is helping support local economies and allows participants to build a much stronger connection with the outdoors and between individuals from varying communities.

**“Building a suitable venue with appropriate trails for high school races has produced both short and long-term economic return, recognition of our community across the state, and increased quality of life for residents. The Town of Eagle has enjoyed tremendous benefits from our partnership with NICA and their Colorado League and I encourage other municipalities to embrace the growing interscholastic cycling movement.”**

Yuri Kostic, Mayor of Eagle, Colorado







NICA has shown that cycling can be used by schools to effectively engage adolescents to help them confront and overcome the difficulties of growing-up in today's complicated world. Moreover, by working with well trained coaches to set and achieve physically and mentally demanding goals through a sport that can be enjoyed both competitively and recreationally well past high school, NICA is equipping today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders both on and off the bike.

**"As principal, I saw our school's mountain bike team grow to become well integrated into both the school and local community, as well as a source of school pride. The team included a diversity of abilities and both young men and women, who helped and respected each other. The breadth of family participation in the sport created a caring, supportive community in the school and beyond."**

Carol Eber, Principal (retired)  
Drake High School, California

**"Why are we still telling students to sit on the sidelines when every athlete deserves to compete. NICA develops these athletes as good as any other organization and gives them the tools to be fit for life."**

Scott Craft, Athletic Director  
Rim of the World High School, California



# We Are Changing Lives

Unlike traditional school sports, NICA leagues provide athletic opportunity to student-athletes of all skill levels and all socioeconomic backgrounds.

There are no tryouts for joining a team. Any child who wants to participate is welcome to join their local team. If the child does not have proper gear and cannot afford to purchase equipment necessary to participate, NICA is dedicated to providing the necessary items through our network of community based gear donation centers and scholarships.

**“Being a part of NICA has been life changing for me and I’m hearing from countless parents, student-athletes and coaches from across the state who all feel the same way. Keep up the good work and know that what you are doing is making a difference!!!”**

Eddie Freyer, Director Alabama League

**“NICA and the Utah League have made a huge impact on my high school years, and on my future. It’s an incredible way to get more kids on bikes while creating a positive and fun environment.”**

Haley Batten, 2013 Varsity State Champion and 2014 National Champion (age 15-16)







NICA is providing an extremely high quality experience to a very diverse array of coaches and student-athletes across the country. In doing so, NICA is transforming adolescents into dedicated cyclists who benefit in a wide variety of ways ranging from:

- Improved test scores, grades, and time management skills;
- Boosted concentration, memory and classroom behavior;
- Increased self-confidence
- Strengthened social and cooperative skills, such as teamwork and problem solving;
- Reduced anxiety and stress.

NICA's coach licensing program is also providing the tools and support necessary for adults to serve as coaches and mentors to adolescents in their community and, in doing so, enables them to build meaningful connections within their communities. With 40% more coaches than last year, the program continues to attract new participants rapidly.

**“He has become a completely different person and his confidence, self esteem and body language have soared! His transformation is possibly the greatest coaching achievement I have ever accomplished.”**

Ken Mozak, Head Coach  
San Ramon Valley High School, California





## A Great Organization

NICA is a youth development organization that provides leadership, governance, financial and programmatic support to develop and promote middle and high school (grades 7-12) mountain biking leagues throughout the United States.

With a professional staff led by a committed board of directors, NICA exists to enable every American teen to strengthen mind, body and character by participating in an interscholastic mountain bike racing experience that is co-ed, inclusive and equal.

Every action that NICA takes is guided by five core principles that are fundamental to the “NICA Way”. These principles are:

**Inclusive:** All student-athletes participate 100% of the time. No one is “benched” and everyone is encouraged to try racing, irrespective of how fast – or slow – they may be.

**Equal:** All student-athletes are treated equally. Team scores are a combination points scored by both boys and girls.

**Strong Body:** NICA emphasizes wellness through lifestyle, nutrition and exercise. Improving physical fitness and overall wellness are at the center of NICA’s training and education.

**Strong Mind:** NICA student-athletes are students first. Our program encourages academic excellence.

**Strong Character:** All student-athletes are expected to work hard, respect others and give back to their communities. Our programs encourage and provide opportunities for trail stewardship, bicycle advocacy and mentoring.



