

Provide a description of the proposed project, including: the need for the project; who will benefit; what your organization wants to do and why; when and where it will take place; and how it will be done. List the amount requested and what the funds requested in this application will support. (Four paragraphs maximum) 10,000 characters:

Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating, Inc (CRAB) is requesting \$20,000 to customize a newly acquired Gemini Freestyle 399 Power Catamaran that will be used by guests in wheelchairs (who do not want to leave their chairs) to go fishing or cruising on the bay. The adaptive catamaran will allow up to five wheelchair guests, plus family members or friends, the opportunity to learn powerboating skills and earn a Maryland Boating Certificate. Additional recreational activities planned for the future include crabbing and wakeboarding.

The addition of the Gemini Freestyle to the CRAB fleet of 7 adaptive sailboats will provide a new opportunity for our guests in wheelchairs to enjoy the beautiful Chesapeake Bay. The boat has over 140 sq. ft. of open floor space that is completely covered by a hardtop with a sunroof for protection from the sun or inclement weather. Many guests sailing with CRAB have experienced cancellations due to the heat or lack of wind. The Gemini eliminates this problem and opens up an entirely new world of boating for them.

The ability to offer an alternative to sailing is expected to make CRAB an even more attractive destination for guests with disabilities who desire to be on the water. Regardless of the weather, the Gemini Freestyle will be able to accommodate guests comfortably and safely.

The Gemini catamaran was acquired with a grant from the Meridian Foundation awarded to CRAB in 2021. Originally, CRAB was seeking to acquire a pontoon boat, but due to manufacturing backlogs, no custom pontoon boats have been built for the past 2 years. The opportunity to “upgrade” to a fiberglass power catamaran was a dream come true. Hence the name for the boat, “Dream Catcher.”

Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating (CRAB) is the leading provider of outdoor, therapeutic, and recreational programs on the Chesapeake Bay for people with disabilities. CRAB’s services are offered free of charge and have been perfected over its 30-year history. To improve accessibility, CRAB, in partnership with the State of Maryland, Anne Arundel County, and the City of Annapolis, is opening the premier Adaptive Boating Center in North America. The Adaptive Boating Center (ABC) was designed from the ground up to accommodate people with any disability and to be the most accessible adaptive boating center ever built.

Independent living, inclusion and community integration*

Describe how this project will increase independent living for people living with paralysis, promote inclusion, or support integration into the physical, cultural, and spiritual communities in which they live. 5,000 characters

Maryland and Annapolis, in particular, have a long maritime history tied to the Chesapeake Bay. However, many members of our community, specifically those with paralysis and spinal cord injury, often are excluded from the maritime activities that are intrinsic to the fabric of our community. The reason people with mobility disabilities are often left out of accessibility challenges. US Access Board regulations only require that the docks of a marina be accessible. They do not require accessibility to a boat from the dock. Annapolis, long known as the Sailing Capital of America, has only one ADA-accessible dock, preventing equal access for members of our community with disabilities to enjoy boating on the Chesapeake Bay. CRAB’s Annapolis Adaptive Boating Center will allow for CRAB’s fleet to be increased in size and diversity in order to provide a greater choice of watercraft to enjoy boating or sailing on the bay.

The Gemini will be adapted to be able to host up to five guests in wheelchairs and will be the only boat in the CRAB fleet that will be able to accommodate people who prefer not to leave their wheelchairs. To sail in one of CRAB's six Beneteau 22A (A for Adaptive) sailboats, guests are required to leave their wheelchairs on the dock.

The fully adapted catamaran is new to the CRAB community and will allow people who prefer not to leave their wheelchairs or do not wish to use a Hoyer lift or transfer slide to access fulfilling watersports. Catamarans are widely used by boaters with disabilities and those who do not have a disability because of their stable platform. New Mobility magazine (for active people who use a wheelchair) even outlined best practices for accessible power boats as "the space to accommodate several wheelchair users at once safely, wider side gates as a standard feature, being able to board at dock level using only a small ramp, and with easily deployable sunshade." CRAB anticipates 12-16 people on the pontoon boat per excursion, which will allow for up to five wheelchair users, caregivers, friends and family, and two CRAB volunteers. The large space is necessary to provide boating instructions and of sharing duties by guests with disabilities. For many people who use wheelchairs, the Gemini Catamaran will be their first opportunity to fully connect with the long-established maritime history and character of the community in which they live.

