

**US Sailing Community Sailing Center  
Accreditation Program Guidelines**



## A. INTRODUCTION

With hundreds of community sailing programs in the US Sailing database, the US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program (hereafter referred to as the Program) identifies and accredits community sailing programs that offer the highest and safest levels of boating education and public access across the United States. By only accrediting programs that meet or exceed these standards, as set forth in the application process, the Program sets the national standard for community sailing programs. Accredited programs use US Sailing Certified Instructors and Coaches with US Sailing's recommended best practices. This includes the use of up to date and nationally recognized emergency and safety procedures, clear documentation and record keeping procedures, instructor certification level, curricula, and instructional standards. Accredited Centers will be connected to other Accredited Centers, receive communication from the US Sailing Community Sailing Committee, and will help mentor newer programs into the Accreditation Program.

Programs of all types (year-round or seasonal, youth or adult, etc.) can apply for accreditation, provided they meet the specific guidelines set forth by the Accreditation Application. The Accreditation process does not have prerequisites for the types of boats that a center uses, nor is there a limitation on what age groups that they must teach. Each program is expected to use boats that are adequately designed for the skills being taught, are maintained regularly as needed for safety, and that are appropriate for the size of sailors (boat capacities and weight limits or minimums should be adhered to). In their educational programs, centers must use curricula that follow a standard skill progression based on the level of sailing being taught and the instructional methodologies found in US Sailing's Instructor and Coach Certification courses. The curricula should align with current US Sailing recommended skills such as the Little Red Book, Skill Up, and the Reach STEM Initiative.

Please note that US Sailing also accredits Keelboat Schools, Powerboat Training Centers, and Adaptive Sailing Centers in addition to Community Sailing Centers. US Sailing reserves the right to adjust accreditation requirements at any time.

## **B. MISSION OF COMMUNITY SAILING**

The mission of the US Sailing Community Sailing Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) is to promote and support community sailing in the United States. The Committee recognizes diversity as essential to achieving our mission. For the Committee, diversity refers to the differences of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, age, beliefs, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, family status, physical ability, cognitive ability, appearance, and ideas. The Committee is dedicated to achieving greater diversity throughout the sport and fostering an inclusive environment. To help achieve this mission, the Committee seeks to identify centers that provide the highest quality of education and support access to sailing for all. These are centers that align with the standards set forth by US Sailing and offer safety, fun, and learning through their programming. Under the guidance of the Committee, US Sailing provides accreditation and resources to support the growth of Community Sailing.

Accredited Community Sailing Centers are expected to promote this mission in their operations and efforts, intentionally assisting the Community Sailing Committee in furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the sport of sailing. An Accredited Community Sailing Center differentiates itself from a sailing school by aiming to provide high quality sailing education, promoting environmental sustainability, and increasing the diversity of the population that has access to sailing education and the sport of sailing itself.

## **C. THE EVOLUTION OF US SAILING**

Serving sailors since 1897 under the names of NAYRU and USYRU, the organization changed its name to US Sailing to describe its broader role more adequately beyond the

administration of sailboat racing. US Sailing derives its charter from the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 passed by Congress and, in this role, is the National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of sailing and regulates all levels of competition. However, US Sailing reaches far beyond the competitive level. From training programs to community sailing outreach, US Sailing has worked to improve the sport and expand its accessibility to bring new people in at all levels of expertise through grassroots development programs.

The organization is strongly committed to quality instruction to produce quality sailors through a national training system. It is a network of instructors, program organizer, and some of the best sailing experts in the world. Across the country, US Sailing has approximately 7,000 instructors trained or certified in Small Boat, Keelboat, Powerboat, Adaptive, and Reach instructor courses. Over the last decade, US Sailing has been actively involved in the development of community sailing programs making sailing more available, safe, and fun. This program has proven to be extremely successful.

Today, US Sailing focuses on all aspects of recreational sailing, and continues as a non-profit organization with a mission to serve all sailors. Directly speaking to the relationship between US Sailing and Community Sailing Programs, US Sailing uses the Accreditation Program to benefit both sailors and programs in the following areas:

- Increase use of national small boat sailing educational standards for programs, instructors, students, and sailors.
- Provide resources in safety, on-water best practices, and other relevant issues.
- Provide a training system that enforces consistent standards of quality and promotes and supports reciprocity among programs in the U.S.
- Issue student and instructor certifications.
- Utilization of superior quality instructor manuals, student books, and other teaching materials to support programs.
- Help programs in their efforts to offer opportunities for people to experience the joys and challenges of sailing.

