

SPECIAL OLYMPICS 2025-2026 SYSTEMS CHANGE IN INCLUSIVE HEALTH SUBGRANT Funding Guidelines & Request for Letters of Interest

AT A GLANCE

Funding Opportunity

Special Olympics, Inc. is part of the movement to improve the physical and social-emotional well-being of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) by increasing their inclusion in healthcare, health promotion, and disease prevention systems. We are looking for partners who are identifying solutions to improve the health and well-being of people with IDD. Organizations that have a new or existing qualifying project can apply to receive federal funding to support their efforts via the **Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrant**.

Amount of Funding Available

The amount of funding available depends on the level of change that the organization is positioned to influence.

- Organizations creating change at the **state and national levels** can apply for up to **\$50,000** of funding per year.
- Organizations creating change at the **local, city, and county levels** can apply for up to **\$25,000** of funding per year.

Guidelines & Deadlines

The following pages will help you determine if your project could qualify for funding. Please review the materials included to determine your eligibility. Then, submit a **Letter of Interest** according to the guidelines outlined on page 13 by **11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 21, 2025**. Organizations whose letters of interest meet the requirements will be invited to submit a full proposal by April 11. Organizations that received funding in the 2024-2025 cycle, do not need to submit a letter of interest. Completed applications will be due on May 2, 2025. More information regarding the timeline can be found on page 12 of this document.

Thank You!

We look forward to learning about your ideas. Please direct any questions to inclusivehealth@specialolympics.org.

Special Olympics

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Special Olympics Health activities are supported by many sources, including in the United States by Grant Number NU27DD000021 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with \$18.1 M (64%) financed with U.S. Federal funds and \$10.2 M (36%) supported by non-federal sources. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.

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WHAT & WHO IS THE FUNDING FOR?

PURPOSE

The Special Olympics **Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrant**, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹, is intended to help **catalyze systems change in inclusive health**. We are partnering with organizations who can make changes to health systems at the national, state, and local levels.

Systems Change is an approach to problem-solving that confronts the **root causes** of social issues, not the symptoms.

For example, rather than creating programs designed uniquely to meet the needs of people with IDD, a systems-change approach would be to transform the greater system so that it works for all the members of a given community.

Systems change improves structures, policies, and processes to create positive outcomes for everyone.

This opportunity is intended primarily for mainstream (non-disability) organizations. However, we may consider projects from mainstream organizations that involve collaboration with disability-focused organizations as part of their proposal. These subgrants are limited to organizations in the United States.

Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrants will allow eligible organizations to:

- Institute organizational changes, including through resource development and dissemination, that sustainably increase the access that people with IDD have to health care, health promotion, and disease prevention services in the U.S.
- Expand on existing efforts or develop new efforts to change health systems and services in the U.S. to better meet the needs of people with IDD.
- Identify and document innovative success stories and promising practices.

¹ Special Olympics Health is supported by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and bound by all federal guidelines under 2 CFR 200. The contents of cooperative agreement # NU27DD0000210100 are the responsibility of Special Olympics and do not necessarily represent the views of CDC.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Organizations Creating Systems Change at the State and/or National Levels

- Hospitals, universities, larger nonprofits, and other state and national level institutions are examples of appropriate organizations for this track. Some city and/or county organizations may qualify for this track if the community they serve is considered a significant portion of the overall population of their state.
- Organizations do not need to be traditional healthcare providers in order to apply for funding. Organizations focused on health promotion, disease prevention, social determinants of health, and lifestyle management (including nutrition, fitness, and mental health) are also good candidates for funding.

Organizations Creating Systems Change at the Local, City, and/or County Levels

- Most city- and county-wide institutions, local nonprofits and small businesses, local chapters of national organizations, and grassroots community organizations are examples of appropriate organizations for this track.
- Organizations do not need to be traditional healthcare providers in order to apply for funding. Organizations focused on health promotion, disease prevention, social determinants of health, and lifestyle management (including nutrition, fitness, and mental health) are also good candidates for funding.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

State and/or National Levels Funding Track

Qualifying state and national level organizations can apply for up to **\$50,000**.