The future remains bright as newer regions join the movement while our existing leagues continue to grow. This means more kids on bikes experiencing the outdoors, supported by well-trained coaches who share and model our core values of inclusivity, equality and helping youth build strong body, mind and character through cycling. Because of NICA, kids who never would have gotten on a bike are discovering the joys of riding a mountain bike and the access to the outdoors that it can bring.

**“From a financial standpoint, what NICA provides to the league directors, students, coaches and everyone else involved is an unbelievable value. For a new league to launch this program without NICA’s guidance, financial support, credibility and expertise would be IMPOSSIBLE.”**

Dylan Gradhandt, Director  
Idaho League

**“As the Director of the NorCal League, I’ve had the pleasure of getting to know tons of teens and their families. The common thread they share is the positive impact that being on a high school mountain bike team has had on their lives.”**

Vanessa Hauswald, Director  
NorCal League







# NICA

Inclusivity • Equality  
Strong Body • Strong Mind  
Strong Character





# The NICA Community

The number and diversity of student-athletes, licensed coaches, volunteers and supporters continues to grow at an incredible rate within the existing NICA leagues while the interest from new regions wanting to join NICA is not abating.

In five years, NICA has created a movement that is gaining significant traction as more and more communities learn that cycling can be used to improve physical and mental health, provide mobility independence, build camaraderie amongst those that participate all while providing opportunities to get outside and have fun!

## Business Prosper

Local businesses as well as NICA's partners and sponsors enjoy the benefits of NICA's growth. Hotels, restaurants, and bike shops notice increased traffic and sales. NICA's supporters gain constant exposure.

## Families Benefit

NICA student-athletes inspire their parents and siblings to get involved. Parents volunteer and resume or begin riding. Siblings provide support and represent the future of NICA.

## 15 Leagues

NICA has established leagues in high schools in 14 states including California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Texas, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Georgia, New York, Alabama, Virginia, and Nevada.

## 1915 Coaches

NICA licensed coaches create teams integrated within high schools and provide mentoring, instruction, training, oversight, and race support for student-athletes.

## 5006 Student Riders

Across the country, NICA student-athletes learn the skills and discipline of riding, training, teamwork, goal setting, and giving back.

## 395 Teams & Clubs

The teams and clubs train and support the development of student-athletes to honorably represent their school, themselves, and each other.

## The NICA Facts

The statistics of NICA's growth and impact tell a compelling story. Under NICA's leadership, organized interscholastic cycling is helping both today's youth and adult coaches become healthier and more engaged members of their communities. Interestingly, these statistics are remaining consistent even as the total number of participants increases quickly across the country.

**97%**

of non-graduating student-athletes are going to participate again next season.

**100%**

Team commitment toward trail etiquette and stewardship.

**96%**

Of student-athletes reported safe and inclusive team environments thanks to NICA licensed coaches.

**85%**

Of student-athletes will continue on to a 4-year college or university after high school.

**78%**

Of student-athletes say that their respect for other trail users and the environment increased.

**88%**

Of NICA student-athletes report improved physical fitness as a result of participation.

**73%**

Of student-athletes report their participation in the league inspired family/friends to start riding bikes.

**89%**

Of participants have a GPA of 3.1 or greater.

**67%**

Growth in the number of female student athletes participating in NICA.

**60%**

Growth in registered student-athletes from 2013.

**1.39 Mil.**

Total hours of student-athlete participation in 2014.

