



USA CLIMBING

2020-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

Support the well-being, development, and competitive excellence of our athletes as we advance the accessibility and growth of the climbing community nationwide.

CORE VALUES

Athlete First. Support the well-being and development of climbers at all levels, abilities and ages – from beginner to elite, including youth, collegiate, adult, and paraclimbing.

Diversity & Inclusiveness. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion as critical to our success, continuously champion these principles throughout the climbing community, and do not tolerate discrimination in any form.

Integrity & Teamwork. Promote climbing's culture and ethos of camaraderie and sportsmanship to enrich lives and maximize the full potential of all participants.

Environmental Stewardship. Encourage responsible use, and the protection and preservation of, the natural environment.

Inspiration & Excellence. Be the very best at what we do as an organization, continually challenge our model, identify and adjust if we fall short, and finally celebrate our successes.

STRATEGIC VISION & TARGET OUTCOMES

Success for USA Climbing by 2028 is envisioned as follows, serving as a guide for setting the direction of the organization for the next quad:

There is increased recognition for the sport of climbing in the U.S.

- A large and annually-increasing USA Climbing membership, with specific demographic-goals to be determined after input from USA Climbing's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force - target 100,000 members by 2028
- Widespread media broadcasts of competitive climbing (including paraclimbing), with large viewership across all types of media platforms – target 30M views annually
- A competition climber is widely recognized as a “household name”
- Major corporate sponsors (endemic and non-endemic) providing significant financial support for the sport, the organization, and US athletes - target = \$1.2m million per year by 2024 and \$2m by 2028
- NCAA recognition of climbing as a collegiate sport - target = 600 colleges/universities with active, certified programs by 2024 with at least 2 conference championships
- There is a sizeable, growing competition pathway for adults at all levels, including athletes entering the sport as adults and those who transition from Youth participation and desire to continue engagement even if not at an elite level – Target 2,500 participants by 2024

US athletes are performing well internationally

- Regular podium appearances in all 3 disciplines at international competitions, including World Cups, Olympic Games, and Youth Olympic Games
- Inclusion of Climbing in Paralympic Games, with US athletes winning medals
- Climber wins an ESPY

The organization is well-respected and delivers operational excellence

- National Training Center and High Performance as a place and a system that enables our athletes to live and train year-round effectively - target = fully fund US National Team athletes' participation in World Cup and Championships for Open, Youth, and Paraclimbing by 2024 and provide stipends for high ranking athletes by 2028
- Sustained US representation on the IFSC board and key committees - target = minimum 2 board/committee positions held
- Coaches are recognized as leaders in the broader climbing industry, and conduct themselves in accordance with USAC's educational curriculum, goals, values, mission

- Certified judges and real-time scoring system in place at all championship events (target = high level of satisfaction among athletes, coaches, and spectators)
- Effective partnerships with leading outdoor groups to promote a culture of respect and advocacy in the protection of climbing areas nationally. - target = 50% of USA Climbing members who have received educational resources relating to environmental stewardship of our climbing areas by 2028 and organizational support through grants/donations/other efforts by 2024
- Strong financial performance in terms of annual revenue, net income, and size of the foundation endowment - target = \$7.5 million revenue with \$250,000 annually in fundraising through the USA Climbing Foundation support by 2024)

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

To successfully advance its mission and vision, USA Climbing will focus its time, energy and effort in the following key areas:

- **ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT & WELL-BEING.** Lead the climbing community in the development and support of athletes with an emphasis on health, safety, and performance.
- **MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT & EVENT OPTIMIZATION.** Enhance member satisfaction and connection with USA Climbing through clear and compelling engagement opportunities, and exciting, consistent event experiences.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE.** Enhance organizational capabilities and leadership to meet the needs of a growing climbing community

2020-2024 QUAD STRATEGIES

ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT & WELL-BEING

Lead the climbing community in the development and support of athletes with an emphasis on health, safety, and performance.