Local, City, and/or County Levels Funding Track

Qualifying local organizations can apply for up to **\$25,000**.

BACKGROUND

Special Olympics, Inc. is the world’s largest sports organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Over the 25 years Special Olympics has offered health programming, we have made life-changing and life-saving strides in health. However, people with IDD continue to live with significant unmet health needs and health disparities compared to the general population.

The following table presents a number of these disparities:

Health condition	Prevalence in the general population (US)	Prevalence in the IDD population (US)
Living with a mental illness ²	20%	36.6%
High blood pressure ³	26.9%	36.4% (adults with cognitive limitations; may or may not have IDD)
Obesity ⁴	28%	38.3%
Premature Death (before the age of 50) ⁵	9%	22%

More information regarding health facts concerning people with IDD can be viewed [here](#).

A confidential inquiry into premature deaths among people with intellectual disabilities in the United Kingdom concluded that people with intellectual disability die on average 16 years earlier than the general population.⁶ The majority of premature deaths in the general population are due to lifestyle factors. In contrast, the study found that premature deaths of individuals with intellectual disabilities were primarily due to potentially modifiable poor care and service provision.

Among people with IDD, there are subpopulations with even worse health outcomes.⁷ For example, 39.2% of Black individuals with IDD have a body mass index over 30, compared with

² Scott, H. M., & Havercamp, S. M. (2014). Mental health for people with intellectual disability: the impact of stress and social support. *American journal on intellectual and developmental disabilities*, 119(6), 552–564. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1944-7558-119.6.552>. National Institute of Mental Health, Mental Illness. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>.

³ Stevens, A., Courtney-Long, E., Gillespie, C., & Armour, B. S. (2014). Hypertension among US adults by disability status and type, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2001-2010. *Preventing chronic disease*, 11, E139. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd11.140162>.

⁴ Hsieh, K., Rimmer, J. H., & Heller, T. (2014). Obesity and associated factors in adults with intellectual disability. *Journal of intellectual disability research : JIDR*, 58(9), 851–863. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jir.12100>. United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adult Obesity Facts. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>.

⁵ Hollins, S., & Tuffrey-Wijne, I. (2013). Meeting the needs of patients with learning disabilities. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 346

⁶ Heslop P, Blair PS, Fleming P, Hoghton M, Marriott A, Russ L. The Confidential Inquiry into premature deaths of people with intellectual disabilities in the UK: a population-based study. *Lancet*. 2014;383(9920):889–895.

⁷ See, e.g., Magaña, S., Parish, S., Morales, M. A., Li, H., & Fujiura, G. (2016). Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Among People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *Intellectual and developmental disabilities*, 54(3), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-54.3.161>.

36.3% of Black individuals without IDD and 32.7% of White individuals with IDD.⁸ The prevalence of diabetes is around 5% among Latinos/as without IDD and White individuals with IDD; among Latinos/as with IDD, the prevalence is nearly 11%.⁹

People with IDD and their supporters report¹⁰ a host of frustrations with navigating traditional healthcare systems, including:

- Communication difficulties, resulting from individuals with IDD being excluded from consultations
- Failure of healthcare providers to conduct health reviews, review medication, and conduct blood tests and investigations
- Lack of health promotion and screening and inadequate knowledge by doctors about the health needs of people with IDD, which has contributed to diagnostic overshadowing. Diagnostic overshadowing occurs when signs and symptoms arising from physical or mental health problems are misattributed to the individual's disability, which can lead to delayed diagnosis and treatment.
- Lack of support offered to caregivers and disregard for information provided by them

People with IDD face significant barriers in accessing health promotion and disease prevention services as well: everything from fitness and physical activity services to health education delivery is rarely adapted to their needs. These barriers exist in health delivery settings, too: training programs in medicine and other health professions rarely include classroom or practical content on how to provide care for people with IDD. Such realities exist across sectors and cause these health disparities to persist. Learn more at the [Center for Inclusive Health](#).

“The doctor kept pummeling me with questions, and he didn’t wait for my answers.”

