



## Introduction/Context

BORP is one of the first organizations in the country to focus solely on adaptive sports and has been a leader in the field for nearly 50 years. In that time, it has operated as the local hub for adaptive recreation programming. After its founding, BORP eventually changed its name from Berkeley Outreach and Recreation to Bay Area Outreach and Recreation, with the intent to serve the entire Bay Area region. Although participants travel to BORP from all over the Bay Area, the vast majority of programming still takes place at one of four Berkeley locations: the cycling/kayak center, fitness center, and two Berkeley gymnasiums.

In the intervening years since BORP's foundation, the adaptive recreation landscape has evolved dramatically. Public awareness, technological advances, and increased accessibility in the built environment, have made almost mainstream what used to be a fringe activity known only to the disability community. There is more awareness than ever before about the importance of adaptive sports thanks to commercials featuring Paralympic athletes, rec centers and gyms purpose-built for adaptive sports, and ever-advancing chair, cycle, and digital technology redefining what is possible.

The increase of attention and opportunity has not impacted BORP much over the years because the organization is not only a service provider, but also a community organization that is led by the disabled community and supported largely by volunteers. The organization deprioritized infrastructure, marketing and communications, and admin support, and put the vast majority of resources toward expanding programming in response to community demand. Thus, while BORP remains a leader in terms of the sheer number and diversity of programs we can offer with a mere \$1.2 million budget, we have stagnated with regard to geographic expansion, name recognition, and effective outreach. As a result, the wealth of programming we offer is not widely enjoyed across the region. We are not living up to our name with regard to making programming available to the 7.75 million residents of the Bay Area; we mostly serve the 110,000 residents of Berkeley or more distant Bay Area residents who have reliable transportation access and the time to commute to our Berkeley-based programming.

### Challenges:

- The Bay Area is large geographically, with multiple populous hubs and gaps in public transportation coverage; transit remains one of the greatest barriers to access;
- Space is at a premium so access to gyms, fields, bike trails, and public transit is expensive (BORP can afford these in Berkeley largely due to a long-standing partnership with the City);
- Staff positions require strong interpersonal skills and specialized knowledge about adaptive sports and equipment, but offer low wages compared to a competitive job market;
- There has been a loss of institutional knowledge with staff changes in the last several years; and
- Current staff is stretched to capacity so it's difficult to sustain programming while also giving due attention to branding, outreach, partnerships, development, and new initiatives.

### Opportunities:

- BORP's reputation is solid, and the community of supporters includes many well-connected individuals;



- BORP staff, 60% of whom have a disability, includes many leaders in the field- some of whom have dedicated a decade or more to serving BORP.
- While there are other teams and programs around the Bay Area providing adaptive sports and recreation, there is no other entity that provides anywhere near BORP’s menu of programs, or serves such broad range of disabilities, or has our depth of expertise about adaptive recreation and disability accommodations, or offers programs as well-run as BORP’s programs, or is led and run by people from the disabled community it serves. Most of these other programs are under-resourced municipality programs or single-sport teams that rely on volunteer support and disband frequently, or health service programming that lacks our community emphasis.
- BORP’s partnerships are strong, though many need to be renegotiated in light of the extraordinary cost-of-living increases in the Bay Area, mandatory minimum wage, insurance rate increases, and other costs associated with being a frontline service provider; and
- Our long-overdue adoption of up-to-date information technology means that we are able to significantly increase organizational efficiency across programming, administrative, and development all at the same time, while also improving the user experience for our program participants.

## **I. Vision**

While BORP provides a wealth of programming in Berkeley and the North Bay region, many participants (and their parents in the case of youth programming) spend hours a week traveling to our locations to participate. We are failing to serve many more potential participants, who would benefit from and enjoy our programs, but lack the transportation resources to attend.

Our goal is to create hubs for adaptive sports and recreation in other locations in the Bay Area region. Each location will be shaped by and created in partnership with existing programs and organizations in the region, with BORP providing the communication, outreach, and admin support that will allow these programs to be sustainable and to grow. With consistent branding and staffing, BORP will become the one-stop-shop for anyone in the Bay Area seeking access to adaptive sports. Through this growth, BORP will then have the capacity to undertake a capital campaign for the construction of an accessible fitness facility, that can be utilized by all the hubs. This will cement BORP’s place as one of the nation’s premier providers of adaptive recreation.

In the next year we will be laying the groundwork for this vision by getting our data house in order with a new CRM platform, integrated data sets, and consistent and disciplined use of the same platforms across the organization. The new CRM will launch in the new year. We will also work to improve our marketing and communication with consistent branding and more engagement on social media (especially important for engaging younger athletes). We hope to hire a communications Director in 2024.