Strategies:

A. Athlete Development Model. Establish a development pathway that encourages and supports age- and skill-appropriate participation, increases athlete and parent satisfaction, and fosters a long-term physically active lifestyle. Incorporate the following as core elements:

- 1) Developing physical literacy (basic motor coordination, agility, etc.)
- 2) Incorporating fun in the training environment and skill building exercises
- 3) Emphasizing confidence and character-building; sport is about more than just winning
- 4) Offer non-traditional formats that better match with younger climber interests and needs; explore using technology to attract and retain younger participants

TARGET OUTCOMES

By 2024:

- USA Climbing is perceived as a leader in youth and long-term athlete development by the USOC and the NGB community
- USA Climbing members are highly satisfied with the athlete well-being resources
- Team USA wins medals in both men's and women's divisions at Paris Games
- Training Center is launched
- Team USA is ranked Top 5 internationally in speed climbing

B. Health & Well-Being.

- 1) Communicate and educate coaches, athletes, parents and the broader climbing community on standards and expectations and how to recognize, respond and prevent abuse, misconduct, unsafe practices and unhealthy behaviors.
- 2) Communicate, educate, and challenge our membership to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion and the values we hold as an organization.
- 3) Evaluate effectiveness of processes and procedures for athlete safety, organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion and make improvements as necessary to ensure physical, emotional, and mental safety.

C. High Performance Enhancement. Focus on advancing elite athletes' ability to be successful in international competition with an eye to reaching the podium at the Games.

- 1) World Class Service Support Model. Develop a best in world holistic, multidisciplinary service support system for elite athletes, inclusive of dedicated coaching, health and wellness providers, and sport science (nutrition, physiology, psychology, etc.).
- 2) Training Center of Excellence. Establish a premier training and educational headquarters to maximize high performance capabilities and develop the talent pipeline of coaches, routesetters, and athletes.

Key Focus Areas:

- Identify preferred location
 - Implement policies and procedures for access and utilization
 - Recruit qualified training, service support, operations and management personnel, e.g. coaches, sport science professionals, administration, etc.
- 3) Speed Climbing. Understand specific needs of the Speed discipline to be internationally competitive, develop and implement strategy to address identified gaps.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS

Enhance member satisfaction and connection with USA Climbing and associated gyms through clear and compelling engagement opportunities, and exciting, consistent event experiences.

Strategies:

A. Participant Outreach & Pathways. Grow membership with clearly defined pathways for participation entry and progression, from recreation/beginner through competitive/elite. Promote pathways with prospective members to increase awareness, interest and deeper engagement with USA Climbing.

- 1) Youth. Promote the incorporation of the American Development Model (ADM) into outreach to younger age climbers and their parents. Describe the steps for youth to remain healthy and active in the sport as well as how to advance to higher competitive levels.
- 2) Paraclimbing. Identify and implement engagement opportunities to expand participation and develop elite paraclimbers.
- 3) Collegiate. Develop initiatives to encourage continued growth of collegiate participation and event opportunities.
- 4) Adult. Enhance the experience for both younger and older adults to continue their participation in the sport, such that climbing is seen as a lifetime and family sport.
- 5) Underrepresented Populations. Include gender, race, and socioeconomic status among other underrepresented areas where USA Climbing actively seeks engagement, outreach, and participation including membership, operations, coaching, and leadership.

TARGET OUTCOMES

- By 2024:
- USA Climbing coach, routesetter, judge, and other members are highly satisfied with NGB resources
 - Formalized training and certification programs for all the key focus areas are established
 - Growth in each of the following membership categories: Youth, Paraclimbing, Collegiate and Adult
 - Membership, operations and leadership diversity: target TBD with input from the newly convened Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force
 - Event organizer guidelines and resource “toolkit” are in place and available, and all event organizers are complying

B. Education & Development. Incorporate best practices in the development of standardized education and certification programming to improve quality and consistency of *coaching* and *routesetting* as well as other climbing support roles

(see below). Encourage athlete involvement as an opportunity to continue participation in the sport after their competitive careers are complete.

Additional Focus Areas:

- Judges
- Belayers
- Key Volunteer Positions

C. Event Experience. Evaluate, create, and implement improvements in all USA Climbing events to enhance the value and experience for all involved.

- 1) Standards and Oversight. Create and enforce a more consistent and standardized experience at all USA Climbing events through event sanctioning requirements, education and training, best practices sharing, and other resource support.
- 2) Technology. Integrate the latest sport technology to ensure enhanced participant (athlete, coach, etc.), sponsor, volunteer, and spectator/fan experience.
- 3) Coordinated Calendar. Create a coordinated national to international event program and seasonal calendar to better accommodate the needs of international competitors.