– *Renee, Autistic Adult*

“When I became my sister’s guardian, we went to the eye doctor for an exam. The doctor asked why we were there since my sister couldn’t drive. I was appalled. She needs to *see!*”

– *Sibling Caregiver of Adult with IDD*

“I had diabetes and became insulin-resistant, so my doctors recommended bariatric surgery. At first the surgeon said that I wasn’t a good candidate because he didn’t think I would be able to follow the rules of the diet because of my intellectual disability. But I’m a super determined person, and I showed him up.”

– *Mackenzie, Neurodivergent Adult*

⁸ See, e.g., Magaña, S., Parish, S., Morales, M. A., Li, H., & Fujiura, G. (2016). Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Among People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *Intellectual and developmental disabilities*, 54(3), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.1352/1934-9556-54.3.161>.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ali A, Scior K, Ratti V, Strydom A, King M, Hassiotis A. Discrimination and other barriers to accessing health care: perspectives of patients with mild and moderate intellectual disability and their carers. *PLoS One*. 2013 Aug 12;8(8):e70855. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0070855. PMID: 23951026; PMCID: PMC3741324.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following qualifications are **mandatory**. In order to be awarded a Special Olympics Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrant, an interested organization **must**:

- Be a U.S.-based non-profit organization or company, not an individual
- Possess a Unique Entity IDD number (formerly called a DUNS number and generated by [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)). This is different from an organization's EIN.
- Have an active, publicly-viewable registration in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If this is your organization's first time applying for a federal contract, you can begin the registration process [here](#).
- Have a project that catalyzes systems change in inclusive health.
- Meaningfully consult with and include people with IDD and their supporters in the project design and implementation.

If funded, subgrantees will be expected to:

- Participate in a virtual orientation session at the launch of the subgrant.
- Participate in a mid-project check-in with their SOI program officer. Projects that encounter challenges meeting their goals may be asked to participate in more frequent check-ins.
- Complete all project activities funded by the 2025-26 Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrant by June 30, 2026.
- Submit a final narrative report and supporting financial documentation by July 11, 2026.
- Comply with all requirements stipulated in the Subgrant Agreement (drafted after funding has been granted).

BUDGET GUIDELINES & FINANCIAL RESTRICTIONS

The following guidelines and restrictions are intended to help potential applicants determine if this funding opportunity is a good fit for their organization.

Please **do not** submit a budget with your letter of interest. Organizations that have been invited to move past the letter of interest stage will complete the budget template as part of their full proposal. At this stage, we are offering access to the budget template for **planning and informational purposes only**. A copy of the budget template can be viewed [here](#).

Indirect Costs

- Indirect costs are costs incurred by an organization that are not readily identifiable with a particular project or program but are nevertheless necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of its programs.
- This subgrant can fund indirect costs related to the project up to the applicant organization's federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). Applicant organizations who do not have a federal NICRA may recover indirect costs up to the federally allowed de minimis rate of **15%**. Any indirect costs claimed must be reflected in

the completed budget template and overall budgeted figure; the overall budget figure (inclusive of any indirect costs claimed) must be less than the listed subgrant amount ceiling and be an accurate reflection of the projected expenses.

- Please provide a copy of your latest NICRA agreement, as applicable, at the time of application.
 - For example, an organization approved to apply for \$50,000 and without a federal NICRA wishes to request 15% of their total budget in indirect costs. Since both the direct and indirect expenses together cannot exceed \$50,000, and since the indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of the direct costs, the organization submits a budget with these totals:
 - \$43,480.00 Total Direct Costs
 - \$6,520.00 Total Indirect Costs (15% of Direct Costs)
 - = **\$50,000 Total Request**

Salaries & Benefits

- Salaries and wages are payable only to staff who are directly involved in implementation of the project for their time working on the project. Wages for administrative, maintenance, and operational staff not directly involved in the project are not allowable in the salaries portion of the budget. However, costs for staff providing an indirect role in the project may be included in the budget under the line item for indirect costs.
- Benefits (if applicable) should be prorated to match the calculated salary and are allowable up to 22% of the total salary amount. Only medical, 401k, insurance, and vacation pay are allowable.
- Tuition remission in lieu of salaries in university settings is allowable, so long as the practice adheres to [federal guidelines](#).
- Additional guidance regarding budgeting for salaries will be provided to applicants who move on to the full proposal stage.

