

Expanding Health Grants

Instructions and Focus Areas



During the pilot phase of the Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative, the 14 pilot Programs implemented a number of innovative models that contributed to improved health status and access to care for people with intellectual disabilities. To further expand the impact of these innovative models, starting in July 2014, “Expanding Health” grants will be available for Special Olympics (SO) Programs to expand their health programming in one of four focus areas.

Programs can apply for funding in one of the following four focus areas:

- (1) Partnerships for Follow Up Care,
- (2) Partnerships for Wellness Opportunities,
- (3) Training of Health Care Providers, or
- (4) Athlete Health Advocates.

On page 2, please find a brief description of the grant application process.

On pages 3-4, each focus area is outlined in more detail. A few examples associated with each focus area are included.

SO Programs are encouraged to be creative and design programming that corresponds with the strengths of their Program and the health needs of their athletes. *Programs must select a focus area, but their objective and activities should be unique and do not need to match the examples provided.* Programs that are invited to submit a complete application will receive a comprehensive toolkit. The toolkit will provide guidance and lessons learned on how to best plan and implement each focus area.

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Applying for an Expanding Health Grant

In order to apply for a grant, interested Programs are asked to submit an *Expanding Health Grant Expression of Interest*. Expressions of interest will be reviewed by SOI, and Programs that meet the criteria will be invited to complete a full *Expanding Health Grant Application*.

Eligibility Criteria:

- History of grant reporting compliance with no outstanding reports due.
- Previous success in implementing health programming including at least one of the following:
 - Health is seen as a strategic priority of the Program as evidenced by integration into operations and strategic plan.
 - Development of sustainable partnerships supporting Healthy Athletes events, wellness opportunities and/or follow up care.
 - Incorporation of Healthy Community elements (at least one health activity beyond Healthy Athletes) such as year round fitness or nutrition programs, Healthy Young Athletes clinics, health classes/workshops, Family Health Forums, etc.

If selected, Programs will be required to:

- Submit a complete grant application (following submission of an expression of interest and receiving an invitation from SOI), which outlines:
 - **Objectives** supporting the focus area.
 - **Timeline** for planning, activation and evaluation of grant.
 - **Evaluation plan** to track results.
 - **Proposed budget** for the grant.
 - **Involvement of athlete(s)** in planning and implementation of the grant.

Successful Programs will receive a one-time, one-year grant of **up to \$20,000 USD** and will be required to do the following:

- Two brief written updates highlighting the progress of your project (one update due three months after the project starts and one update due nine months after the project starts. This could be in the form of a story highlighting progress)
- Brief mid-year report (due six months after project implementation begins)
- End of year report (due August 31, 2015)
- Join conference calls as needed (calls may be organized to provide technical assistance and guidance as needed).

*To apply for the above opportunity, please complete the attached Expanding Health Grant Expression of Interest form. Applications must be submitted to the Regional Healthy Athletes Manager by **April 21, 2014**.*

Note: In 2014 there will be approximately seven grants available. This will increase to 20 grants in 2015.

Grant Focus Areas, Descriptions and Examples

1) PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOLLOW UP CARE:

After attending a Healthy Athletes screening event, many athletes are told they have a health issue that needs follow up care from a health professional. Globally, 67% of athletes receive a referral for follow up dental care at Special Smiles, 28% of athletes attending Opening Eyes need a new prescription, and 27% of athletes fail their hearing test at Healthy Hearing. For a number of reasons, many athletes do not receive the follow up care they need. To increase the likelihood that an athlete gets the care he or she needs, Programs can link athletes and providers by developing partnerships with healthcare professionals or universities in order to facilitate the athletes receiving the care they need.

SO Peru has partnered with the Universidad San Martin de Porres Dental School to provide free dental care for SO athletes and others with ID. Health professionals from the university provide dental screenings, one-day dental treatment at the university clinic, and follow up care at no cost to athletes. Multiple times each year, SO Peru and university volunteers travel to low-income special schools in Lima to provide dental care. Through this partnership, 130 people with ID received follow up dental care in 2013.

