

What Accreditation Offers:



Membership in the Movement. Accredited Programs bring to life the mission of Special Olympics in communities around the world. Accreditation is required to brand oneself as a Special Olympics Program. Without an active accreditation status, a Program is unable to use the Special Olympics name, visual identify, or trademarks nor raise funds, participate in Special Olympics regional or international games and events, or offer Special Olympics programming.

Competition. Access to Special Olympics competition – from local to global – is contingent upon a Program’s accreditation status. Only accredited Programs may offer local Special Olympics competitions and participate in our Regional and World Games. Our Games, along with local events every day worldwide, show the skills of our athletes.

Partnerships. Special Olympics is the best-known organization and one of the most trusted in the world promoting inclusion and respect for people with intellectual disabilities. Partnerships with International Sport Federations help accredited Programs provide high-quality competitions, coaching, and equipment. Accredited Programs also benefit from Special Olympics partnerships with some of the world’s biggest brands, including Coca-Cola, ESPN, Bank of America, Toyota, and United Airlines.

Access to Funds and Fundraising. Apply for grants in health, youth and school engagement, sports, and more. Small and developing accredited Programs can also receive grants from the Christmas Records Trust, which share proceeds from sales of *A Very Special Christmas* albums.

Flagship Programming. Resources to participate in Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, Law Enforcement Torch Run®, Polar Plunge®, Unified Sports®, Unified Leadership, and more.

Athlete Empowerment. Special Olympics drives personal and organizational change through building leadership skills in athletes so they can become leaders within the movement and their communities. Athletes of accredited Programs also benefit from the protection Special Olympics provides them and the high standards of safeguarding training the organization upholds.

Investments. In 2023, Special Olympics invested \$106.3M benefiting the work of Programs. Programs support this effort by contributing accreditation fees, totaling \$4.1M in 2023. On average, the fees contribute 2.4% to the budget annually.