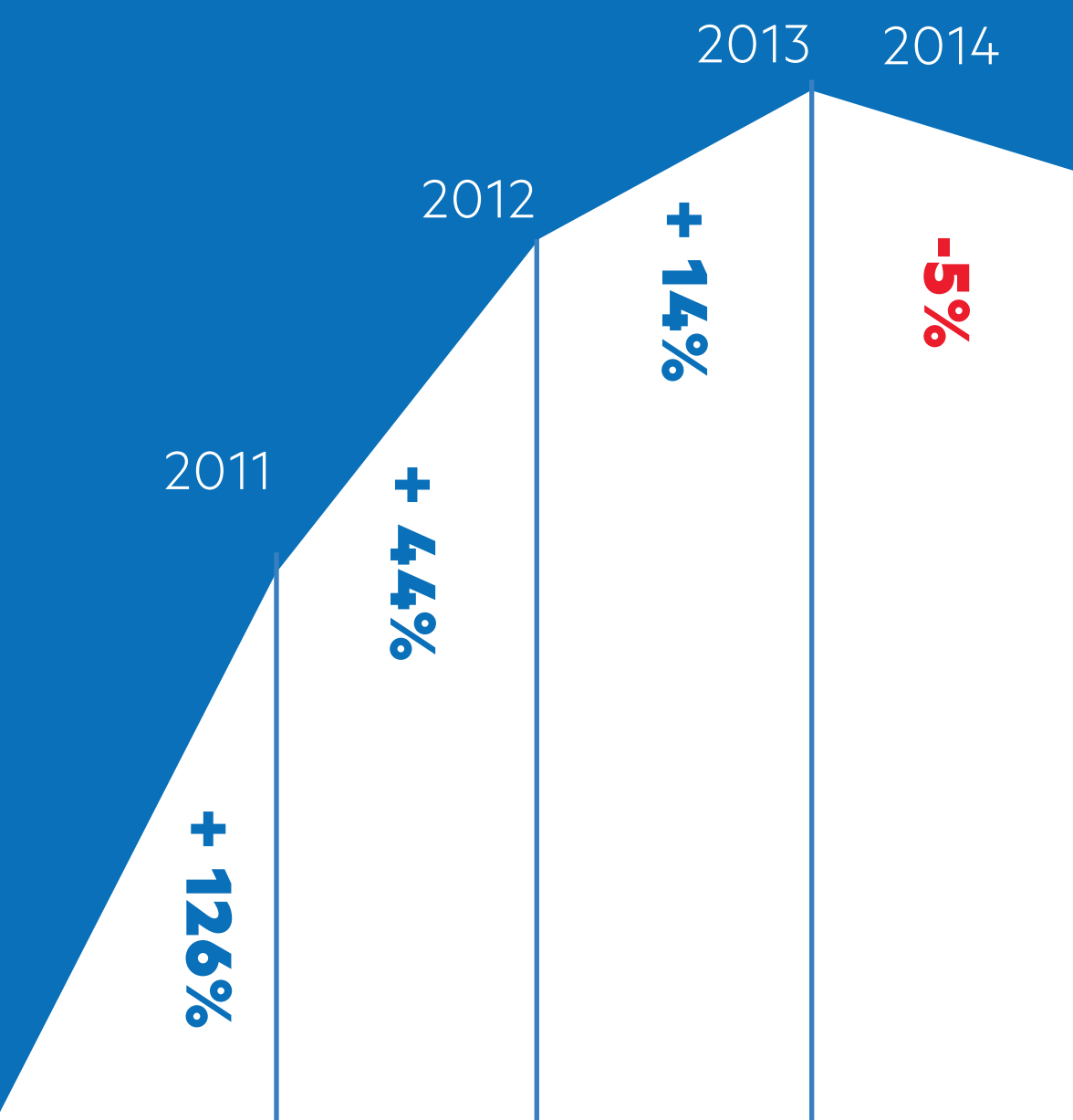
**4.2 of 5**

Was the average score given to rate the level of camaraderie at races.