SO Florida created a clinic site where they conduct health screenings in various disciplines and provide wellness opportunities for SO athletes. Once athletes have been screened, those needing follow up care are given a list of providers in the surrounding counties who are willing to see SO athletes. Additionally, SO Florida has partnered with Nova Southeastern University to provide hearing exams and hearing aid fittings for SO athletes at the clinic itself. So far, 8 athletes have received hearing aids.

2) PARTNERSHIPS FOR WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES:

Partnerships for Wellness Opportunities: An important way to improve athlete health is to prevent health issues before they occur. Partnerships with community wellness providers and health education targeting athletes, coaches and families can help athletes prevent health issues like obesity, heart disease, tooth decay, malaria and other problems athletes face.

To promote healthy eating and oral health, SO Mexico held a health education day for athletes, their caregivers and coaches. SO Mexico involved partners from the community to engage participants in interactive demonstrations and education sessions, including a Family Health Forum. Dental students from Anahuac University were on hand to provide athletes information about oral health, hands-on tooth brushing practice, and a new toothbrush and toothpaste. Reminding participants to eat healthy, four chefs with ID from the Escuela Internacional de Chefs prepared and provided a nutritious snack.

To help tackle obesity, a serious problem for many SO athletes, SO New York teamed up with the YMCA of Greater Rochester to bring more physical activity and wellness opportunities to individuals with ID through a multi-faceted partnership. The YMCA pledged to recruit SO athletes through Healthy Athletes events, offer free trial memberships, enroll athletes in their 16-week diabetes prevention program, train its staff in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, and ensure that cost will never be a barrier to membership for an SO athlete.

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SO Wisconsin partnered with Manitowoc County Miracles to hold a “Biggest Loser” weight loss competition for athletes and volunteers. Over six months, they participated in bike rides, yoga sessions, a walking club, workouts at the YMCA, and presentations on healthy nutritional choices from the Manitowoc Health Department and Cops Food Store. The winning athlete lost 18 pounds and the winning volunteer lost 44 pounds.

3) TRAINING OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Few health care providers around the world have been trained adequately in how to work with people with ID, which makes it more difficult for SO athletes and others with ID to receive the health care they need. In addition to increasing the number of providers available to people with ID, training health professionals links SO athletes to providers in their communities for follow up care and other services.

In Thailand, local-level health workers called Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) provide basic health services to those in their community. SO Thailand recognized that it could expand the reach of its health program by training these VHVs in how to work with people with ID and by raising their awareness of this underserved population. In the first year alone, VHVs trained by SO Thailand provided health education and basic health screenings for 645 people with ID throughout Thailand.

SO Mexico has partnered with Anahuac University to offer a free online training course for dental students and professionals in caring for people with ID. Five national universities and health institutions have joined and 80 dentists and dental students are currently participating in the program. After completing the virtual training and receiving their diploma, each participant has an obligation to see five Special Olympics athletes. SO Mexico is hoping to expand this course to universities and health institutions throughout the country.

4) ATHLETE HEALTH ADVOCATES

The Athlete Leadership Program gives SO athletes the opportunity to become more involved in the Special Olympics Movement by taking on leadership roles while expanding their own skillsets. Some athlete leaders become mentors to other athletes in their Program. With a bit of training, these leaders can become “athlete health advocates” who teach other athletes how to improve their health.

SO New Jersey’s Athlete Congress liked what they heard about Healthy Communities and decided to get involved. At their Summer Games, they got a group of athlete health advocates together and handed out sunscreen samples, water and healthy snacks to raise awareness of the importance of sun safety, hydration and nutrition. The Athlete Congress also passed a ban on high caffeine/energy drinks for athletes and Unified Partners at all SO New Jersey competitions and events.

In South Africa, 30 athlete leaders were trained to become health advocates or ‘Health Heroes’ at an upcoming Healthy Athletes screening. Stationed outside each discipline, these health advocates engaged other athletes in conversations about the screening the athletes had just attended. They were able to reinforce the messages the athletes had heard in the screening as well as encourage them to make a pledge to change a specific health-related behavior (e.g. wash hands before eating, drink water instead of soda).