



The Sun Bus Strategic Development Plan **DRAFT 1** **2025-2027**

Developed by: Pear Associates

Purpose and Context

The Sun Bus provides free, mobile skin cancer screenings and health education to underserved communities and the public throughout the Midwest. Currently, The Sun Bus relies on revenue from corporate sponsorships – which account for more than 80% of its annual revenue -- to conduct its critical work. To ensure the sustainability of these services and the organization’s growth, The Sun Bus must diversify revenue sources, strengthen donor engagement, and build internal capacity. This plan outlines key strategies and a phased approach to build a robust development program, which will increase revenue and long-term sustainability towards expanding The Sun Bus’s impact.

Development Strategy Overarching Goal

The overall goal of this development strategy is to ensure sufficient funding, capacity and human resources for The Sun Bus to sustain and grow its infrastructure and programming through a diversified revenue model.

Key Priorities

To achieve its overarching goal, The Sun Bus must:

1. Build internal capacity and systems to support a robust fundraising program.
2. Sustain and grow corporate sponsorship and partnership revenue.
3. Build an individual donor program.
4. Identify, cultivate and solicit institutional funders.
5. Develop a fundraising event strategy that aligns with capacity.

This plan provides strategies and actions for each of the five priority areas above. A comprehensive audit of The Sun Bus’s fundraising activities and conversations with key organizational leaders were conducted in Fall of 2024 to inform the plan.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Priority 1: Build internal capacity and systems to support a robust fundraising program.

Current Status

The Sun Bus is understaffed, with the Executive Director (ED) handling most administrative and fundraising tasks, in addition to overseeing and assisting with programs. The Board is dedicated and generous with time and expertise, but not fully engaged in fundraising.

Strategies

- Allocate resources to hire, retain and develop skilled fundraising staff
- Increase Board Engagement in Development process and leverage board networks
- Implement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to track donors of all types and automate fundraising activities
- Refresh web and social media presence to align with development strategies and strengthen Sun Bus brand recognition.

Priority 1: Build internal capacity and systems to support a robust fundraising program			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
Allocate resources to hire, retain and develop skilled fundraising staff	Conduct annual staff development workshop to train current staff on their role in the development process.	2026 Q1	100% of staff identify ways that development strategies can be integrated into their position
	Engage with consultant or contracted professional at 10 hours per week to begin implementing development plan actions and build internal processes	2025 Q2	Key actions from Development Plan are successfully implemented, including CRM system, donor stewardship plans, sponsorship
	Conduct search and hire full time development professional to fully implement plan	2026	
	Provide ongoing professional development and training opportunities for development staff to enhance skills and stay up to date on fundraising best practices.		
Increase Board Engagement in Development process and leverage board networks	Conduct annual board development workshop focused on fundraising.	2025 Q2 ongoing	
	Implement a formal "give/get" policy to ensure 100% board participation in donations.	2025 Q1	
	Dedicate board meeting time to brainstorming and identifying	2025 Q1	

Priority 1: Build internal capacity and systems to support a robust fundraising program			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
	potential donors and sponsors from board members' networks.		
	Encourage board to implement personal birthday fundraisers via social media.	2025 Q1	
Implement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to track donors of all types and automate fundraising activities	Research options and select system (Note: Dynamics 365 is a Microsoft CRM product that might be a good option, given The Sun Bus access to discounted Microsoft products. Other suggested options include Bloomerang, Donorperfect, GiveButter, Blackbaud)	2025 Q1	
	Consolidate existing donor info from accounting system and past fundraising events and import into CRM. Include sponsors, grants and individuals	2025 Q2	
Refresh web and social media presence to align with development strategies and strengthen Sun Bus brand recognition.	Redirect Colorado Melanoma Foundation website to The Sun Bus url and include CMF info on Sun Bus "About" page.	2025	
	Add landing page for "how you can help" that includes all ways to donate and volunteer	2025	
	Replace paypal donation form with The Sun Bus-branded donation form that links to CRM. Include suggested donation levels and option for monthly donations and tribute gifts.	2025 Q2	
	Add donation link and language to all social media accounts.	2025 Q2	
	Integrate regular donation requests into schedule of social media posts.	2025 Q2	

Priority 2: Sustain and Grow Corporate Sponsorship Revenue

Current Status

Corporate sponsorships are the primary revenue source, accounting for over 80% of annual income. Key sponsors like Elta MD/Colgate offer consistent support, but there is potential to increase contributions and secure multi-year agreements.