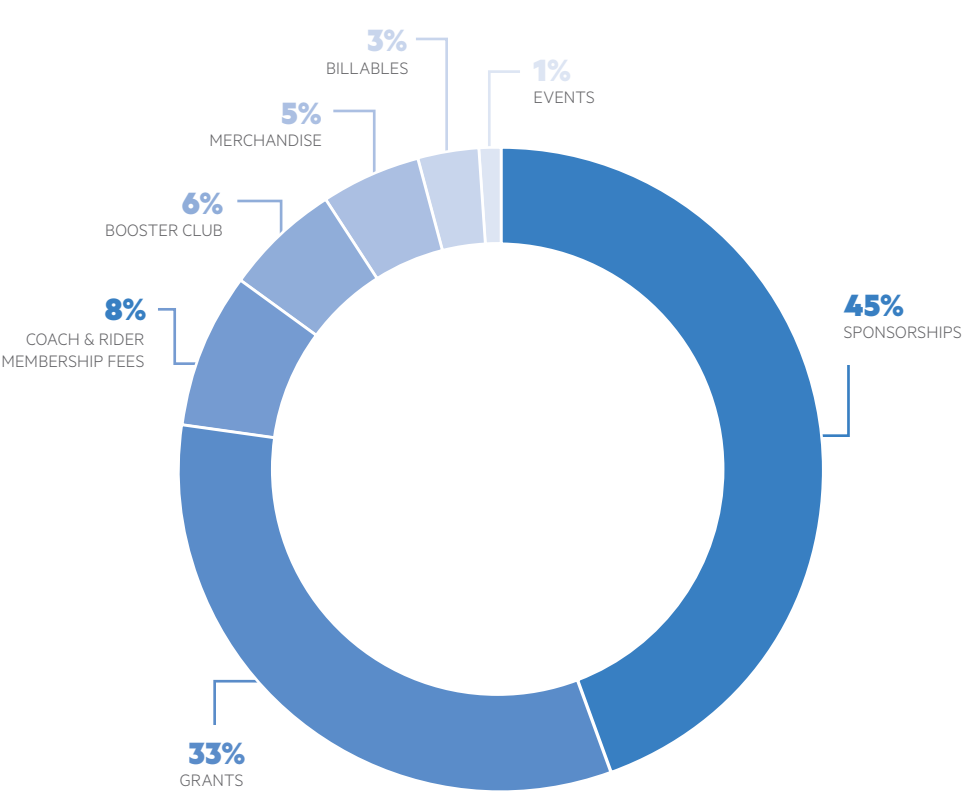
# Funding Overview

While we saw a slight decrease in overall funding from FYE 2013 as a result of sponsorship changes and more focused charitable donations restricted to specific NICA member leagues, we have been able to continue establishing new leagues, and expand existing programs to better serve our growing membership. With that said, we are actively seeking new supporters and means to increase revenues in the coming year.



# Income 2014

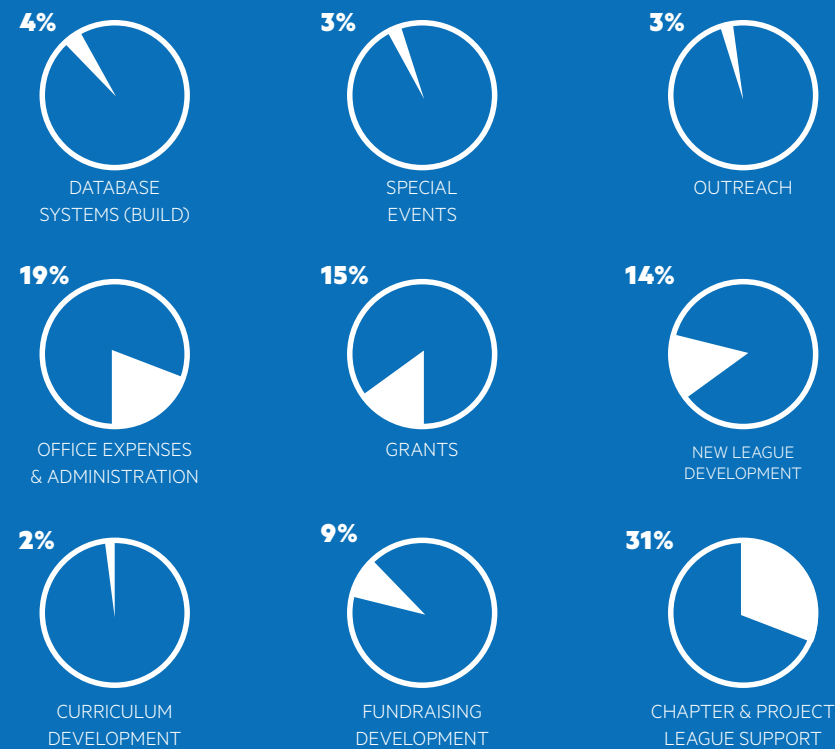
Funding remains heavily reliant upon the bike industry and a few charitable foundations. Collectively, these two sources provided 78% of all income received. With the growth of total student and coach participation, both registration fees and merchandise sold slightly increased. Also, by working with our Honorary Board and undertaking aggressive outreach across social media, we were able to secure a significant matching grant from the SportsMatter Foundation which resulted in a strong NICA Booster Fund.



