

*Special Olympics*



Request for Proposal  
**Evaluation of Special Olympics' Sport and Coach  
Programming**

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**Issue Date: March 3, 2021**

**Response Due Date: March 20, 2021**



## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP), Special Olympics Inc. will identify a vendor to lead a multi-country evaluation to collect health status and implementation data in order to understand the relationship between Special Olympics Sport and Health programming.

## BACKGROUND

Previous research has demonstrated that the strong connection between sport participation and health outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) – both physical and social-emotional<sup>1,2</sup>. Importantly, the **lack** of physical activity is associated with the risk for a range of preventable health conditions including obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes<sup>2</sup>. These risks are even greater for individuals with ID who often lack opportunities to engage in sport and regular physical activity. Evidence suggests that when individuals with ID are provided opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity, there are positive effects on weight, blood pressure, overall fitness, sense of well-being, and enhanced social relationships<sup>2,3</sup>. What is missing however, is an understanding of variation in these outcomes based on sport-specific participation or which sports facilitate more positive outcomes. Coaching can play an important role in promoting these positive outcomes through the development of quality interpersonal relationships and sport-specific knowledge<sup>4</sup>, yet less is known about how coaches can facilitate positive health-related outcomes for individuals with ID.

### Special Olympics

Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) is an international NGO providing sports training and competition to over 5 million people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in 193 countries. With the support of almost 1.5 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 33 Olympic-type sports and more than 108,000 games and competitions throughout the year. Beyond sports programming, Special Olympics provides a vast array of health interventions, school programming, and athlete leadership programs to improve the health, social inclusion, and opportunities for people with ID around the world.

SOI has collected a wealth of data demonstrating the impact of Special Olympics programming on variety of outcomes for athletes including health, fitness, social inclusion, attitudes towards people with ID, among others. What is missing however, is an understanding of the impact of the sport choice and frequency of participation and the role of Special Olympics coaches on the health and well-being of SO athletes.

<sup>1</sup> Dowling, S. (2014). Sport and intellectual disability: benefits, barriers and bridges. *Sport, coaching and intellectual disability*, 34-51.

<sup>2</sup> Scifo, L., Chicau Borrego, C., Monteiro, D., Matosic, D., Feka, K., Bianco, A., & Alesi, M. (2019). Sport intervention programs (SIPs) to improve health and social inclusion in people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. *Journal of Functional Morphology and Kinesiology*, 4(3), 57.

<sup>3</sup> Rubenstein, E., DuBois, L., Sadowsky, M., Washburn, K., Forquer, M., Stanish, H., & Shriver, T. (2020). Evaluating the potential of Special Olympics fitness models as a health intervention for adults with intellectual disabilities. *Disability and health journal*, 13(2), 100850.

<sup>4</sup> Petitpas, A. J., Cornelius, A. E., Van Raalte, J. L., & Jones, T. (2005). A framework for planning youth sport programs that foster psychosocial development. *The sport psychologist*, 19(1), 63-80.



With over 30 sports and many more other locally popular sports available to Special Olympics athletes, what has yet to be examined is the impact that sport selection and frequency of participation might play in the athlete's overall well-being. For example, does training/competing 4 times per week in a traditionally higher intensity team sport such as football have a greater impact on both physical and social-emotional well-being than participating weekly in an individual, lower intensity sport such as tenpin bowling.

Coaches play a vital role in the development of Special Olympics athletes as sports persons, but also as people. Coaches influence the physical, social and emotional well-being of their athletes both positively or negatively. While Special Olympics has previously examined the role of coaches in fostering social inclusion, there is a dearth of research around how or indeed if coaches influence well-being in its many forms, as we expect.

## Sport and Coaching Outcomes

As Special Olympics moves into the next strategic plan, a big focus of our work will to further understand the integration of Sport and Health and the bidirectional relationship between sport and health, both physical and social-emotional. Special Olympics will focus heavily on empowering and supporting local Special Olympics Programs to deliver evidence based programming and in particular, coach education, to support enhanced physical and social-emotional well-being of our athletes. **This project will be implemented in select Programs across the following Special Olympics regions: Europe-Eurasia, Latin America, and Africa.**

We aim therefore to collect health status data to 1) establish the physical, social and emotional well-being of our athletes and 2) understand the role of coaches and 3) sport selection and training/competition frequency as an influence on physical and social-emotional well-being.

## SCOPE OF WORK

Special Olympics seeks to engage a university partner or organization as a collaborator with SOI to manage the design, sampling, methods, collection, cleaning, analysis, and compilation of this implementation evaluation. This university partner will collect data on health status of Special Olympics athletes including physical and social-emotional well being across a broad range of sports.

Pending a return to activities following the COVID-19 pandemic, this evaluation will take place from April through August 2021. All data, analyses, results and publications will be shared with and the property of Special Olympics International.