Strategies

- Secure Multi-Year Sponsor Commitments
- Increase Sponsorship Levels
- Enhance Sponsor Reporting
- Expand Sponsor Outreach and Cultivation

Priority 2: Sustain and Grow Corporate Sponsorship Revenue			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
Secure Multi-Year Sponsor Commitments	Develop formal requests for multi-year sponsorship agreements	2025, Q1 ongoing	2025: one sponsor makes multi-year commitment 2026: two sponsors commit 2027: four sponsors commit
Increase Sponsorship Levels	Introduce exclusive branding opportunities (i.e., exclusive logo placement on bus, event-specific logo placement on bus with magnetic logos, dedicated event signage) to incentivize higher contributions (targeting \$250,000 for lead sponsorships).	2025 Q2	
	Develop a tiered sponsorship package with specific benefits at each level, and include add-on options (i.e. additional cost for NASCAR event)	2025 Q2	
Streamline and enhance sponsor reporting	Shift to quarterly impact reports to reduce the time spent on sponsor communications	2025 Q1 ongoing	
	Develop a standardized reporting template that can be easily updated.	2025 Q1	
Expand sponsor outreach and cultivation	Develop schedule of key conferences and events where potential sponsors are	2025 Q1	Board and staff attend at least 3 conferences

Priority 2: Sustain and Grow Corporate Sponsorship Revenue			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
	present, with board and/or staff assigned to each event.		annually and connect with at least 3 new sponsor prospects.
	Dedicate board meeting time to brainstorming potential sponsor contacts and plans for introductions/outreach.	2025 Q1	
	Create a prospect list of potential new sponsors and assign follow-up tasks to the board and ED.	2025 Q2	

Priority 3: Build an Individual Donor Program

Current Status

The Sun Bus has not yet cultivated a strong individual donor base but has access to thousands of contacts from its screening events, which presents an opportunity to build a sustainable donor pipeline. Additionally, many Board members are connected to people that have the potential to become major donors for The Sun Bus.

Strategies

- Establish an annual fund program targeted at “friends” (lower-level donors) and “partners” (mid-level donors.)
- Establish major donor program (\$1,000 and up)
- Develop documented donor acknowledgement and stewardship practices
- Implement quarterly newsletter with regular features

Priority 3: Build an individual donor program			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success
Establish an annual fund program targeted at “friends” (lower-level donors) and “partners” (mid-level donors)	Engage screening participants with follow-up emails separate from surveys or have a donation request appearing at the end of survey as a link that takes them to a new window completely separate from their survey. Thank them for their participation and including a donation request. Emphasize the impact of their support on expanding access to healthcare.	2025, Q1	2025: Raise \$15,000 from individual donors 2026: Increase individual donor revenue by 25 % 2027: Increase individual donor revenue by 35%
	Develop standard donation request language for use in all Sun Bus materials.	2025, Q1	
	incorporate donation requests into screening event materials, signage, promotion and follow up. At	2025, Q2	

Priority 3: Build an individual donor program

Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success
	NASCAR and other large-scale events, request a “text to donate” announcement on the big screen.		
	Launch a year-end fundraising appeal, using email, direct mail, and social media for outreach.	2025, Q4	
	When capacity permits, launch a second annual appeal (spring or summer) using email, direct mail, and social media	2026, Q2	
Establish major donor program (\$1,000 and up)	Develop a Major Donor Prospect List working with board members to identify individuals with the capacity to make significant gifts	2026 Q1	
	Create individual “ask” goals and cultivation strategies for each prospect	2026 Q2 ongoing	
	Establish a Sun Bus Legacy Society to encourage planned giving by developing Legacy gift materials and soliciting board members/advisors as founding members. Build phased outreach strategy around planned giving	2027	2027: At least 2 donors include Sun Bus in their estate plan.
Develop documented donor acknowledgement and stewardship practices	Determine next steps once donation is received according to donation level (i.e. major donors invited to donor thank you event, \$500 and up receive personal phone call thank you from board or ED, up to \$500 receive auto-generated email thank you, new donors receive donor welcome packet with Sun Bus swag or car magnet.)	2025 Q2	All donors are acknowledged within 48 hours of gift receipt Each mid-level and major donor receives at least two “non-ask” contacts annually
	Determine touchpoints throughout year to acknowledge and thank donors unrelated to giving (i.e. annual phone call “thank-a-thon,” handwritten notes from board members, annual coffee dates with major donors)	2025 Q2 ongoing	
Implement quarterly	Subscribe to online newsletter platform that links to donor	2025 Q1	Newsletter delivered four times/year

