

Non-Profit Member Spotlight: Revisiting State Climb

March 14, 2025

Posted By: **Dos Allen** in [CWA Blog](#)



Wow, how time flies!

A little over two years ago, our Membership Coordinator Quinn Gordon interviewed the director of State Climb, a non-profit indoor climbing gym in Central VA that uses a Pay What You Like model to prioritize accessibility. They've just turned 5 years old, and we reached out to them to get an update.

State Climb just had its 5th anniversary! We've now served over 25,000 different participants, facilitated hundreds of thousands of dollars of service at no cost or reduced cost, and continue to expand our capacity to meet increased demand.

We have expanded our fitness area, increased the number of hours we are open, and increased our retail offerings.

We just opened a brand new bouldering area that nearly doubled our available terrain, and have plans to add some more lead climbing terrain in the next year.

We continue to be nimble and adapt to the needs of our community as those needs shift over time.

Our specialty is still our Pay What You Like pricing for Day Passes all day every Friday, for all youth programs including Summer Camps, and school holidays. We have increased our focus on youth program facilitation, both during the day and with after-school programs, but have also

taken measures to mitigate the potential negative impact that this youth programming can have on our adult member community. We do our best to be a good steward to a great session!

READ ALSO: [How Pay What You Can Works \(And Makes Money\)](#)



We do not use any form of eligibility requirement when operating Pay What You Like, we simply provide everything a person needs to get in a good session and we do it for whatever amount they would like to pay.

That includes shoes, harnesses, chalk, belay devices, you name it. We firmly believe that **getting past the front desk shouldn't be the crux of your session.**

This method of providing access has proven to be incredibly effective at getting people in the door that wouldn't have had the opportunity otherwise. Many of our most dedicated members came to us in this way!

We've seen the average amount paid for a Day Pass settle in at around \$11, and that has been just enough to keep us moving forward. We now have an opportunity to secure our future for many years to come, and we'd love to share that opportunity with the entire CWA community to help us make light work of a heavy lift.

We're pulling together funds to purchase our building. Doing so would turn an obstacle into an

opportunity for us.

This would fully free us from being grant-dependent, from dragging out building projects for extra months because we don't have the funds to support material purchases, and we'd be able to recruit some seriously talented individuals in the nonprofit realm to help us fulfill our mission.

For all of you operators out there, this shift would result in a 57% increase in our cash flow. It's hard to overstate how transformational a shift like this would be for our organization!

If you're reading this now and you want to see us continue to drive forward toward a future where everyone gets the chance to experience what we in the climbing community cherish as our 'normal', [you can donate here!](#)

Learn More About Pay What You Can

The Climbing Wall Association is committed to providing resources for all climbing businesses, allowing you to the tools you need to make smart business decisions. We partnered with the American Alpine Club on their Pay What You Can Toolkit, which interviewed many of our members and put together a comprehensive report. You can download that toolkit for free below.

About The Author



Dos Allen is the founder of State Climb, a nonprofit rock climbing gym in Central VA, and currently serves as Executive Director. He enjoys routesetting, is a USAC youth coach in Region 81, and serves on the DEI Board Committee for USAC. He is a recovering jazz saxophonist and a mediocre old-time banjo player.

☐ **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
MOMENTUM INDOOR CLIMBING**

March 31, 2025

**CHOOSING VENDORS THAT FIT
YOUR BRAND: PART 2** ☐

March 14, 2025