D. Gym Partnership. Recognize the value of associated gyms as critical membership category and business partners. Evaluate needs and design enhanced benefits or resources to support mutual success.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Enhance organizational capabilities and leadership to meet the needs of a growing climbing community.

Strategies:

A. Leadership. Position USA Climbing as a positive influencer in the domestic and international sport climbing community.

- 1) International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC). Seek opportunities to participate on the board and critical committees.
- 2) Climbing Resource “Hub.” Become the “go-to” organization for climbing information and connection to sport participation opportunities in the United States.
- 3) Transparency. More effectively engage members/stakeholders and increase satisfaction through timely, complete and candid exchange of information that includes feedback receipt and response.
- 4) Diversity. Serve as a major contributor and ally to a cultural transformation in climbing, lifting up the efforts of others, incorporating recommendations from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, and committing to an ongoing process of critically examining and addressing inequities through regular business practices.
- 5) Gyms. Recognize the critical role that climbing gyms play in our organization while also providing best practices and leadership to the industry.

TARGET OUTCOMES

- By 2024:
- US representation on IFSC board
 - Website or app “portal” as a one-stop-shopping location for climbing resources launched and operational.
 - Total revenue exceeds \$7.5M
 - Major non-endemic sponsor agreement; total sponsor revenue exceeds \$3M annually
 - Fundraising revenue exceeds \$2M annually
 - Sport broadcast includes regular coverage of paraclimbing
 - High member satisfaction with communication
 - Dedicated fulltime Marketing/PR professional staff

B. Financial Sustainability. Increase existing and new revenue for USA Climbing to support membership growth, general operations and strategic priorities.

- 1) Sponsorship Marketing. Identify opportunities to engage new sponsors, as well as expand activations with existing sponsors, to increase support for

strategic priorities, core operations and enhanced services/benefits for members.

- 2) Fundraising. In partnership with the Foundation, focus on private donor support by creating engagement opportunities that connect individuals directly to the mission and culture of USA Climbing.

- C. Communication. Stay abreast of - and responsive to – the latest trends in social/digital media and customer communication expectations. Highlight athlete stories and value of association with USA Climbing to enhance brand affinity.

- D. National Office Capacity. Plan for growth and increasing diversity with strategy for structural changes to staffing model, including dedicated role(s) for marketing and PR / communications.

- E. Media/Broadcast. Create content and partnerships with existing and emerging media channels to increase viewing opportunities and generate additional revenue.

- F. Community Relations. Develop stronger partnerships with other climbing organizations to showcase the ability of climbing to transform lives as well as how to be good stewards of the environment and protect natural resources.

USA CLIMBING STRATEGIC WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Marc Norman – Chief Executive Officer, USA Climbing
Patti Rube – Board President, USA Climbing
Bruce Mitchell – Board Vice President, USA Climbing
Matt Roberts – Board Treasurer, USA Climbing
Jesse Grupper – Board Member, USA Climbing – Athlete’s Representative
Avery Cook – Board Member, USA Climbing
Jeff Pedersen – Board Member, USA Climbing
Dustin Skinner – Board Member, USA Climbing
John Muse – High Performance Director, USA Climbing
Alex Fritz* – Elite Athlete (Bouldering/Lead)
Piper Kelly – Elite Athlete (Speed)
Brittany Davis – Elite Athlete (Para)
Meghan McDonald – Coaching Committee Chair
Steve Struthers – Regional Coordinator
JoAnne Carilli-Stevenson – Regional Coordinator
Charlie Gifford – Volunteer/Judge
Lisa Hammer – Member Parent, USA Climbing
Connie Lightner – Member Parent, USA Climbing
John Raaf – Member Parent, USA Climbing

FACILITATORS

Denise Parker – Vice President, NGB Services, US Olympic & Paralympic Committee
Avery Wilson – Strategy & Business Consulting, US Olympic & Paralympic Committee
Jace Coston – Strategy & Business Consulting, US Olympic & Paralympic Committee
Davis Tutt – NGB Services, US Olympic & Paralympic Committee

**Since participating in this project, this individual has been deemed ineligible. Click [HERE](#) for more information.*