Priority 3: Build an individual donor program			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of Success
newsletter with regular features	database. (constant contact, mailchimp etc.)		Newsletter achieves at least 30% open rate.
	Develop template with regular features including Donor highlight, Client success story or program impact, helpful facts/sun safety tips, donation request and link, sponsor recognition	2025 Q1	

Priority 4. Identify, Cultivate and Solicit Institutional Funders

Current Status:

Grants currently account for a small percentage of The Sun Bus’s revenue. There is opportunity to pursue capacity-building and programmatic grants, particularly in the health equity and mobile healthcare spaces.

Strategies:

- Expand Grant Prospecting
- Develop Internal Grant Processes
- Build Long-Term Funder Relationships

Priority 4: Identify, cultivate and solicit institutional funders			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
Expand Grant Prospecting	Conduct prospect research into local, state and national using Foundation Center and other online resources to identify grant opportunities related to capacity building, cancer prevention, mobile healthcare, and rural health. Consider outsourcing prospect research to a specialist. Repeat prospect research efforts 2x/year	2025 Q2 ongoing	2025: list of at least 20 “right fit” funding prospects developed
	Research corporate foundations tied to current sponsors for additional grant opportunities.	2026 Q1	
Develop Internal Processes	Develop a grants calendar to track prospects, deadlines, submissions, and reporting.	2025 Q2	2025: Submit at least 5 grant proposals, and raise at least \$100K in grant funding, with at least \$25K allocated for general operating/capacity building
	Develop boilerplate proposals for capacity building and programmatic support focusing on	2025 Q2	

	clear, compelling data and impact stories.		2026: Submit at least 8 grant proposals and raise at least \$250K in grant funding 2027: Submit at least 10 grant proposals and raise at least \$1 M in new grant funding
	Hire a contract grant writer to assist with writing and/or customizing boilerplate to align with each funder’s guidelines.	2026 Q1	
Build Long-Term Funder Relationships	Establish an outreach and stewardship plan for grant funders, providing regular updates and demonstrating the long-term impact of their contributions.		

Priority 5: Develop a fundraising event strategy that aligns with capacity.

Status

The Sun Bus hosted successful fundraising events, such as golf tournaments, until 2020. These events were labor-intensive but raised significant funds (between \$80,000 and \$100,000 post-expenses).

Strategies

- Develop an annual fundraising event strategy that aligns with capacity.
- Identify and implement one annual peer to peer fundraising opportunity

Priority 5: Develop a fundraising event strategy that aligns with capacity			
Strategy	Action	Timeframe	Measures of success
Develop an annual fundraising event strategy that aligns with capacity.	When Capacity is in place, revive one large-scale annual event, such as a golf tournament, pickleball tournament, or gala. Focus on securing event sponsors to cover costs and improve event ROI.	2027	Event nets \$150K and garners 2 new business sponsors 20 New donors added to donor list
	Develop post-event stewardship plans to cultivate attendees as future individual donors.	2027	
	Engage an event planning committee that includes non board members and consider outsourcing event logistics to contract event planner.	2027	
Identify and implement one annual peer to peer	Explore opportunities for local road races, marathons, etc. for Sun Bus to have a fundraising team in which	2027 (or later)	Event nets \$150K and garners new business sponsors

fundraising opportunity	participants have a fundraising minimum and solicit their own contacts for donations.		
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Conclusion

The Sun Bus is positioned to significantly expand its reach and impact by implementing this comprehensive fundraising and development plan. By focusing on diversified revenue streams, strengthening donor engagement, and building internal capacity, The Sun Bus can continue to provide essential healthcare services to underserved communities and the public while ensuring long-term sustainability.