Consultants / Contractors

- Part-time subject matter experts and consultants related to the project are allowable, but organizations must confirm that consultant/contractor expertise is not within the scope of the organization's existing human resources.
- If a full-time employee is being proposed to be hired as a consultant, then please submit a No Objection letter from their employer at the time of application.
- Consultants/contractors costs cannot be 100% of your proposed budget. It is advisable to limit Consultants/Contractors deliverables to 25-30% of the total budget direct costs.

Food/Meals

- Group and individual meals, as well as all beverages (including alcohol) are unallowable expenses under this subgrant.
- **Exceptions** include:
 - Reimbursement for meals during travel are allowable. Meals during travel can be budgeted at the local rate as set by the [GSA](#) (which varies based on destination), but which will be reimbursed in accordance with actual receipts provided. The first

and last day of travel will be reimbursable at 75% of the total GSA-approved rate. Please include the city and state of your destination in your budget.

- If appropriate for your program and/or project, healthy snacks for program participants may be included in your budget. However, snacks are only allowable expenses for programs that last a full day (8 hours). **Please do not exceed \$20 per person per 8-hour period.** At the close of the performance period, you will need to **provide a list of names** of program participants who received healthy snacks.

Lodging & Transportation

- Any travel included in the budget must be necessary for the success of the project. In the description section of all travel-related budget items, please explain the purpose of the travel.
- Lodging expenses should fall within allowable [GSA rates](#). Please include the city and state of your stay in budget estimates. If there are not options within GSA rate, please request and provide documentation of approval from your organization's CFO or CEO.
- Allowable airfare covers economy class tickets booked at least 14 days in advance of expected travel.
- Mileage reimbursement for the use of privately owned vehicles is allowable. Rates are set by the [GSA](#). The rate for 2024 for business mileage is \$0.67 per mile. However, volunteers, program participants, and/or any other non-employee and non-contractor parties should be reimbursed at the charitable rate of \$0.14 per mile instead of the business rate. In your budget, please specify each person's role in the project if you plan to reimburse them for mileage. Mileage reimbursements can only be claimed when the transportation is outside of the core duties of the staff / consultant.
- Ride sharing services such as Uber and Lyft are allowed if they are the most cost-effective option.
- Allowable rental car expenses include economy class vehicles only. All vehicles should be refueled prior to their return.

Receipts and Reporting

- All subgrant expenses will require a corresponding legible **receipt and proof of payment**.
- To document the payment of salaries and wages, pay stubs (or other proof of payment) and timesheets will need to be submitted for **employees**. A timesheet template will be provided, or you may submit your own version. Timesheets must be signed by the employee's supervisor. If employee's supervisor is not available, then CEO or CFO can sign off.
- **Contractors** are not required to submit timesheets. However, the funded organization must submit proof of payment to contractors. Appropriate documentation for contractors could include a copy of a contracting agreement specifying agreed-upon hours and/or deliverables, or a detailed invoice and proof of payment that includes services rendered, fees, and dates of service. The dates of service must fall within the subgrant performance period.

- All amounts should be reported in USD. Please provide an English translation for any receipts in a foreign language.
- All receipts and supporting documentation must be labeled and uploaded according to the appropriate budget category (e.g. supplies, travel) and submitted at the conclusion of the performance period.

Miscellaneous

- **Remuneration** in the form of cash or gift cards is not allowed. For some project types, it may be customary to offer participation incentives instead of wages. In those cases, projects may distribute incentives in the form of products that help promote good health and wellness practices, like water bottles and insulated lunch boxes. The incentives cost cannot exceed \$50 per individual. However, this subgrant cannot be used to fund cash or gift cards.
- **For-profit organizations** may apply for funding, so long as the organization has an active profile on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) and the organization's bylaws don't prohibit accepting federal grants for non-profit purposes. If a for-profit company is invited to submit a full proposal including a budget, please keep in mind that no profit may be derived from the project activities: only direct project costs will be approved for reimbursement. More guidance regarding federal restrictions related to awards granted to for-profit companies can be found [here](#).
- **Lobbying** is strictly prohibited.
- **Auditing.** Per [federal regulations](#), funded organizations' financial records must be made available for review or audit upon request by Special Olympics, a federal pass-through entity. For-profit organizations may also be audited per Special Olympics' internal policy [Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 75.501 [\(d\)](#) and [\(h\)](#)].
- **Subscriptions.** Collecting charges, subscriptions, fees, or payments of any type for projects funded by this grant are not allowable.