- Encourage continued participation in the sport.
- Foster awareness of the importance of boating safety.
- Work with industry manufacturers to support community boating programs in the U.S.
- Work with other marine industry organizations to stimulate more people to come into sailing and foster cooperative efforts to benefit the entire industry.
- Encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion within the sailing community.

## D. COMMUNITY SAILING CENTER ACCREDITATION PROGRAM – MINIMUM REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

The current guidelines for application in the US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program include:

- 1) Centers must be a member organization of US Sailing in good standing and complete the application.
- 2) Centers must be either a 501(c)(3) or corporation open to the public without discrimination based on any protected class status. This clause may not be interpreted to halt any Center from refusing to serve persons deemed inappropriate, dangerous, or incompatible with teaching, learning, or community sailing. Military sailing programs are exempt from this requirement.
- 3) Centers agree to the terms, conditions, and rules in this document, as well as intentionally align with the mission of the Committee. This includes continuing and specific programming, initiatives, or other direct action with the aim of increasing its participant and leadership diversity, growing access to sailing, and environmental stewardship.
- 4) Centers apply as an organization and, as such, must show understanding from multiple positions of leadership that the Center intends to align itself with the mission of the Committee and the requirements of the Program. An applying Center should include documentation in its application that:

- a) Acknowledges organizational leadership's understanding of the Committee's mission, application, and review process.
- b) Authorizes the applying official to make the application with multiple leadership level signatures. In the case of 501(c)(3) organizations, a board motion or similar official action may suffice.
- c) The Center's primary board member and staff contact must complete and sign the US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program Application. If principal staff are seasonal, please indicate that in your application.
- d) Provides a description of organizational leadership structure.
- e) Confirms implementation of intentional organizational practices that:
  - i) Create greater diversity in the Center's leadership or programming.
  - ii) Identify and lower the barriers towards participation in sailing.
  - iii) Reduce the Center's overall environmental impact and/or increase environmental stewardship.

5) When onboard a program-owned or operated vessel that is underway, all aboard must wear a properly fitting and secured U.S. Coast Guard approved Life Jacket.

6) Centers must have a website with a clear process for members of the public to sign up for programming.

7) Centers must provide written proof of having been in business at least three years (such as a certificate of incorporation and course offering calendars). At the sole discretion of US Sailing, this may include operations under another entity, DBA, etc. Centers must notify US Sailing of any change of ownership, changes to its legal business status, or dissolution.

8) Staff Certification Requirements:

- a) Each individual on-water sailing class/camp/lesson/program must be supervised by an on-the-water US Sailing Certified Instructor or Coach who is assigned to that class/camp/lesson/program.

- b) Sailing instructors or coaches who teach courses that result in a US Sailing certification must be certified to the level of the course they are teaching and equipment they are operating.
- c) While a US Sailing Certified Instructor or Coach must supervise each individual group from on-the-water, non-certified instructors can work under the supervision of the Certified Instructor or Coach.
- d) US Sailing Instructor and Coach Certifications must be up-to-date and require current US Sailing membership, US Sailing certification (renewal every three years), First Aid/CPR, and SafeSport certificates to be valid.
- e) It is recommended that program directors, head instructors, or volunteer managers are Small Boat Level 1 Instructor certified or have completed the Small Boat Level 3 Head Instructor course.
- f) Centers must provide current US Sailing Member ID numbers, staff names, and the level of instructor certification in the application. If a seasonal facility is applying, the list may be of the past season's staff and certifications supplemented with the written intention to meet the requirements again in the coming season.

9) Centers must provide evidence of an enduring point of water access that is open to the public with a brief description of the facility, map, or arrangement including photographs of each aspect of the facility used by the public. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) An enduring physical access point to the water for sailing through lease, ownership, or other formalized agreement which recognizes the Center's ability to operate its programming.
- b) A teaching area suitable for conducting instruction in line with US Sailing instructor certifications
- c) A storm shelter or equivalent/alternative emergency plans

- d) Nearby supporting facilities (yacht clubs, marinas, etc.) which cater to the boating public.