Project goals*

Provide at least one major goal of the project as well as a description of what you plan to accomplish. 10,000 characters

The goal of this project is to increase access and diversify opportunities for people who use wheelchairs on the Chesapeake Bay. CRAB is requesting \$20,000 to customize its Gemini Freestyle 399 Catamaran so it can host up to five guests who use wheelchairs in a single excursion.

The adapted catamaran will be custom designed for safety and stability. Features that need to be adapted include:

- Larger gate for wheelchair users
- Wheelchair Securement System for when the boat is underway
- Reinforced railings
- Removable seats
- Electric wiring to add joystick for easy maneuvering of the boat
- Detachable Ramp and guard rail for safe boarding

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation logo will be placed on the boat's hull, which will be highly visible in Annapolis and on the Chesapeake Bay during the boating season. In addition, the boat will be displayed at the United States Power Boat Show hosted in Annapolis annually. The Power Boat Show attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Annapolis every year. The boat will also be decorated for the Eastport Yacht Club Annual Parade of Lights in December in the Annapolis Harbor, which is attended by thousands of people.

Will your project take longer than 12 months to complete?* Please note that for your Direct Effect application to be eligible, project timeline and expenditures must be able to be completed within the 12-month grant period.

No

Timeline, activities and benchmarks*

Outline your project timeline of major project activities, including proposed start dates, benchmarks, and end dates. 6,000 characters

CRAB purchased a Gemini Freestyle 399 Catamaran with the intention of modifying it to host up to five guests who use wheelchairs. Now that the boat has been delivered, CRAB is working with boat vendors to customize the boat with adaptative modifications so people using wheelchairs can safely board and disembark. CRAB anticipates that, once the design modifications are agreed upon, the modifications will take about two months to complete. CRAB would like to start work on the boat as soon as possible and would begin as soon as funding is secured. This will put the Gemini into operation in May, just in time for the boating season.

Expected impact*

Describe the extent to which the proposed project/program is likely to have a significant, direct impact on the target population. What difference will the proposed project/program make in the lives of individuals living with paralysis and their families? 10,000 characters

The opportunity to participate in outdoor recreational adaptive sports can be an important part of rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury and paralysis. Individuals with paralysis who participate in adaptive boating receive both physical and psychological benefits from increased outdoor activity. CRAB is the only provider of adaptive boating and sailing on the beautiful and serene Chesapeake Bay. As the largest estuary in the country, the Bay provides a great deal of "blue space." Scientists have known for more than a decade that being near water is good for the body and the mind. Proximity to water is associated with many positive measures of physical and mental well-being, from higher levels of vitamin D to better social relationships. "Many of the processes are exactly the same as with green space – with some added benefits," says Dr. Mathew White, a senior lecturer at the University of Exeter and an environmental psychologist with BlueHealth, a program researching the health and well-being benefits of blue space. Additionally, research has demonstrated the benefits of exercise, including improved muscle strength and endurance, decreased insulin resistance, and a decreased risk of cardiovascular mortality.

There is also a growing body of work reinforcing the benefits of physical activity in the SCI population. Unfortunately, approximately two-thirds of individuals with physical disabilities in the United States do not participate in sports, a significantly lower percentage than their peers without disabilities. CRAB is working to make therapeutic and fulfilling adaptive programming accessible to anyone with a disability at no cost to them. The adapted catamaran will be a significant improvement to CRAB's current programming because it will provide the first opportunity for equitable access for anyone who is not comfortable leaving their wheelchair.

