

# Special Olympics Wisconsin 2025-2027 State Budget Request

## Background

Founded in 1972, Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) is a leading organization in the State dedicated to serving individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). The four mission-based program pillars of SOWI are Sports; Training & Competitions; Inclusive Health; Unified Champion Schools and Athlete Leadership.

SOWI is **one of just three programs** in the United States participating in the Rosemary Collaboratory Global Initiative on inclusive health, **and just one of four programs** participating in Project All-Star documenting the impact of sports and health programs on athletes over time.



## Statewide Impact



**220+**  
Yearly Events



**14,527**  
Athletes and  
Unified Partners



**129**  
Local Programs



**4,920**  
Volunteers



**1,566**  
Coaches

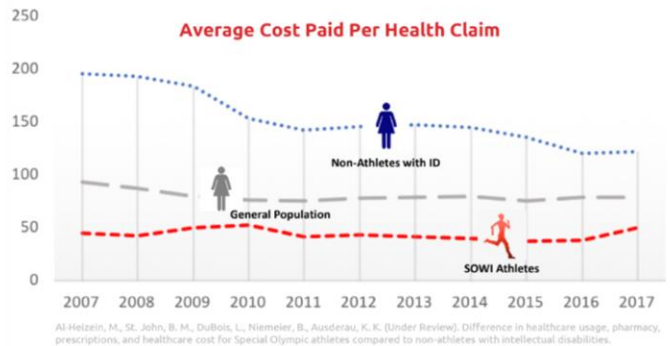
# Health Programming for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Special Olympics is the **world's largest public health organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities.**

SOWI provides **1,700 free health screenings** per year across eight disciplines: podiatry, physical therapy, health promotion, audiology, vision, physicals, dental and mental health.

In 2023, **SOWI received a one-time \$191,290 grant from the Department of Health Services** to support the expansion of the organization's health programs. This led to an increase in inclusive health trainings from 3 in 2023 to 65 in 2024. These funds helped train more than 1,300 healthcare providers and students on how to work with individuals with ID.

**SOWI Athletes Cost Medicaid 3X Less**



## Health Programming Ask

**SOWI requests \$1 million in ongoing GPR funding per year to continue the expansion of Health programming and reduce Medicaid costs.**

SOWI's ten-year Health vision is a public-private partnership that will be supported by contributions and investment from healthcare systems, community-based organizations, managed care organizations, county health departments and financial support from individuals, businesses, foundations and the State of Wisconsin.

### Ongoing state funding for Health programming will support:

- Increased trainings for health providers
- More public-private partnerships
- Stronger referral and care coordination network
- Increased annual health screenings
- Launch of Healthy Young Athletes



## Mission-Based Programs

SOWI is grateful to the State of Wisconsin for the annual DPI funding to support our mission-based programs and initiatives. The \$200,000 in DPI support has made an impact in the following ways:

- Since 2022, number of Unified Champion Schools (UCS) has increased from **71** to **117** to create school environments that reduce bullying, support and engage all learners
- Increased the number of athlete leaders at SOWI to more than **300+ trained athlete leaders** thanks to expanded trainings
- Invested in **upgrading SOWI sports equipment** to provide high-quality games and competitions
- Launched a **new SOWI website** to be more user friendly and ADA accessible



## Mission-Based Programs Ask

**SOWI requests your support of the \$300,000 per year increase to SOWI in the Governor's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) budget.**

SOWI participation increased 20% between 2022-23 and an additional 10% in 2024.

### **Additional state funding from DPI will support:**

- Expand and deepen Unified Champion School (UCS) programs across the state
  - Goal to have between 180 – 200 UCS schools by June 2027
- Support, deepen and expand athlete leadership program
  - Host an athlete leadership retreat; expand leadership training program for statewide businesses and partner organizations
- Invest in sports and training
  - Launch new coaches training program
- Invest in technology to drive engagement
  - Upgrade outdated financial, volunteer and fundraising software programs

# URGENCY MEETS IMPACT

## Support for Special Olympics Wisconsin Inclusive Health Vision & Mission-Based Programs

### OUR ASK – 2025 – 2027 Biennial Budget

#### Inclusive Health

##### **\$1 million for the Special Olympics Wisconsin Inclusive Health Vision**

Request that DHS Budget include \$1 Million GPR per year for Inclusive Health Vision

- Building private-public health partnerships to increase access
- Expand Healthy Athlete® programming in all disciplines
- Athlete engagement

#### Mission-Based Programs

##### **\$500,000 for the Special Olympics Wisconsin Mission-Based Programs**

from the Department of Public Instruction

Request increase in annual DPI funding from \$200,000 to \$500,000 to directly support mission-based programs

- Unified Champion Schools®
- Athlete Leadership Programming
- Sports Programming
- Investment in Technology



## Contact Information

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