The main deliverables for this consultancy will be:

1. Collaborating with SOI and SO Programs to identify appropriate agreed upon on methods, sampling frame, design and measures.
  - a. Establish and maintain regular communication with SOI and SO Programs
2. Manage the scope and coordination of data collection
  - a. Quantitative Data Collection:
    - i. Identify data collection tools in collaboration with SOI
    - ii. Manage quantitative data collection through collection of athlete and coach data



- iii. Manage qualitative data collection through focus groups or interviews with coaches to understand how they view their role as influencers of physical and/or social-emotional wellbeing for athletes.
3. Aggregating, cleaning and analyzing data from athletes and coaches
  - a. Complete quantitative data analysis
  - b. Sharing analysis iteratively with SOI, and include feedback and provide adjustments based upon feedback
  - c. Completing a comprehensive final report, detailing methods and results, by end December 2021
4. Providing recommendations for quality improvement and future evaluation for what measures SO Programs should collect to monitor impact of sport and coaching on athlete health and wellbeing
  - a. Recommendations should take into account the global context in which Special Olympics operates
5. Preparing 1-2 manuscripts for publication, co-authored by consultants and SOI
  - a. Additionally, consultants should plan to create a 1-2 page summary of findings for broader dissemination to other stakeholders, including athletes, coaches, families, and Special Olympics Programs
6. Optional: Identifying at least 1-2 additional funding opportunities for Special Olympics, and if deemed appropriate by SOI, collaboratively develop proposals for funding

#### **TERMS OF CONTRACT**

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by Special Olympics legal and finance departments and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Special Olympics has allocated a maximum of \$50,000 USD to complete the project work outlined above. Additionally, SOI will cover any agreed upon travel costs for training University partners and up to three site visits to evaluation grantees (subject to approval, any travel must take place in 2021)

#### **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

RFP responses compliant with instructions will be read and evaluated by the selection/ implementation team. Finalists will be notified. Responses will be evaluated based on, but not limited to, the following criteria.

1. Ability to meet the project needs of Special Olympics
2. Proven methodology for implementation and ongoing support
3. Experience working with or knowledge of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities



### Value In-Kind (VIK) Solutions

Special Olympics, being a non-profit organization, relies heavily upon sponsored or value-in-kind contributions. We ask organizations to state if, and how much, of their proposal would be offered in a sponsored or VIK relationship.

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### General Conditions and Terms

Special Olympics is not obligated to any course of action as the result of this RFP. Issuance of this RFP does not constitute a commitment by Special Olympics to award any contract. Special Olympics is not responsible for any costs incurred by any vendor or their partners in the RFP response preparation or presentation. Information submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of Special Olympics. All responses will be kept private from other vendors. Special Olympics reserves the right to modify this RFP at any time and reserves the right to reject any response to this RFP, in whole or in part, at any time without assigning any reason.

#### Proposal Review Schedule

Work shall begin within ten (10) days following receipt of a contract by the Consultant. The anticipated contract commencement date will be April 12, 2021. All tasks should be completed, and products/deliverables submitted within the following schedule. The scope of work is to include a proposed work schedule by task and project timeline, which shall include monthly progress, reports on the project's status. All dates are subject to change.

RFP Released to Organizations	March 3, 2021
Full RFP Response Submission Due	March 20, 2021
Notification of Selected Vendor	April 3, 2021
Contract Negotiation Begins	April 6, 2021
Implementation Start	April 12, 2021

#### Response Format

Responses shall be submitted in PDF format and sent using electronic mail. Send your response to Ashlyn Smith at: [asmith@specialolympics.org](mailto:asmith@specialolympics.org) by the date and time specified above. Receipt will be acknowledged via email. Please include the words "**RFP: Evaluation Response**" in the subject line.

Organizations should organize their proposals as defined below to ensure consistency and to facilitate the evaluation of all responses. All the sections listed below must be included in the proposal, in the order presented, with the Section Number listed.



Proposals applying for this consultancy should be a maximum of 8 pages (1.5 spacing), excluding appendices.

The responses shall be submitted in the following format:

- Section 1 – Executive Summary (provide a concise summary of proposed solution)
- Section 2 – Proposed Solution (provide proposed approach to respond to the expectations of the RFP, along with relevant comments and observations)
- Section 3 – Approach/Methodology (provide a detailed description of the proposed methodology to conduct the work as laid out in this RFP)
- Section 4 – Proposed Timeline (detailed chronogram of key activities – use of Gantt chart is encouraged). The maximum allowable timeline to complete all deliverables is up to November 30, 2022.
- Section 5 – Relevant Experience – Key Personnel and Capacity (provide names and abridged CVs of project director/principal investigator, and of all the technical personnel that will be involved, highlighting skills, expertise and relevant publications. The organization’s history with similar relevant projects and capacity should also be detailed.)
- Section 6 – Financial Proposal (provide a detailed breakdown of costs by each six main deliverable outlined above and overall amount requested. The personnel inputs will be quantified specifying the number of person-days, FTEs or hours for each of the technical personnel involved and corresponding fee rates.)

### **SOI Point of Contact (POC)**

All correspondence with regard to this RFP and the proposal should be addressed to Ashlyn Smith at: [asmith@specialolympics.org](mailto:asmith@specialolympics.org). Please include the words "RFP: Evaluation Response" in the subject line in all correspondences.