



# UNITED STATES NATIONAL WATER SAFETY ACTION PLAN

LAUNCHING 2022

## PURPOSE

The U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP) will be a strategic, evidence-informed plan, created by experts in drowning prevention and informed by water safety stakeholders and practitioners from across the country, aimed at preventing drowning in the USA. Considering that most prevention needs to happen at the subnational level, the USNWSAP will be a model-based plan, focusing on providing guidance on what a model water safety community, county, and state should look like, as well as identifying national level activities that guide and support subnational efforts.

## BENEFITS

A National Water Safety Action Plan has many benefits including, but not limited to, creating a coordinated strategic approach to an important preventable epidemic, prompting meaningful changes in policy and funding, creating opportunities for multi-sectoral stakeholder collaboration, and providing guidance on efforts towards achieving the common goal of promoting safer behavior in and around the water, reducing drowning and saving lives.

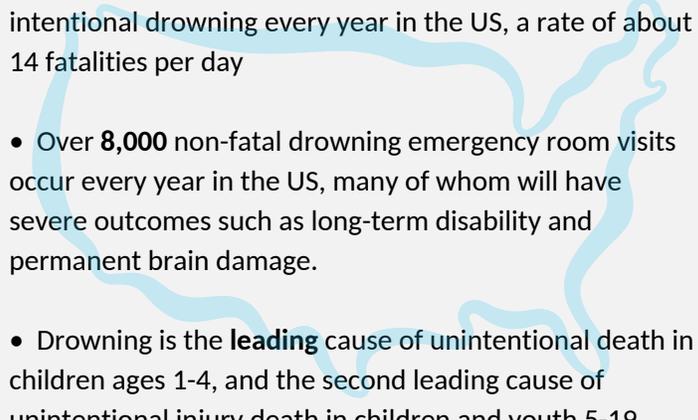
The USNWSAP also aims to:

- Provide a strategic framework for collaborative efforts to prevent drowning
- Guide relevant partners in a cohesive response to drowning risks
- Set priorities and coordinate actions among stakeholders to protect against drowning
- Identify important gaps in drowning prevention and water safety research
- Establish equity and inclusion in water safety and aquatic activity opportunities
- Foster targeted drowning prevention efforts for high-risk populations and environments
- Raise awareness of ways to stay safe in and around the water

## BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization has identified the development of a national action plan as one of the primary actions to help protect countries from the tragedy of drowning.<sup>5</sup> Many countries, like Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and Canada have successfully created and are now implementing a national water safety strategy. In 2022, the United States will officially launch the United States National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP). The process for creating the USNWSAP was initiated and facilitated by Water Safety USA and is now led by a Steering Committee of experts in water safety and drowning prevention.

## BURDEN<sup>1-4</sup>

- Approximately **5,000** people die due to unintentional or intentional drowning every year in the US, a rate of about 14 fatalities per day
  - Over **8,000** non-fatal drowning emergency room visits occur every year in the US, many of whom will have severe outcomes such as long-term disability and permanent brain damage.
  - Drowning is the **leading** cause of unintentional death in children ages 1-4, and the second leading cause of unintentional injury death in children and youth 5-19.
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- A light blue outline map of the United States is positioned behind the text in the Burden section.

# SCOPE

The USNWSAP will be a 10-year plan that will be monitored for progress every 5 years. The plan focuses on six important areas in drowning prevention, each with an associated working group made up of drowning prevention experts. Working groups and steering committee members have collaborated to develop action and gap recommendations that make up the models at the community, county, and state levels. The six focus areas are:

- Life jackets/PFDs
- Water safety/Water competency including swimming lessons
- Supervision/Lifeguards
- Rescue/CPR
- Pool fencing (and other barriers)
- Data/public health surveillance



# STAGES

The USNWSAP is being developed and will be launched, and sustainably implemented in distinct stages:



Developed a Steering Committee, establish scope, and select a framework that supports both the development and implementation of the USNWSAP.



Established multi-sectoral Working Groups to engage with stakeholders and draft recommendations that identify important actions and gaps for the USNWSAP.



Build consensus around recommendations among the water safety community, stakeholders, and practitioners, and convene a high-level expert Blue-Ribbon panel to finalize the plan.



Launch and implementation of the USNWSAP through sustainable media dissemination, presentations, and advocacy efforts, while gathering necessary data to monitor progress of the plan nationwide.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED



Provide feedback on the draft USNWSAP recommendations later this year.



Be an advocate for the USNWSAP by following us on Instagram @USNWSAP and on Facebook at U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan.



Follow our progress by signing up for the USNWSAP quarterly newsletter.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO: [WWW.WATERSAFETYUSA.ORG/NWSAP](http://WWW.WATERSAFETYUSA.ORG/NWSAP)**