With the approaching opening of the CRAB Annapolis Adaptive Boating Center, there is an increased amount of attention surrounding CRAB and its adaptive boating programs. The ABC has earned national and international attention as a showcase project supporting people with disabilities. The success of this project will be shared with other adaptive and community boating centers in the country that wish to replicate the facility and strengthen their program offerings. CRAB is proud to be recognized as an innovator and a local, regional, and national leader in adaptive boating programs. CRAB will use this opportunity to position the universally accessible catamaran to engage the global boating community to raise awareness of barrier-free recreation and to inspire people with disabilities, recovering warriors, and youth from underserved communities and their families to improve their independence and quality of life. Along with other marketing initiatives, CRAB intends to feature the Catamaran at the United States Power Boat Show in October 2023.

Impact - number of individuals living with paralysis*

How many people living with paralysis will be served by this project / program?

12,000

Impact - individuals living with paralysis*

Indicate how you arrived at this figure and the data sources used. 5,000 characters left of 5,000

The Catamaran will be modified to accommodate up to 5 people with paralysis per excursion. Once the boat is modified, CRAB expects that it will have the capacity to provide 4 excursions a week during the Maryland Boating season. Our boating season runs for about 24 weeks, from April to October. The modified catamaran hull has a life expectancy of 25 years. This would result in an expectation that more than 12,000 individuals with paralysis will benefit from this project.

Impact - number of caregivers and family members of those living with paralysis*

How many caregivers or family members of those living with paralysis will be served by this project / program?

12,000

Impact - caregivers and family members of those living with paralysis*

Indicate how you arrived at this figure and the data sources used. 5,000 characters

Caregivers and family members are welcome and encouraged to participate in CRAB programs along with their family members with a disability. CRAB anticipates that the catamaran will be able to host at least one or two caregivers or family members per guest in a wheelchair per excursion. CRAB expects that it would have the capacity to provide 4 excursions a week during the Maryland boating season. The boating season runs for about 24 weeks, from April to October. The modified catamaran hull has a life expectancy of 25 years. This would result in an expectation that more than 12,000 caregivers of people with paralysis will benefit from this project.

Underserved targeted population to be served*

Tell us if your proposed project / program specifically targets any of the following underserved population groups. Select all that apply.

Current or released prisoners and / or persons at-risk of incarceration

Ethnic minorities

Homeless

Indigenous or tribal communities

LGBTQ+

Limited English proficiency

Low income and / or poverty populations

Migrant workers

Military service members and / or veterans

Newly injured or diagnosed persons with paralysis and their caregivers

None of these

- ✓ Older adults / elderly

Rural residents

Survivors of violence

Other

Age group of participants*

Check the following age group(s) or intended participants in your proposed project. Please check all that apply.

- ✓ 0 - 4 years old
- ✓ 5 - 12 years old
- ✓ 13 - 18 years old
- ✓ 19 - 24 years old
- ✓ 25 - 45 years old
- ✓ 46 - 60 years old
- ✓ 61 - 90 years old

Outreach*

Describe how you will reach the intended audience. For example: How will you recruit program participants? How will you make the community aware of the project? 5,000 characters

CRAB will initiate a multi-media marketing and public relations initiative to recruit program participants. CRAB will feature the catamaran in its monthly newsletter, with a distribution of nearly 7,000 individuals. CRAB will reach out to each of its twenty-five partner community nonprofit organizations, including Kennedy Krieger Institute, Bennett Institute, Paralyzed Veterans, and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and offer boating events to each organization free of charge. The boat itself will be a showpiece on the water with a custom hull wrap intended to attract attention to its mission through brightly colored graphics. CRAB will produce a video introduction to the boat to be hosted on its website and posted on all of CRAB's social media platforms. CRAB has also invited the United States Access Board to host its July Board meeting at the Adaptive Boating Center and participate in an excursion on the catamaran (since confirmed). This event will bring media attention to the ABC and all of its offerings, including the newly adapted Gemini catamaran. CRAB will feature the catamaran at the United States Power Boat Show, October 5-8, 2023. The U.S. Power Boat Show is an annual event in Annapolis, Maryland, and attracts more than twenty thousand visitors.

