



## OVERVIEW – The USA Swimming Foundation’s Make a Splash Initiative

Drowning is the second leading cause of childhood unintentional death, and children from non-swimming households are eight times more likely to be at risk of drowning than children from homes where their parents know how to swim.

Drowning is an epidemic in our country. It is also preventable. We have a solution, and the solution is swimming lessons.

Traditional drowning prevention initiatives seek to save lives by putting up physical barriers between children and the water, such as fencing around pools and secure pool covers. The USA Swimming Foundation’s *Make a Splash* initiative believes that the best defense against drowning is empowering children with the life-saving skill of learning how to swim, and teaching them how to be safer around the water.

Research has shown that participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88%. *Make a Splash* provides children across America with the opportunity to receive qualified swimming instruction, regardless of their ability to pay for lessons. By teaching children to swim, we are teaching children how to save their own lives.

Since 2007, the USA Swimming Foundation’s *Make a Splash* Local Partner network has grown to over 800 Local Partner programs in all 50 states. Through these partners, children from ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged communities receive the opportunity to enroll in free or reduced-cost swim lessons. The USA Swimming Foundation assists these Local Partners in their efforts to provide swim lessons to all children, regardless of their ability to pay, by awarding grant funding which allows them to enroll scholarship students in their learn-to-swim lesson programs. The Foundation targets its grant dollars to partners that are best able to address the disparities in U.S. drowning rates, and who are able to have the greatest impact in their communities. Local Partners meet specific criteria to ensure their effectiveness and ability to offer water safety instruction and/or swimming lessons to young people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to learn to swim.

Enrollees in *Make a Splash* Local Partner swim lessons attend a minimum of one session of qualified swim instruction. Each session is comprised of 6 classes (minimum), with at least one (1) class per week; participation in the *Make a Splash* Local Partner network requires a minimum of four (4) hours instructional time per session. Children receive instruction at a maximum 6:1 student to instructor ratio, and receive at least 30 minutes of instruction per class for group lessons. During swim lessons, children learn basic water safety skills, including: breath control, floating, paddling, kicking, and how to call for help if they’re in trouble. During the course of their session, children build confidence in and around the water, and learn basic water safety principles, such as never swimming alone, following pool rules, and how to react if someone needs help in the water.

In order to track the effectiveness of our efforts, *Make a Splash* Local Partner grant recipients are chosen based on their: project goals; ability to serve a large and diverse population; demonstrated partnerships with other qualified organizations; and financial stability, with an emphasis on the ability to secure additional and/or matching funds. *Make a Splash* Local Partner programs are required to file three (3) seasonal enrollment reports each year. Reports are due on June 1, September 1 and January 1. Partners are asked to report on the

following criteria three times per year: total number of children participating in learn-to-swim programs; number of children participating in learn-to-swim programs as a direct result of USA Swimming Foundation scholarship grants; number of children participating in learn-to-swim programs as a result of outside or direct program scholarship assistance; additional statistics may be included per program availability (e.g., ethnicity, age, gender, etc.). This data is collected and analyzed by the USA Swimming Foundation to monitor the overall impact of the USA Swimming Foundation's *Make a Splash* initiative.

To date, USA Swimming Foundation *Make a Splash* Local Partners have reported over 4 million enrollments in learn-to-swim programs at their facilities, now serving just under 1 million children annually. Of these, more than 120,000 children have been recipients of a scholarship as a direct result of USA Swimming Foundation funding. Local Partners have been able to leverage this relationship to enroll an additional 400,000+ scholarship recipients in learn-to-swim programming.

In addition to the Local Partner program, the USA Swimming Foundation seeks to raise national awareness about the importance of learning to swim. Each year, the Foundation embarks on a national awareness tour. Entering its ninth year, the *Make a Splash Tour presented by Phillips 66* visits cities across America to spread the learn to swim message among children, families and communities.

With the help of our USA Swimming Foundation Ambassadors and National Team athletes to spread the life-saving message of learn to swim, the Tour has enhanced publicity and expanded the reach of the *Make a Splash* campaign to a wide audience of parents, learn-to-swim providers, educators and community leaders. The Tour has received extensive national media exposure in outlets such as *Sports Illustrated*, the *Today Show*, *HBO Real Sports* and more. The *Make a Splash* tour has made stops in cities such as St. Louis, Portland, Oklahoma City, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Ft. Lauderdale, Houston, New Orleans, Des Moines, San Francisco, Memphis, New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago, Phoenix, and Atlanta. [Click here](#) for a comprehensive look at 2016 Make a Splash Tour media coverage.

In 2012, the USA Swimming Foundation announced the formation of its *Make a Splash* Affiliate Coalition. The Coalition is comprised of community-based national business and organizations who share the common goal of promoting the importance of learning to swim and water safety across America. To date, Affiliate Partners include the National Drowning Prevention Alliance, Starfish Aquatics Institute, Goggles for Guppies, the Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation, Swim Lessons University, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission *Pool Safely* campaign, the Aquatic Exercise Association, the Aquatic Therapy and Rehab Institute, the Association of Aquatic Professionals, the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation, World Waterpark Association's World's Largest Swimming Lesson, USA Triathlon, the Boy Scouts of America, USA Deaf Swimming, the Redwoods Group Foundation, the American Red Cross, Water Smart Babies, and U.S. Masters Swimming *Swimming Saves Lives Foundation*. In addition to our Affiliate network, the following organizations support the USA Swimming Foundation through Sponsorship or Charitable partnerships: SwimWays, SafeSplash Brands LLC., The College Swimming Coaches Association of America, and John Wayne Cancer Foundation.

For more information on the USA Swimming Foundation's *Make a Splash* initiative, please visit our website at [www.usaswimmingfoundation.org/makeasplash](http://www.usaswimmingfoundation.org/makeasplash), or contact us at 719-866-3546, [masinfo@usaswimming.org](mailto:masinfo@usaswimming.org).