Capital Fund Request
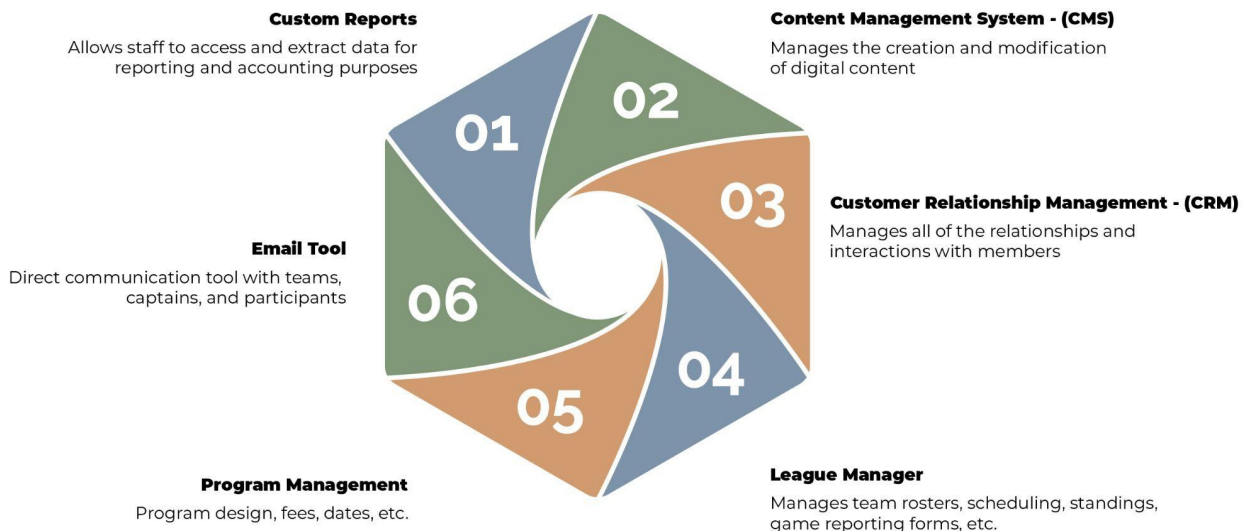# For Enterprise Management System
Upgrade Project

Request

The Board of Directors requests $230,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund to complete an upgrade and redesign of the VUL Enterprise Management System (EMS). The project will start on December 15, 2022, and end no later than February 1, 2024.

Background

The software hosted at www.vul.ca is more than just a website – it is a custom-built, fully-featured Enterprise Management System (EMS). It includes the functionality and reporting the VUL staff needs to deliver our numerous and complex programs. Our EMS is built on top of Drupal, an open-source and general-purpose content management software. Our EMS was launched in 2013 with the assistance of a local software company and maintained by an external contractor for the first few years. In 2017, the VUL hired a part-time Web Systems Manager to bring all IT management and software development in-house.

The EMS has evolved over the last nine years to meet the needs of our members and staff. The system is a critical asset for the VUL as it manages all of our member data, records our program revenue, supports all program-related information and is a source of information for our members.

Enterprise Management System

Custom Reports
Allows staff to access and extract data for reporting and accounting purposes

Content Management System - (CMS)
Manages the creation and modification of digital content

Customer Relationship Management - (CRM)
Manages all of the relationships and interactions with members

Email Tool
Direct communication tool with teams, captains, and participants

League Manager
Manages team rosters, scheduling, standings, game reporting forms, etc.

Program Management
Program design, fees, dates, etc.

Why does the EMS need to be upgraded?

1. Drupal 7, the version we are currently using, is scheduled to reach end-of-life on November 1, 2023. Drupal will no longer support version 7 with bug fixes, improvements and security patches after that date which puts our EMS at risk. Without regular security patches, the VUL's EMS is vulnerable to hackers, which puts the VUL at risk of legal action in the event of a data breach. Without regular bug fixes, our system will crash and halt daily operations.

2. The VUL needs to redesign the entire interface to be mobile-first. The EMS was not designed to be friendly on small devices such as tablets and phones. The inability to easily navigate the EMS on a mobile device is the most common complaint we get from our members. Since 50% of all traffic to the EMS is on a mobile device, a complete redesign of the user interface is a top priority in the new strategic plan. During the redesign process the team will also review and improve the entire user journey experience in order to address navigation complaints raised by members.

It should be noted that there are significant cost savings by completing the Drupal upgrade and the user interface redesign simultaneously by the same vendor.

Vendor and Project Timeline
The Board of Directors recently selected a Vancouver-based software development firm as the vendor of choice for this program. The firm specializes in interactive, data-rich websites, web applications and mobile apps. They also have experience performing Drupal upgrades, custom website design, and working with nonprofits. The selection was made following an extensive seven-month RFP process led by the Web & IT Manager.

The staff are completing pre-project work in anticipation of a December 15, 2022 project start date. We anticipate launching the new EMS in October 2023, followed by three months of support leading to a project end date of February 1, 2024.