

## WHAT'S NEW FOR 2015 – 2016 ?

Special Olympics is embarking on a new five year strategic plan. "Our vision is to open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities, using sport to create inclusive communities all over the world." The goals and strategies set will drive us to this vision. The complete plan will be rolled out to the US Programs this fall. We will share more as we get the information.

SOWI continues to build resources to assist with managing local programs, expanding online training opportunities and resources, and simplifying the *Agency Manager Handbook* and *Competition Guide* to be more user-friendly. SOWI also recognizes that Project UNIFY® is growing; school programs, youth and teacher leaders are searching for similar resources already created for Agencies. In the next year, SOWI hopes to start to align this growth, and the resources required, with our traditional Agencies.

### Front Pocket

1. Please review the staff list in the front pocket or on the "Contact Us" page on the SOWI website. There are more changes to staff contacts coming so please refer to our website for latest information.

### Agency Management

1. We want you to know that we acknowledge all of the time you give and in an effort to try something new and streamline the process, this year we have decided to not conduct accreditation in the same format and have not enclosed any Agency Standards. If you'd like to reference the standards from years past, please contact your Regional office.
2. The SOWI website will be refreshed with a new look soon and we hope you find it easy to use, with all of the information at your fingertips. When the website is launched, Agencies will be among the first to know and SOWI will set up technology webinars to help teach you how to utilize the new tools.

### Athlete Policies

1. According to Special Olympics, Inc. guidelines, athletes (or parents/guardians for athletes who are minors and/or not their own guardian) are required to sign an addendum to the *Official Special Olympics Release Form* indicating they are aware of Special Olympics, Inc. housing information for overnight activities/tournaments. Athletes who have signed the *Official Special Olympics Release Form* printed after August 2013 do not need to sign the addendum. A sample of the addendum is included in the *Agency Manager Handbook*.
  - i. Approximately six weeks prior to every medical deadline a report will be mailed to Agency Managers and/or Agency Medical Directors indicating which athletes are still in need of the addendum. If you have any questions please contact the Athlete Records Manager.
  - ii. Athlete participation might be affected if this is not completed by the end of 2016.

### ALPs

1. Certain areas of the Athlete Leadership Program will be temporarily suspended until proper resources can be allocated back to this program.
2. The Athletes as Coaches (AAC) program will continue to be supported. Athletes that wish to become coaches will complete the online general coaches' certification (see training below) and will be required to complete specific AAC training with the help of a mentor. More information will be available in the fall of 2015 at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org).

### Training

1. The certification requirement for coaches will change beginning with the 2015 Fall Tournament season. Coaches will no longer be required to obtain a sports-specific certification, but will be required to complete the online general coaches' certification (available in the fall of 2015 at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org)). SOWI will continue to offer sports-specific certifications as an educational resource, and existing certifications as of August will be

grandfathered into the process until they expire (coaches who are currently certified will not need to complete the online general certification until their current sports-specific certification expires). Details are provided in the Training section of the Agency Manager Handbook.

2. All emails regarding certification status can now be sent to [training@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:training@specialolympicswisconsin.org)

#### Finance

1. Monthly financial statements are available on the Agency log in page of the website (financial statements are no longer mailed or e-mailed). These statements will be available on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. For example, January reports will be posted on or before February 10<sup>th</sup>. These reports will show all expenses and revenue for the month. If you need more specific reporting, please contact the Accounts Payable.
2. If you have questions about accounts payable or invoices to send, you can contact the department directly via [accountspayable@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:accountspayable@specialolympicswisconsin.org).

#### Outreach

1. There are funds set aside for Agencies to conduct “Mini-Projects” through Healthy Communities. Projects promoting physical activity and/or health education are eligible. Contact Director of Health Programs at [mschoenbrodt@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:mschoenbrodt@specialolympicswisconsin.org) for more information.
2. Unified Sports opportunities will be available for schools in Unified Bowling, Unified Flag Football, Unified Snow Shoe Relays, Unified Indoor Triathlon, Unified Poly Hockey, Unified Futsal, and a Unified 4x100 Relay. There are limited funds available for schools to host a Unified Invitational of their sport of choice in any of the three models: Competitive, Player Development, and Recreational.

#### Insurance

1. Please note that obstacle runs and events involving alcohol have been added as a fundraising exclusion unless the activity is approved by the Insurer prior to the event.

#### Forms for Duplication

1. Forms for training, finance, insurance, sports, and fundraising are updated yearly. Please use the forms in this section for the upcoming Program year and recycle anything you may have printed copies of from the previous year’s handbook.

#### Competition

1. Review the Key Changes and Reminders page of the Competition Guide for details on competition changes and updates.
2. Multi-Agency Competition Grants are now available when hosting Unified Sports competitions.