Funding Timeline

- 85% of the approved funding amount will be disbursed at the contract's signing / performance period initiation.
- The remaining balance amount actually spent as per the approved budget or 15% of the total subaward approved, whichever is lower, will be disbursed upon receipt and review of Final Project & Financial Report at the end of the performance period. Final reports must include all supporting documents and receipts to reflect actual expenses incurred.
- If projects do not spend their entire funding award, they will be reimbursed according to the actual expenses incurred and they will owe the surplus back to the Special Olympics.
- All approved expenses must be spent **during** the performance period. Your receipts for expenses must indicate the correct dates in order to be covered.

TIMELINE

February 24, 2025	Funding Guidelines & Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) released. ¹¹
March 13, 2025	Q&A Meeting (optional, but may be helpful). 2-3:30pm ET on Microsoft Teams. Join the meeting Meeting ID: 220 262 325 02 Passcode: 2Nx6yZ2C
March 21, 2025	Deadline to receive Letters of Interest (LOIs) is 11:59pm ET. Letters will be accepted via email as Microsoft Word or PDF documents.
April 11, 2025	Qualified applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal and budget.
May 2, 2025	Deadline to receive full proposals and budgets is 11:59pm ET. Proposals will be accepted via email as Microsoft Word or PDF documents, budgets will be accepted as Excel documents.
Week of May 27, 2025	Final decisions issued and applicants notified. Subgrant recipients will submit budget online via SmartSimple platform for final Financial approval by June 4.
June 2, 2025	Optional office hour for SmartSimple questions. Join the meeting Meeting ID: 279 451 914 636 Passcode: h7nf2GT7
June 6 – July 31, 2025	Contracting period (including budget and project revisions as needed)
Early August, 2025	Performance period begins. 85% of funding disbursed.
January - April, 2026	Mid-project check-in scheduled
June 30, 2026	Performance period ends
July 11, 2026	Final narrative report and supporting financial documentation due
Mid August, 2026	Final 15% of funding disbursed. If projects do not spend their entire funding award, they will be reimbursed according to the actual expenses incurred.

¹¹ SOI is not obligated to any course of action as a result of this RFLOI. Issuance of this RFLOI does not constitute a commitment by SOI to award any subgrant.

HOW TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF INTEREST

To express your interest in the Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrant, organizations must submit a formal **letter of interest**. Please do not complete a full proposal or a budget at this time.

You may submit your letter of interest by completing our template on Microsoft Word (available [here](#)) and emailing a copy of your completed document to inclusivehealth@specialolympics.org. You may submit your letter as a PDF or Word document. If you would prefer to submit your project for consideration another way, please email us to discuss your needs. Accommodations will be made for accessibility purposes.

All letters of interest must be received by **11:59 pm ET** on **March 21, 2025**.

All organizations will be notified about the status of their letter of interest by **April 11, 2025**. Organizations with projects that align with the priorities of this subgrant will be invited to submit a full proposal and budget at that time.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Who are people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)?

- People with IDD are valuable members of all communities, across the U.S. and around the world.
- IDD refers to “a group of developmental conditions characterized by significant impairment of cognitive functions, which are associated with limitations of learning, adaptive behavior and skills. Intellectual disability is a type of developmental disability.
- A person has an intellectual disability if they have:
 - Limitations regarding learning, reasoning, and problem solving, often measured with an IQ below 70-75, AND
 - Limitations in two or more areas of skills needed to live, work, or play in the community, such as communication or self-care, AND
 - These limitations are evident before the age of 22 years.
- All Special Olympics athletes are people with IDD.
- You can read more about IDD [here](#).

Can organizations outside the U.S. apply for this subgrant?

- No. Only U.S.-based organizations are eligible.