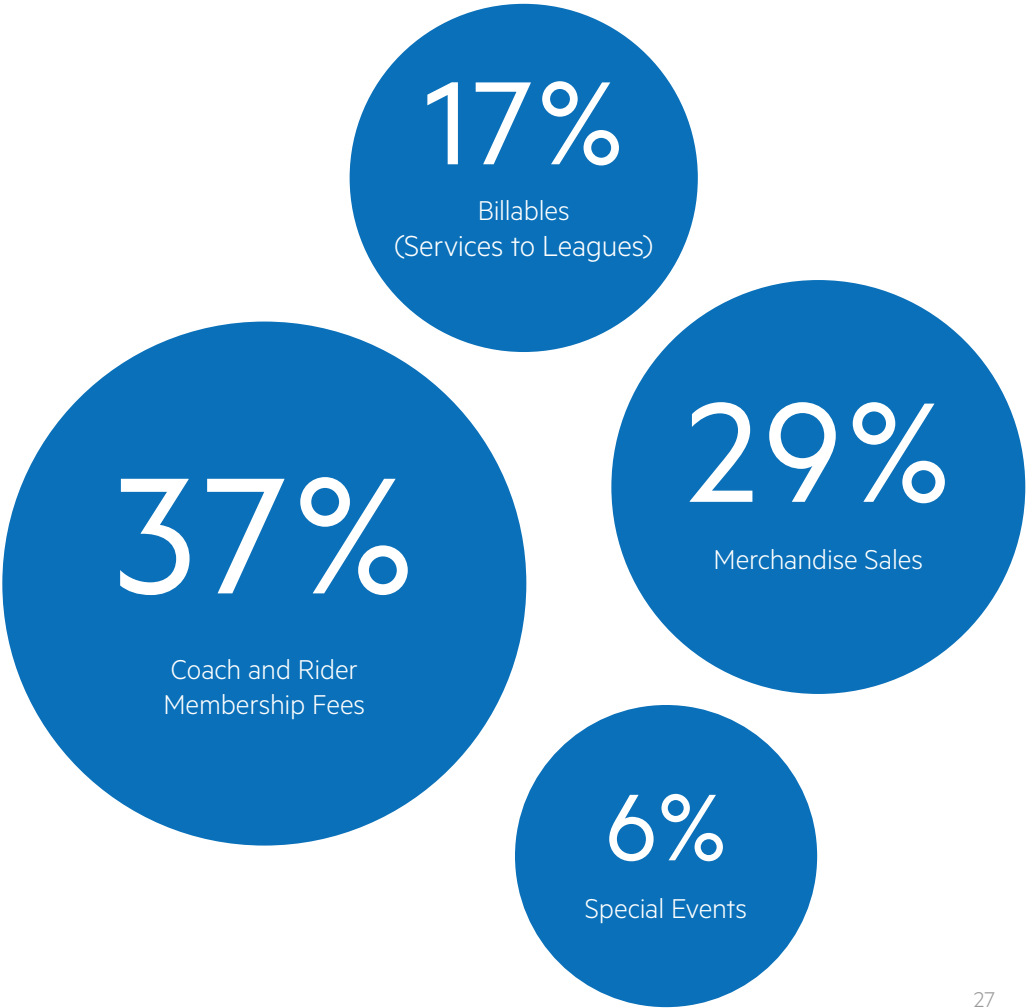
# Operations

Demands on NICA's staffing, technological systems, programs and resources continue to grow as both the number of member leagues and participants within existing leagues swells. Overall, operating expenses grew from FYE 2013 to FYE 2014 by 24% a result of hiring new accounting and program department staff, the additional costs of supporting four new leagues and increased demands for scholarship assistance. Roughly 81% of all expenses covered program and technical services directly benefitting student-athletes, coaches and member leagues. Once again, curriculum development and technical support expenses would have been higher than reported if not for the generosity of assorted subject matter experts who donated their time and efforts.