Evaluation and Project Measures*

Describe how you will evaluate the project. How will you know if it was successful in meeting its goal(s)? List the major outputs and outcomes of your project. [See the "Guide to Establishing Evaluation Indicators" (link provided here) as well as on our website.] 10,000 characters

Success in achieving stated outcomes will be measured by the number of guests accommodated on the new adaptive catamaran, assessing wellness indicators (self-esteem, sense of belonging, and self-confidence), repeat participation, and the degree to which participants increase their boating skills and knowledge. CRAB staff and volunteer skippers will administer the following tools to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure the successful evaluation of the proposed programs: individual surveys, on-the-water observation, and focus groups. This work will be performed prior to, during, and after each boating program on the catamaran has

concluded. The true litmus test will be how many disabled guests ask to go boating on the Gemini catamaran and come back again with family or friends.

Geographic service area*

Tell us about your project / program's geographic service area. What states, counties or areas will your project serve? Please indicate if services are provided nationally. 7,000 characters

CRAB's regional outreach includes guests from Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Eastern Shore, St. Mary's County, Montgomery County, Prince George County, and Frederick County in Maryland, D.C, Northern Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey.

Project Contingency Funding*

Explain how funding requested from this Reeve Foundation grant fits with your overall project budget strategy. If other project funding is pending and subsequently denied, how will the project be funded? What happens if the Reeve Foundation is not able to support the proposed project? 3,000 characters

CRAB previously received funding from the Meridian Foundation for the purchase of the 2023 Gemini Freestyle 399 for \$225,000. Funding from the now-dissolved Meridian Foundation was received in 2021 in the amount of \$218,000. It took more than a year to find an appropriate and available boat and complete the purchase. In that time, supply chain issues and inflation created a deficit in our original project budget. That is why CRAB is now looking to the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation for support. If the Reeve Foundation is not able to provide funding, it will result in additional program delays, and CRAB will be required to look for another funding source to make the necessary modifications to the boat.

Organizational Information

Provide your organization's mission statement. (Three paragraphs or less.) 1,000 characters

CRAB's mission is to provide the thrill, freedom, and therapeutic value of sailing to people with disabilities, recovering warriors, and youth from underserved communities on the Chesapeake Bay.

Description of Organization's History and Capacity*

Briefly describe your organization's history and its capacity to do the proposed project; i.e., how long your organization has been in business; what experience and expertise your organization has in doing the proposed type of work; what makes your organization uniquely qualified to be successful in carrying out this proposed project. (Four paragraphs or less.) 5,000 characters

More than 30 years ago, CRAB was founded on the principle that people with disabilities can and should be able to live fulfilling lives and have equitable access to meaningful outdoor therapeutic recreation on Chesapeake Bay. In 1989, Annapolis local Don Backe was in a serious car accident that left him paralyzed. After months of painful rehabilitation, Don realized he would not regain any more of his mobility. Realizing that recovery meant more than mobility, Don's friends and supporters devised a system to lower him with ropes onto his sailboat. Immediately, Don knew he would dedicate the rest of his life to helping other people get access to therapeutic sailing, and in 1991 CRAB was born.

CRAB is a leading provider of outdoor, therapeutic, recreational boating programs for people with disabilities and is the only organization of its kind on the Chesapeake Bay. Each year, more than 1,200 people participate in its programs: Family Sails, Group Sails, Sailing Clinics, Kids Sailing Camps, and Regattas. CRAB's services are offered free of charge and have been perfected over its 32-year history. Its programs and adaptive equipment

are now models for other adaptive sailing programs throughout the country, including Community Sailing New Orleans and the Baltimore Downtown Sailing Center.

CRAB relies on its more than 150 experienced and dedicated volunteers to deliver its adaptive boating programs. In 2022, volunteers provided more than 3,840 hours of service to staff 71 sailing events for more than 1,233 individuals living with a disability. Volunteers who work with CRAB come with decades of boating experience. CRAB enjoys a 100 percent safety record.