## **II. Funding**

We see five areas for increased funding: Government (City and County); Foundation; Major Donors; Corporate (with an emphasis on Health Care); and Membership.



In the near term, we will emphasize the true costs of the services BORP provides. These costs have been largely hidden from the public because BORP has always (and always will) provided our programs for free to those with limited means. Providing a service for free gives the impression that the expenses are covered. BORP shifted to a no-fee, donations-only model a few years ago and has since suffered a drop in program-generated revenue. By explaining the true costs of programming, we will help participants and supporters appreciate just how valuable a resource BORP is, while also laying the groundwork for a membership program.

### Government

BORP enjoys strong support from the City of Berkeley and City of Oakland as well as Alameda County. The true, and rapidly increasing, costs of providing the services we offer have not been conveyed to our partners in city government in several years. Because BORP is functionally providing all of Berkeley's adaptive sports and recreation programming, fulfilling their legal obligations to provide these services, we are saving the City many expenses. We believe we can increase funding from (or decrease fees we pay to) the City of Berkeley. For the City of Oakland and Alameda County we expect funding to remain the same. Looking further into the future, expanding our footprint will increase our ability to forge stronger partnerships at the city and county lever. For instance, BORP's contract with the City of San Francisco cost BORP more in 2023 than we are paid to implement it. Since taking on the Executive Director position, Emily has surfaced the problem and met with City allies to address this imbalance. Her engagement there has (counterintuitively) strengthened BORP's relationship with our City of San Francisco contact. We now look to launch our first adaptive sports hub next year in the City, offering more programming and better serving the disabled community there.

### Foundations

Current relationships with funders are generally solid. However, Foundations are not typically interested in funding long-term general operations and some funders saw dropping participation even before the pandemic. Our plan is two-tiered. In the near term we are showing our longtime funders that BORP is back, renewed with fresh and vigorous leadership. Looking out a year from now, we plan to engage Foundations in our growth initiative. This will also open opportunities for one-off funders and build new long-term relations with Foundations in the greater region that serve, for instance, San Francisco or the Peninsula. Our initiative will offer one of the more exciting, and most impactful, opportunities in the region for Foundations with a focus on disabilities and equity. We believe major state funders such as the California Endowment and California Health Care Foundations will want to be involved and that many smaller regional funders will be interested in specific requests, for example to purchase adaptive cycles and other equipment at the adaptive sports and recreation hubs.

### Major Donors

BORP enjoys the support of individuals who are well-established, successful people in their sunset years living in one of the most expensive regions in the country. Traditionally, BORP's fundraising has been almost entirely passive, with our biggest event being a peer-to-peer fundraiser. We are now actively engaging donors to set one-on-one visit and/or to attend house parties to share our vision for BORP's future.



For years, individuals have had a personal connection to the organization, formed from direct program participation by themselves or a loved one. BORP Program Managers have nurtured those relationships with event like the Poker Slam, Roll and Shoot, the Jonathalon, the REV etc. We need to bridge relationships between these individuals to the organization as-a-whole with one campaign and one narrative – a rising tide that lifts all ships, as it were.

While we will maintain some of the historical events that have been important community-building event, our organizational investment will shift the focus toward community building that spans across program areas. For example, the Chris Finn Memorial Poker Slam used to raise funds only for Power Soccer. This year we increased the goal substantially and raised for all the teams. This year we are also launching the Adaptive Sports Expo will highlight the full breadth of BORP programming and include a strong outreach element, with the entire event oriented toward lowering the barriers for new participants.

This revamped major donor strategy will engage donors at in-person events, person-to-person visits, or at in-person house parties hosted by major donors. These will be focused fundraising and networking opportunities intended to raise funds quickly but also get the message out that BORP is going places.

We know that many of the participants want a dedicated BORP adaptive sports facility. Yet, faith in BORP's ability to achieve that has flagged. Additionally, running such a facility will require a more resourced and larger organization. While the three-year plan does not include a BORP gym, it lays the groundwork necessary for the organization to be able to sustain a gym once built.

### Corporate

The disabled community is a significant market that is increasingly being recognized as chronically underserved. This has led several sectors to invest in adaptive products including sports equipment, adaptive technologies, and adaptive virtual gaming. All of these companies are possible corporate backers, augmenting current corporate funding from the medical and service industries.

As BORP becomes recognized regionally as the primary contact for adaptive sports and recreation needs throughout the entire bay area, we will also become the go-to for physical therapists, trauma units, hospitals, out-patient care, senior centers, etc. Instead of disconnected, sparse, and minimally advertised programming, BORP will provide a one-stop-shop to connect an individual with a caring, disability-competent community that can guide them to the sports or recreation experience that fits their needs and wants.