Breakdown of Operation Costs



In 2014, direct revenue from coach and rider registration fees, special events, merchandise sales and billable services to member leagues accounted for 17% of total revenue for the year; a 5% increase from 2013. The decrease in billable services to leagues from last year reflects that NICA is successfully training the member league staff to “stand on their own”. Meanwhile, as the NICA brand becomes more known, merchandise sales have increased. While we are still operating in a “start-up” mode, there is point in the future at which direct revenues will contribute a much more significant portion of the total income budget.



# Partners & Sponsors

NICA partners and sponsors have been critical to our operations. They enjoy comprehensive integration throughout our national member league marketing and outreach programs. From online exposure through newsletters, website and social media to on-site branding and activation at events, supporters are recognized and exposed to student-athletes, their families and licensed coaches frequently. Media partners enable expanded and consistent exposure of programs and offerings.

## PARTNERS



## MEDIA PARTNERS



## PLATINUM SPONSORS



## GOLD SPONSORS



## SILVER SPONSORS



## BRONZE SPONSORS





# Media Exposure & Reach

With a solid communication infrastructure in place that includes press releases to national, regional and local media, a national website, fifteen individual league websites, active social media channels (again, both national and league specific), live broadcasting and banners at races/events, the volume of engagement and media coverage in 2014 has grown significantly over the past year. National office website page views have increased by 20% while social media followers have exploded by 63%. With coverage in the *New York Times* and a number of other mainstream media, NICA is gaining the attention of a much wider audience.

8,293  
average national office  
website monthly page visits

9,726  
total social media (Facebook,  
Twitter and Instagram) followers

26,224  
average combined league  
website monthly page visits

28,400  
total team races and practices held

7,046  
average PitZone monthly  
page visits

1,392,000  
hours of student-athlete participation

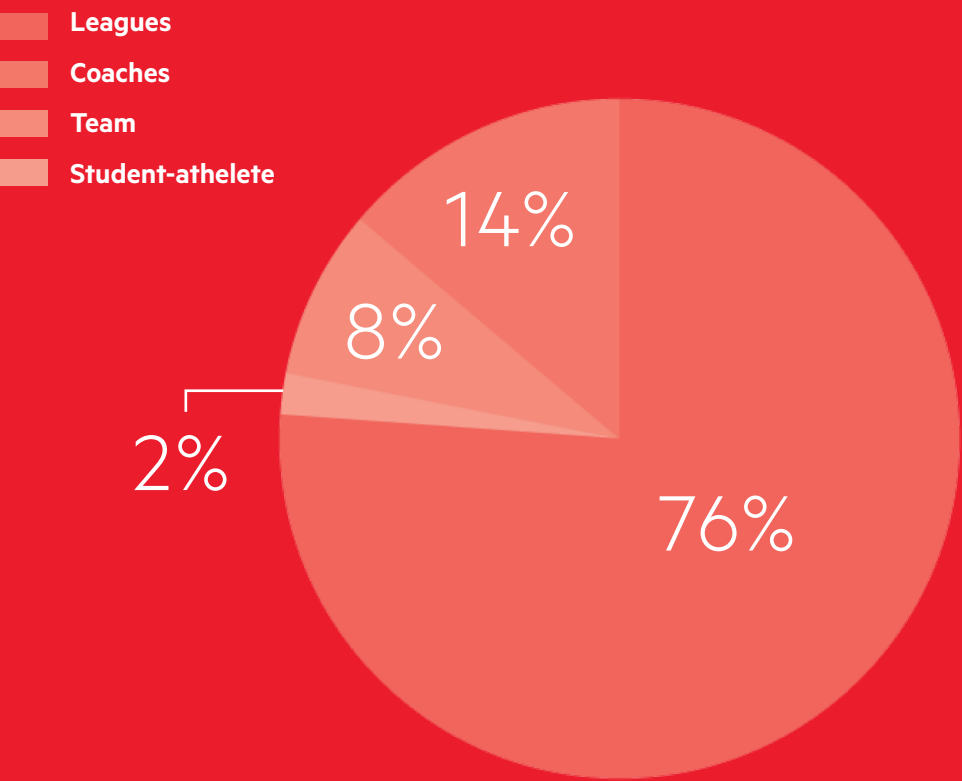
21,770  
national e-newsletter subscribers