10) Centers must submit copies of:

- a) Emergency and Safety Procedure and Protocols.
- b) Include an Emergency Action Plan, Emergency Card (with map), and site-specific Safety Manual. Examples provided below are from the Gowrie Group and should be modified for individual site conditions and risks:
  - i) [\*\*Gowrie Jr. Sailing Safety Guide\*\*](#)
  - ii) [\*\*Club and Sailing Organization Safety Manual\*\*](#)
  - iii) [\*\*Emergency Card Template\*\*](#)
- c) Liability waiver, incident report, and accident report.
- d) State business license and federal tax ID numbers.
- e) Overall program curriculum – this should include, for each individual sailing course/class:
  - i) Course/class syllabi.
  - ii) Sample of individual lesson plans.
  - iii) Student evaluation forms or checklists (completed by staff to offer feedback to students and to track student progress through sailing skills).
- f) Forms for the evaluation of staff.
- g) Diversity, equity, inclusion, environmental stewardship, or other initiatives including any measurable outcomes the organization may use to review or gauge its effectiveness.
- h) Publicly available mission statement or similar organizational documents.
- i) Leadership structure, including the person responsible for implementation of this program.

11) Centers' student skill evaluation criteria must meet or exceed standards found in the US Sailing's Small Boat Beginner Sailor Certification Record Book (commonly

called the “Little Red Book”), which stipulates boats to be used are defined as dinghies, keel, and centerboard day sailors and multihulls that are generally under 20 feet and without live-aboard accommodations.

12) Centers acknowledge and agree that they are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport and shall abide by all U.S. Center for SafeSport policies and procedures, and all US Sailing athlete safety policies and procedures. A Center’s SafeSport obligations include the following:

- a) Ensure that all Center staff and board members annually complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s online child abuse prevention training (“**SafeSport Training**” titled: SafeSport Core, and Refreshers 1, 2, and 3).
- b) Centers must ensure all other volunteers who have regular contact with, or authority over minors complete SafeSport Training annually.
- c) Centers must ensure that all Center in-program activities are observable and interruptible, in accordance with the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s One-on-One Abuse Prevention Policies. Please see Section IV of the **US Sailing SafeSport Handbook** for a full description of all applicable One-on-One Abuse Prevention Policies.
- d) All Centers must annually submit to US Sailing data regarding the following:
  - i) Reports of emotional or physical misconduct made to the U.S. Center for SafeSport:
    - (1) Total reported incidents of alleged emotional misconduct.
    - (2) Total reported incidents of alleged physical misconduct.
    - (3) Total number of investigations of alleged emotional misconduct.

- (4) Total number of investigations of alleged physical misconduct.
  - (5) Total number of violations for emotional misconduct adjudicated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
  - (6) Total number of violations for physical misconduct adjudicated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.
- ii) Reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport that a participant violated the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP):
  - (1) Total reported incidents of alleged violations of the MAAPP, by policy type.
  - (2) Total number of investigations of alleged violations of the MAAPP.
  - (3) Total number of violations of the MAAPP.
- iii) Reports to the U.S. Center for SafeSport that a participant engaged in retaliation:
  - (1) Total reported incidents of alleged retaliation.
  - (2) Total number of investigations of alleged retaliation.
  - (3) Total number of violations of retaliation policy separated by cases adjudicated by National Governing Body (NGB) and cases adjudicated by its Local Affiliated Organizations (LAO).
- iv) Centers must submit the number of occurrences annually with this form by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. If the LAO has received zero (0) reports, the LAO must report zero (0) through the form above.
- v) Beyond the reporting requirements listed here, LAO's and LAO members are required to report directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport any incidents involving sexual misconduct. Please review all misconduct reporting requirements contained in Section VIII of

the US Sailing Athlete Safety Handbook. To report to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, [please click here](#).

13) Centers shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Response and Resolution authority, including compliance with all U.S. Center for SafeSport Response and Resolution procedures, requests, resolutions, temporary measures, and sanctions. Please review the [SafeSport Code here](#) for more information about the U.S. Center for SafeSport's authority. For more information, please email [compliance@ussailing.org](mailto:compliance@ussailing.org) or consult [US Sailing's Athlete Safety Handbook](#).

14) Centers are subject to a physical or virtual site inspection and ongoing visits by US Sailing representatives. Such inspection includes (but is not limited to) the standard items found in the US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program guidelines. Site inspections are also intended to identify site specific concerns that may not be adequately accounted for in the Program Guidelines. Site visits are performed on a case-by-case basis and may not be a mandatory part of the application process. However, a site visit may occur if a US Sailing representative is not familiar with your program.