Can for-profit companies apply for this subgrant?

- Yes, so long as the organization has an active profile on [SAM.gov](#) and the organization’s bylaws don’t prohibit accepting federal grants for non-profit purposes. If a for-profit company is invited to submit a full proposal including a budget, please keep in mind that no profit may be derived from the project activities: only direct project costs will be approved for reimbursement. More guidance regarding federal restrictions related to awards granted to for-profit companies can be found [here](#).

Can local chapters of national organizations in the U.S. apply for this subgrant?

- Yes. In most cases, local chapters of national organizations are positioned to create change at the local, city, and/or county level. As such, each local chapter would be eligible to apply for up to \$25,000. In some cases, larger chapters working within major cities may have a reach that extends beyond the local level to the state level. In that case, the organization would be eligible to apply for up to \$50,000.

Are organizations that already partner with Special Olympics eligible to apply?

- Yes. This includes organizations that currently hold non-financial memoranda of understanding with Special Olympics. Organizations that have previously received an inclusive health subgrant are also eligible to apply.

Are organizations required to work directly with Special Olympics in implementing their proposed project?

- Organizations are required to consult with and otherwise include people with IDD in their project design and implementation.

- Because all Special Olympics athletes are people with IDD, organizations may choose to invite local SO chapters to partner on their project, pending the availability of the local SO chapter.
- There are also many other organizations that support people with IDD. In order to ensure that your efforts at systems change are community-wide, you may also wish to reach out to [Developmental Disability Councils](#), [chapters of the Arc](#), state [Vocational Rehabilitation agencies](#), [Centers for Independent Living](#), or similar organizations to connect with people with IDD and their supporters.

Can Special Olympics Programs apply?

- No, Special Olympics Programs are not eligible for these subgrants.

What do you mean by “mainstream” organizations?

- These are organizations in the public health sphere whose primary mission is not focused on people with disabilities. Please contact us if you have any questions about your eligibility.

What do you mean by “inclusive health?”

- Inclusive health means people with IDD are able to take full advantage of the same health programs and services available to people who do not have IDD.
- While some specialized programs are needed to meet the needs of every individual, it is more efficient for general programs and institutions to support all needs, not just those of the average participant.

Can non-healthcare organizations apply for funding?

- Yes, as long as the organization’s scope of work is related to health promotion, disease prevention, social determinants of health, or lifestyle management services (including nutrition, fitness, and mental health, among others), the organization is a good candidate for funding.

Are there any restrictions on the location of performance?

- Yes. Projects funded by Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrants must take place in the United States and its territories.

When will we find out if our application is funded?

- Qualifying organizations who submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) by March 21, 2025 will be invited to submit a full proposal by April 11, 2025. Full proposals are due May 2, 2025. Funding decisions will be communicated to organizations by May 23, 2025.
- After submitting a successful LOI and before submitting a proposal, SOI may ask applicants to correct errors, provide additional clarity, or improve the strength of the project description. Interested organizations will need to submit these revisions according to updated deadlines provided during the revision process in order to be considered for funding.

What advice do you have for applicants?

- Before submitting a letter of interest, we recommend that you **carefully read through** all the sections of this document (the Funding Guidelines & Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) document). In addition, we recommend that all applicants review the Request for Proposals (RFP) document, available on our subgrant [webpage](#). The RFP outlines additional information organizations will need to provide if invited to submit a full proposal. However, please **do not** submit a proposal unless invited to do so following the successful acceptance of your letter of interest. We are providing access to the RFP in the interest of transparency to help organizations plan, but we will not review unsolicited proposals.
- Smaller organizations are especially encouraged to read through the RFP carefully, especially if they've never received a federal grant before. The contracting and budgeting processes can be complex and time-consuming, and our hope is that all organizations are as prepared as possible for all phases of the process.
- We recommend that applicants attend the [Q&A Teams Meeting](#) on Thursday, March 13, 2025 from 2-3:30pm ET. If you're unable to attend the meeting, it will be recorded and posted on our website for your review. Alternatively, you may email us at inclusivehealth@specialolympics.org to request additional support.

How will our letter of interest be evaluated?