3,500,000  
estimated media impressions (tv,  
radio, newspaper and magazine)

# Booster Funds

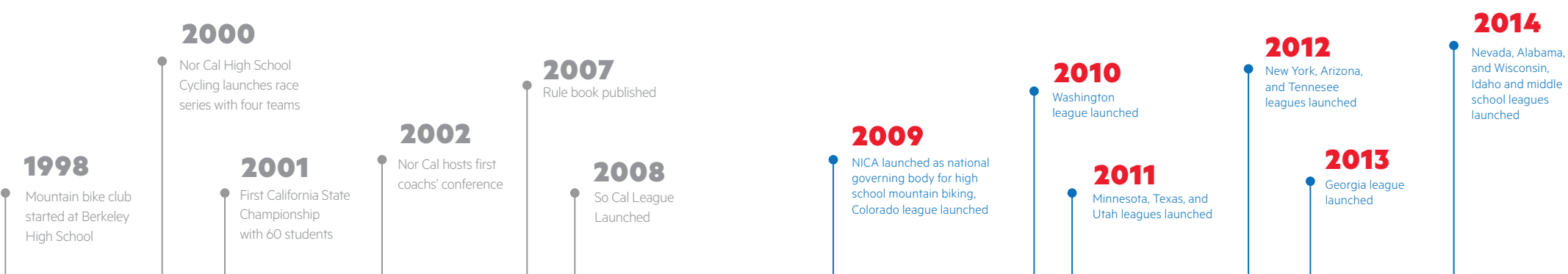
In 2014, the NICA Booster Fund distributed \$165,874 directly to student-athletes, coaches, teams and leagues in need of financial support. While this is nearly the same amount that was awarded in 2013, the total number of student-athletes, coaches and teams receiving support increased as a result of the individual member leagues covering a growing percentage of their own scholarship requests. As leagues become increasingly financial stable, they are able to reduce their reliance on the NICA National Office, which allows for more support to be made available to the start-up leagues and to program expansion. Please visit the website for more details: [www.nationalmtb.org/boosterclub/](http://www.nationalmtb.org/boosterclub/)

2014 Distribution of Booster Funds



# NICA Timeline

The founders of the NorCal High School Cycling League back in 2000 did not know at the time that they were setting into motion a movement that would eventually go national. After a few years of consistent growth, the Easton Foundations enabled a test to replicate leagues in both Southern California and Colorado. With three successful leagues operating, the time was right to incorporate as a national non-profit and begin serious efforts expanding NICA's reach. Amazingly, in five short years, NICA has been able to deploy the infrastructure and trained staff to provide opportunities to nearly 50% of the population with the United States.





## Looking to the future

Year over year, NICA's student-athlete participation has grown to record numbers with established leagues showing modest growth and newer leagues exploding with new participants. Student-athlete participation grew by 60% from 2013 to just over 5,000 by the end of 2014 (previous year's growth was 57%). While incredibly exciting, we carefully moderate our growth and only accept new regions that have completed a detailed bid proposal and selection process. Each year, we defer some applications as we feel our successful growth is a direct outcome of our ability to deploy our proven, scalable resources and tools to new leagues without overcommitting.

New regions interested in forming a NICA League are required to participate in detailed informational webinars before submitting a bid proposal outlining their strategy for launch, growth and sustained success. When accepted, a new League then works closely with NICA for eighteen months, receiving NICA's guidance and support based on our years of experience and lessons learned launching new leagues. We are closing the year with strong interest from a number of new regions eager to help expand the interscholastic cycling movement.

The future is bright!

**From the riders, coaches, families, volunteers, and NICA, thanks for your continued support.**

**And, a special thanks to Seven Design for their assistance in the layout and overall report design and Steve Wilson Photography for both the front and back cover images.**



# NICA

2414 Sixth Street, Berkeley, California 94710  
info@nationalmtb.org | 510-524-5464 | @nationalMTB | www.nationalmtb.org

WilsonPhotography.com