15) Fee Structure:

- a) Annual Organizational Membership dues for US Sailing.
- b) Annual Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program fee for US Sailing.
- c) Centers that hold multiple accreditations have a different fee structure.
- d) One (1) invoice will be sent to the organization with all dues itemized. The invoice will arrive within a month of the next year for which it is due.
- e) US Sailing reserves the right to adjust any aspect of the fee structure at any time.
- f) Any Center that declares bankruptcy or violates any of requirements or terms specified in the US Sailing Community Sailing Accreditation

Program Guidelines can be terminated with 30 days written notice or suspended until discrepancies are resolved.

## E. MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS SUGGESTED

- 1) Each organization should consult with their insurance agency to confirm that all applicable insurance coverage is in place. Additional limits should be considered based on your organization's operations, size of program and assets.
- 2) General Liability:
  - a) Each Occurrence: \$1,000,000
  - b) General Aggregate \$2,000,000
  - c) Medical Expense Limit \$5,000
  - d) Policy should not exclude claims that occur on docks, piers or moorings. If applicable, Marine General Liability policy may satisfy this requirement.
- 3) Protection & Indemnity:
  - a) Each Occurrence/Aggregate: \$1,000,000
  - b) This policy should include coverage for sailing instructions and for students on boats owned, chartered, leased or borrowed.
- 4) Workers Compensation & Employers Liability:
  - a) Each Accident \$500,000
  - b) Disease – Policy Limit \$500,000
  - c) Disease – Each Employee \$500,000
- 5) Centers must provide a certificate of insurance from an insurer with a minimum best rating of A-Minus or better for minimum requirements above.
- 6) All coverage noted above should be included within the description within the certificate of insurance or by attachment of the applicable forms.

## F. IMPLEMENTATION & OVERSIGHT

- 1) Site visits are not required, but may be performed at the discretion of US Sailing. A video tour may also be requested.
- 2) Centers with a change in leadership must notify US Sailing as soon as possible to set up a meeting to update new leadership on the requirements to maintain the Program. Centers who merge with other organizations, change structure significantly, or endure force majeure must notify US Sailing as soon as possible to set up a meeting to review the requirements to maintain the Program. The contact email address is: [communitysailing@ussailing.org](mailto:communitysailing@ussailing.org).
- 3) US Sailing reserves the right at its sole discretion to review, suspend, or terminate a Center's accreditation status for non-compliance with any term or obligation contained herein.
- 4) Centers are expected to pay their invoices from US Sailing in a timely manner. Any Center whose account is more than 120 days past due is subject to having their accreditation suspended and can be reinstated if account is paid in full to US Sailing within 365 days past due. Any Center whose account is more than 365 days past due is subject to having their accreditation terminated and must reapply.

## G. REVIEW PROCESS

Once Centers submit a completed application their materials will be reviewed by the Accreditation Working Party of the Committee. If any documents are missing, they will be contacted by a US Sailing staff member. Upon receipt of missing materials, their application will be reviewed a second time. If the applicant doesn't meet the requirements of the program after a second review, they may be asked to wait at least one year before reapplying. If approved, programs are required to submit payment for accreditation upon receipt of the approval email. Upon receipt of payment, Centers will receive a certificate and their status will be reflected in their organization member

profile on MyUSSailing. They will also receive a US Sailing Community Sailing branded item and annual benefits.

## H. MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

- 1) Centers will maintain their accreditation status by completing the following annually:
  - a) Pay annual US Sailing Organizational Membership dues.
  - b) Pay annual US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program fee.
  - c) Sign attestation of the US Sailing Community Sailing Center Accreditation Program Guidelines.
- 2) The maintaining and reaccreditation process is currently being reviewed and is subject to change.

## I. YOU'RE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

In addition to all the benefits a US Sailing Accredited Community Sailing will receive, we invite you to give feedback to refine the quality and outreach of US Sailing's programs. With guidance from community sailing programs like yours, US Sailing can create and provide materials, credentials, and support for sailing organizations. If you are interested in being involved in community sailing through the [US Sailing Community Sailing Committee](#), or if you have general questions, please contact [communitysailing@ussailing.org](mailto:communitysailing@ussailing.org).