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Medal Event Shows Mettle

SPORTS: Special Olympics to be biggest event in 31 years.

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Ready, Set:

Patrick McClenahan of LA2015 at his downtown L.A. office.

Special Olympics Seen as Big Score for L.A.

It will be L.A.'s biggest sports event since the 1984 Olympics.

More than 7,000 of the world's top athletes with intellectual disabilities will compete in Los Angeles in the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games.

"The Special Olympics will have more athletes from more countries than the 1984 Olympics," said David Simon, president of the Los Angeles Sports Council and 2015 Special Olympics board member.

Organizers expect athletes, their families and 3,000 coaches from more than 170 countries to travel to Los Angeles for competition in 27 sports. They expect 2,000 media in attendance and 500,000 spectators at venues such as Staples Center, Pauley Pavilion and Home Depot Center.

The nine-day competition will kick off with an opening ceremony at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on July 24, 2015. It's the first time the event will be staged in Los Angeles. The LA2015 non-profit company manages the 2015 Special Olympics, also known as the World Games. The organization, in downtown Los Angeles, has a fundraising target of \$90 million. It now has 11 full-time employees for fundraising and planning, but in the next two years leading up to the event, the organization will add 150 full- and 200 part-time employees. The athletes and coaches will pay their own way to get here. But once in Los Angeles, the host committee will provide food, housing, medical care and even translators for participants throughout the three-day welcome program and nine-day competition.

"We're going to provide 360,000 meals over 12 days," said Patrick McClenahan, chief executive of LA2015. "In total, we have 67 different cost centers and a 1,300 line item budget."

Transportation will be one of those

costs.

Participants will be shuttled to 27 venues throughout Southern California. Athletes and coaches will stay in dorms at USC and UCLA; about 6,500 will stay at USC and 3,500 at UCLA.

The \$90 million is a fraction of the \$14.9 billion that the 2012 London Olympics reportedly cost, although the regular Olympics typically involve immense construction projects.

The Special Olympics follow a similar format to the International Olympics, but for athletes who have intellectual disabilities. (Physically disabled athletes compete in the Paralympics.)

The athletes will participate in 27 competitions and demonstrations, including badminton, basketball, gymnastics, powerlifting and sailing.

The Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who organized the first one in Chicago in 1968. Smaller events are held annually across the world. The major international competition alternates every two years with winter and summer competitions. Pyeongchang, South Korea, staged the 2013 World Games winter competition. Athens, Greece, was the site of the last summer competition in 2011.

Winning Bid

The bid for the upcoming summer games was awarded to Los Angeles that year. A study commissioned by the bid committee forecast an economic benefit for Los Angeles County of \$415 million. That includes direct spending of \$128 million from attendees, \$23 million for accommodations and \$28 million for production of the games. The event is expected to generate tax revenue of \$27.5 million.

For comparison, a Super Bowl can have an economic benefit for its host city of \$150 million to \$300 million, with a high of about \$500 million.

In other countries, the government is heavily involved in bidding for these types of world class events. For example, the 2007 Special Olympics in Shanghai received 85 percent of its budget from the Chinese government.

"Our basic premise and model is privately funding this event through philanthropic dollars," said McClenahan.

Non-Profit: Companies Pledge In-Kind Donations

In order to raise the \$90 million needed to meet the organization's budget, he and his team have reached out to corporate sponsors and wealthy individuals for donations. In total, the organization expects to raise 75 percent of its budget from cash donations and the balance from in-kind gifts.

So far, they have received five contributions of \$1 million in cash from Mattel Inc.; AEG; Kaiser Permanente; Steven Spielberg and his wife, Kate Capshaw; and David Geffen.

The companies and people who commit to a \$1 million gift are recognized as founding champions. McClenahan expects 12 to 15 companies to sign up at that level. For that level of contribution, companies will receive 25 seats at the opening and closing ceremonies at the Coliseum, access to VIP lounges and other perks. Lower-level sponsorships are available starting at \$25,000. The organization also expects to receive small donations from individuals who support its mission.

In addition to corporations and individuals, several local foundations have made contributions, including California Community Foundation, \$200,000; California Endowment, \$200,000; Weingart Foundation, \$100,000; and Rose Hills Foundation, \$100,000.

Some companies are contributing in-kind donations as well. Kaiser Permanente pledged \$1.5 million in-kind

by lending its medical expertise. Local agency Davis Elen Advertising Inc. has taken on the organization as a pro bono account. It has provided \$2.5 million in services that includes logo development, video production, branding strategy and other advertising work.

The local office of Deloitte has provided \$3 million in-kind that includes office space for LA2015, business plan development and a financial officer who serves as controller for the organization.

"We have a cash budget that we provide for charities, but the talent of our people is a valuable resource," said Michelle Kerrick, managing partner of Deloitte's L.A. office. "As a firm, we have a commitment to provide \$60 million in pro bono work and we've set aside \$3 million for the Special Olympics."



Special Olympics
WORLD GAMES
LOS ANGELES 2015