- The most important determinant (other than fulfilling mandatory eligibility requirements) for both letters of interest and proposals will be each project's capacity to catalyze systems change in inclusive health.
- As a reminder, systems change means addressing the root causes of why people with IDD are underserved by healthcare systems and services, resulting in poor health outcomes. The strongest applications will be those that explain how the proposed project will affect your entire organization's "way of doing business." The project should increase the access that people with IDD have to healthcare, health promotion, and disease prevention services that meet their needs.

Is funding for these subgrants guaranteed?

- Funding is contingent upon each organization's eligibility, appropriateness of the proposed project, and availability of funds.

What regulations govern these subgrants?

- Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrants are supported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All federal subgrants are bound by Federal Guidelines under 2 CFR 200. Additional provisions are contained in the Subgrant Agreement that will be provided to successful applicants.
- **Equal Opportunity Employer Statement:** Special Olympics is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer committed to maintaining a non-discriminatory, diverse work environment. Special Olympics does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by applicable law in any of its programs or activities.

**What are examples of programs that would qualify as systems change in inclusive health?
(feel free to borrow ideas from these examples)**

- **State and/or National Level Example:** A state-level Department of Public Health requests funding to revise and implement a statewide health survey.
 - Recognizing that the local Developmental Disability Council is not solely responsible for identifying the needs of people with IDD, the new statewide survey will include questions that stratify for intellectual and developmental disability status (specific and separate from overall disability status). It will also include questions that allow respondents to identify health needs and barriers specific to their disability status.
 - The survey will be intentionally distributed to group homes, other residential facilities, and correctional facilities that may house people with IDD, all of which had been excluded from the previous statewide survey. All survey questions will be rewritten in the plainest language possible.
 - The Department of Public Health knows that it will likely take three years to accomplish their overall goals, but they request funding for the first year of activities, which would allow them to initiate a process to revise the old survey with input from people with IDD, their supporters, and other disability professionals.
 - In subsequent years – pending availability of funds and compliance with subgrant requirements during the first year of funding – the organization can apply for additional funds to continue their work.
- **Local, City, and/or County Level Example:** A local YMCA wants to offer simultaneous swim lessons for people with different support needs, with the goal of allowing parents to drop off multiple children with different needs at the same lesson. Previously, all swim lessons offered were based on skill level, and every level was offered at a different time.
 - The new swim lesson will employ more staff members and volunteers, and it will be split into two pods of swimmers. One pod will offer a staff-to-child ratio of 1:4, and the other pod will offer a ratio of 1:1. Rather than separating the pods by disability status or age, parents opt their child into a pod according to the child's need for adult support.
 - Both pods receive simultaneous instruction regarding overall swim goals, but they may practice different skills. Both pods include swimmers of different ages with and without disabilities.
 - The pod with the 1:4 staff-to-child ratio employs an adult instructor with IDD who is a skilled swimmer.
 - The YMCA plans to run their new lesson on Saturday mornings for four months, and then they will survey the participants regarding their experience. As an added bonus, the YMCA plans to give a presentation on the successes, challenges, and future goals of its new lesson, including participant survey results, at the national YMCA conference later that year.
 - This organization could be a good candidate to graduate to the \$50,000 funding track in future years if they developed a plan to refine and then share a successful model for inclusive swim lessons with other YMCAs nationwide.

Will there be future rounds of Systems Change in Inclusive Health Subgrants?

- Special Olympics expects to open subsequent inclusive health funding opportunities in 2026, and hopefully beyond.

COMPANION MATERIALS

The following are a selection of resources that contain valuable information about inclusive health, inclusive project design, and disability justice:

- [Inclusive Health Principles and Strategies: How to Make your Practices Inclusive of People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Inclusive Policy-Making for People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Foundational Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Health & Intellectual Disability Global Fact Sheet](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning](#)

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP



Email your questions to inclusivehealth@specialolympics.org.



[Attend](#) our **Q&A Teams Meeting** on Thursday, March 13, 2025 from 2-3:30pm ET. Meeting ID: 220 262 325 02. Passcode: 2Nx6yZ2C



Email us to schedule a **phone** or **video call** to address your questions.

THANK YOU!