For healthcare providers this is especially a boon. Patients who are self-motivated to be active require less out-patient rehabilitation. Beyond the physical benefits, multiple studies confirm that adaptive recreation participation strongly correlated to improved mental health and connection. People with disabilities are significantly more likely than their non-disabled peers to report loneliness, low social



support and social isolation.<sup>1</sup> Research also shows that this “quality of life” gap is erased when people get access to adaptive sports.<sup>2</sup>

Time and time again, BORP’s participants confirm the transformative impact that our programs have on their well-being. The benefits include: connecting with peers who understand the difficult and isolating disability experience; having a recurring activity adding purpose and structure to your day; and increased self-esteem that comes with viewing your capabilities and body in a positive light. The life-changing nature of these benefits cannot be overstated. This mental health increase correlates with better employment rates and better health outcomes: all ultimately reducing costs to healthcare providers.

### Membership

Membership is the simplest way to allow people to sustain the programming they enjoy. It will also enhance our understanding of a person’s full engagement with BORP, bringing previously separate datasets together and streamlining reporting and evaluation processes. Everyone who participates in BORP programming will need to be a member, though it will be free to those who receive SSI, other government support programs, or with other demonstrated financial hardships. The single membership will allow for simpler communication, participation tracking, waiver compliance, and (with monthly payments) provide a steady, dependable monthly income year-round. It also provides a context in which to explain the true costs of programming without making some participants feel less-than. Membership is a portion of the overall funding strategy that will include transparency around revenue and expenses. All members are of equal standing regardless of their ability to pay, and just by being a member they are supporting BORP’s greater efficiency and demonstration of impact as an organization. BORP’s membership program will also help all participants feel more connected to the larger organization; we plan to include a t-shirt and new sports jerseys as part of the membership fee and build out a store with merch for those who want to represent BORP in their day-to-day.

## **III. Staffing**

Key positions for successful implementation include:

- Communications Director (2024)
- Outreach/Recruitment Manager (2025)
- Program Directors for each adaptive sports hub (2026)

## **IV. Timeline**

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<sup>1</sup> Emerson E, Fortune N, Llewellyn G, Stancliffe R. Loneliness, social support, social isolation and wellbeing among working age adults with and without disability: Cross-sectional study. Disabil Health J. 2021 Jan;14(1):100965. doi: 10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.100965. Epub 2020 Aug 5. PMID: 32843311; PMCID: PMC7403030.

<sup>2</sup> Côté-Leclerc, F., Boileau Duchesne, G., Bolduc, P. et al. How does playing adapted sports affect quality of life of people with mobility limitations? Results from a mixed-method sequential explanatory study. Health Qual Life Outcomes 15, 22 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-017-0597-9>



## Foundation and Government outreach on-going

### July through December 2023

- (August – December) Implement new internal systems to improve efficiency – (12 weeks of system training for staff required with on-boarding start date TBD)
- September to June 2024 – house party fundraisers (3 with combined goal of \$18,000 (\$6,000 each)
- 9/23 - Poker Slam – fundraising event (\$15,000 goal, surpassed goal) (not including in-kind contributions)
- Data migration to Neon CRM (Membership launch date planned for early 2024)
- 10/14 - BORP Adaptive Sports Expo (corporate sponsor opportunities)
- 11/1 - Year-end appeal (mailed by 11/15)
- 11/28 - Giving Tuesday (\$5,000)
- 12/5 - Give the gift of BORP year-end campaign booster (Goal \$25,000 includes Giving Tuesday and new monthly donors)

### January through June 2024

- May 11 – 22<sup>nd</sup> Revolution Ride
- June SF/Peninsula Adaptive Sports and Recreation Hub launch
- June – July San Francisco Hub established with the following:
  - Power Soccer
  - Cycling
  - One additional Program (potentials: fitness, basketball, goalball, climbing)

### July through December 2024

- House party fundraisers continue (3 for 2024/25 with combined goal of \$18,000 (\$6,000 each)
- September Poker Slam
- October BORP – adaptive sports expo (corporate sponsor opportunities)
- 11/1 - Yearend appeal
- 12/4 - Giving Tuesday (\$5,000)
- 12/7 - Give the gift of BORP year-end campaign booster (Goal \$250,000 includes Giving Tuesday and new monthly donors)

### January through June 2025

- June South Bay Adaptive Sports and Recreation Hub – program director hire
  - June – July South Bay Hub established