

## **Special Olympics Summary Report**

### **Information about the Applicant**

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities (ID), giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy while participating in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics has been changing lives and attitudes for 50 years. It all began in the 1950s and early 1960s, when Eunice Kennedy Shriver saw how unjustly and unfairly people with intellectual disabilities were treated. She also saw that many children with intellectual disabilities did not even have a place to play. She decided to take action. Her vision began to take shape as she held a summer day camp for young people with intellectual disabilities in her backyard. The goal was to learn what these children could do in sports and other activities.

Today, Special Olympics Inc. is the world's largest provider of fitness training, education and athletic competition — coupled with social, life, and leadership skill development opportunities — for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics is an everyday, everywhere movement changing the world for people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) was founded in 1972 and is the largest sports program in Wisconsin for individuals with intellectual disabilities. SOWI serves over 8,000 individuals with an intellectual disability over the age of two. There is no upper age limit for participation. SOWI athletes of eight and older train and compete in 19 sports, including snowshoeing, alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, team basketball, skills basketball, gymnastics, track and field, swimming, soccer, powerlifting, softball, bocce, tennis, golf, flag football, bowling, and volleyball. For children ages 2-10, they may enroll in the Young Athletes program.

### **Statement of Need**

Special Olympics is seeking a grant in the amount of \$10,000.00 to support expansion of the summer sports initiative. The goal of the Summer Sports Expansion initiative is to offer lower-participation sports for athletes and unified partners at our State Summer Games in June 2023 in hopes of increasing the number of participation in these sports while also providing additional opportunities for our athletes and unified partners. Prior to this initiative, these sports were standalone events and/or invitationals. The initiative involves qualified volunteer coaches, sports training, competition, and criteria that each athlete must meet to participate.

### **Project Goals and Expected Benefits**

The goal of the Summer Sports Expansion initiative is to offer lower-participation sports for athletes at a state level to increase participation rates in those sports as well as provide new offerings to athletes at a higher level. This will enable our athletes to compete at State Summer Games alongside a larger group of athletes, as well as participate in the extracurricular activities that come along with a State Games, including overnight experiences, a grand Opening Ceremonies, health screenings, and more.

- Expand five sports to the State Summer Games:
  - o Incorporate cornhole, a Senior Athletes sport, to retain the older athlete population that may otherwise stop competing

- o Recruit new athletes to tennis by offering a tennis skills options for those not ready to compete in traditional tennis
- o Reintroduce gymnastics and powerlifting, formerly invitationals hosted by local programs, to a SOWI- run, state competition to provide the athletes with the full state games experience
- o Bring soccer, formerly a standalone event, to a larger multi-sport state games

### **Project Implementation Plan**

Project goals and objectives will be implemented as follows:

- Introduce new sport offerings to Special Olympics Wisconsin athletes, coaches, local program managers, and volunteers (September 2022)
- Update rules for all sports (March 2023)
- Registration Paperwork due for State Games (May 2023)
- Purchase equipment and signage for the event (May 2023)
- Host State Summer Games, including cornhole, gymnastics, powerlifting, soccer, and tennis (June 2023)
- Develop a plan for future regional and statewide competitions (June 2023)

We will work with the Special Olympics Wisconsin regional staff, Local Program Managers, and our athlete leaders to gather feedback on the various sports to decide on future growth.

### **Evaluation Plan**

In an effort to monitor success, we will be looking at the participation numbers. We have pre-COVID and current participation numbers to compare them too. While we might not expect the participation rates to get all the way back up to pre-COVID levels (we haven't seen that happen yet in our most popular sports), we would hope to see a trend in that direction. In addition, we will be sending out post-event surveys to all of the local programs attending the event.

### **Budget**

<b>Summer Sports Expansion Initiative Program Budget:</b>	
Facility Costs:	\$6,975.00
<i>Tennis Courts</i>	
<i>Cornhole Fields</i>	
<i>Gym Space (Powerlifting &amp; Gymnastics)</i>	
<i>Soccer Fields</i>	
Tennis Balls - \$75.00 x 1 case	\$75.00
Vinyl Banners - \$45.00 x 10	\$450.00
Feather Banners - \$500.00 x 5	2,500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$10,000.00</u></b>

**Attachment:** IRS letter of tax-exempt status

### **Staff Recommendation**

The grant application can be recommended for approval. The proceeds will be applied toward supplies and the facility which directly benefits the individuals with disabilities. The use of proceeds aligns with the initiatives of the foundation.