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## **US Sailing Development Proposal May, 2015**

### **Overview**

Sailing has always attracted affluent individuals who are passionate about the sport and committed to its long-term success. US Sailing's history and leadership position create a strong platform from which to launch a successful development program. Within the organization, development has long been identified as an area with significant growth potential; however, the resources and focus required to build and sustain a successful development effort are easily diverted to meet other important needs.

Many sailing organizations across the country are making another choice and investing in development. They are enjoying a substantial return on their investment and building a strong future for their organizations. By capitalizing on the longevity, visibility and our acknowledged leadership role, US Sailing is positioned to secure substantial resources that will protect the future of the organization and the sport of sailing.

### **Current Structure**

#### **US Sailing Foundation**

The US Sailing Foundation (USSF) assists participants in world championships and international class competition with their campaign expenses. USSF also funds a variety of small projects and initiatives overseen by the US Sailing Association related to education initiatives.

The Foundation's current mission is influenced by previous and current donors and their designations. The Foundation board considers grant requests and allocates funding according to the Foundation by-laws. There is currently no development effort underway on behalf of the Foundation.

#### **US Sailing Association**

The US Sailing Association's development efforts are directed towards the Annual Fund and Development Projects that support specific programs. Through a year-end campaign, donors designate US Sailing programs or US Sailing operations as the beneficiary. The Association has been successful in generating revenue through the Annual Appeal, but results vary from year-to-year.

The Association's fundraising for Development Projects is determined by needs and opportunities identified as they arise. Over the last few years, Development Projects have successfully secured funding for Championships, Youth Development and Adaptive Sailing, and is currently focused on Safety.

Revolving development leadership, competing responsibilities and inconsistently applied strategies are limiting results. Despite these obstacles, the Association secured over \$400,000 in support in 2014.

In addition to targeted fundraising campaigns, the Association offers high-level membership options, including the US Sailing President's Club. Until 2014, the contributing membership





options have not been actively promoted, but modest efforts recently employed resulted in a 60% increase in revenue and the addition of 16 new President's Club members.

The Membership Director and staff currently manage US Sailing's development activities, supported by the Executive Director, Board members and volunteers/members who contribute, provide introductions and assist with donor cultivation.

### **Olympic Division**

The Olympic Division implements the most successful and robust development effort within the organization. The Medalist Program has effectively secured major gifts from individuals committed to our national team totaling \$2.5 to \$3.0 million in each of the past two quadrenniums and is on track to do the same this quad.

Project Pipeline, a recently launched advanced youth development program, has secured a significant matching grant that will be leveraged to engage a wider pool of donors.

The Medalist Program is led by the Managing Director of Olympic Sailing, a part-time administrative assistant, and is supported by a fundraising committee.

### **The Need**

While the fundraising objectives of the Foundation, the Association and the Olympic Division differ, the strategies, tools and resources required for success are identical. A focused and unified development program is capable of generating significant revenue for the organization. If existing efforts can produce good results, a dedicated development effort to execute a strategic, comprehensive and consistently applied fundraising program will be highly successful.

Our current success is achieved through individual efforts but limited by divided attention, competing responsibilities and inadequate development tools and support. In addition, fundraising initiatives are implemented in isolation so, at times, the organization is competing with itself. We are not presenting a cohesive message and need to align our activities within one comprehensive platform in order to efficiently and professionally cultivate existing donors and expand our donor base.

Sharing donor information and prospect cultivation plans will prevent overlap, present a unified message and a professional image. Shared donor profiles will enable the presentation of funding opportunities aligned with each donor's affinities and interests. These affinities are not singular, and expanding donor engagement across campaign lines is a proven strategy for increasing donor engagement, thus creating robust, focused and long-term relationships.

Finally, other organizations that touch our members and constituents are accelerating their development programs and public relations strategies. Mystic Seaport, IRYS, National Sailing Hall of Fame, the Herreshoff Marine Museum, Sail to Prevail, and Sailors for the Sea, to name just a few, are working to build a strong future for their organizations through their professional, dedicated development departments. If US Sailing continues to delay investment in a strong fundraising operation, we risk ceding donor support and leadership status to sailing organizations that are actively cultivating donor relationships.

### **The Solution**

The US Sailing Foundation is the ideal vehicle to contain the US Sailing Development Office, a centralized development department dedicated to maximizing fundraising revenue for the



Association and the Olympic Division. The oversight inherent within a foundation structure is reassuring to donors and strengthens credibility.

The Foundation's current President has voiced support for revitalizing the Foundation Board by enlisting new board members who are influential in the sailing community, have the capacity to make a significant annual gift and enjoy the social standing needed to cultivate connections with high value donor prospects.

US Sailing Development staff will work with the Foundation board to develop a strategic approach to major gifts and fundraising initiatives for the benefit of the Association and the Olympic Division.

### **Major Gifts**

The Medalist Committee is in mid-stride with its 2016 Olympic development campaign and achieving success. US Sailing Development can support their efforts:

- identify new prospects
- work with Foundation board to identify and cultivate prospects
- track donor engagement
- implement follow-up protocols
- oversee communications and events
- institute a consistent acknowledgement process
- expand ongoing donor communications and communication calendar
- steward relationships with current Medalist donors

US Sailing Association's approach to major gifts is opportunistic and sporadic. Without the resources, tools and administrative support to effectively manage high-level donor relationships, it is risky to expand the effort. As a result, the untapped potential for major gift support from the sailing community and the membership base is great.

### **Fundraising Initiatives 2015 & 2016**

- Medalist and Project Pipeline
- Olympic grassroots campaign
- Ongoing initiatives: First Sail, Reach, safety, division support
- 2015-16 Annual Appeal

### **2015 Implementation – H2**

#### **Staff Requirements:**

- full-time Development Director
- part-time assistant

#### **New Resources:**

- contracted donor research
- CRM solution
- campaign and collateral materials
- legal

**Objectives/Activities:**

- add horsepower and resources to Medalist program – maintain existing structure
- create and implement grassroots Olympic campaign
- sustain existing and consider new US Sailing initiatives
- consolidate administration and management of all development activities
- implement CRM solution
- work with USSF to revise mission
- engage legal and foundation resources to review structure, best practices, governance, reporting and redesign to support revised mission
- develop plan for board recruitment
- revise the Planned Giving Program
- establish Endowment Plan

**Estimated Budget::** (see attached)

**Sources of Startup Funds:**

- existing Olympic development resources
- existing US Sailing development resources
- Loan - Windfall Fund

**Financial Sustainability Goals:**

A financial investment in 2015 and 2016 will result in a self-sustaining Development Office under the umbrella of the USSF by 2017.