



Special Olympics Minnesota Fact Sheet

LAW ENFORCEMENT
TORCH RUN[®]
FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS
MINNESOTA

Inspire Greatness

Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver with the belief that individuals with intellectual disabilities could participate fully in their communities and in life. It was her vision that through year-round sports training and athletic competition, individuals with intellectual disabilities would be better equipped to be contributing members of society. By focusing on a person's abilities and not his or her disabilities, Special Olympics athletes earn respect, acceptance and understanding from their communities, while growing physically, socially and developmentally.

Today, Special Olympics is the largest, fastest-growing sports program in the world, representing more than 4.5 million athletes in more than 170 countries. Special Olympics is also the only organization in Minnesota, the United States and the world utilizing the unique benefits of sports to improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics continues to grow thanks to the financial support from individuals, businesses and civic organizations. Special Olympics Minnesota does not receive government funding and is not a United Way agency.

Special Olympics Minnesota

Special Olympics Minnesota, an accredited program of Special Olympics Incorporated, opened its doors in 1973. Currently, 8,100 Minnesotans with intellectual disabilities participate and compete in 17 Olympic-type sports.

Special Olympics Minnesota offers five annual statewide competitions, six regional competitions, more than 95 area events, training programs for 3,300 coaches and opportunities for 14,000 volunteers. Athletes can also take part in our Healthy Athletes program. Designed to improve health and fitness, screenings and education provide athletes an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Other opportunities include Athlete Leadership Programs, which give athletes the opportunity to participate in roles previously considered non-traditional.

Statewide Competitions

With five annual statewide competitions, athletes are given opportunities to train and compete year-round. March – Winter Games, April – Spring Games, June – Summer Games, August – Fall Games, November – State Bowling tournament

Sports Offered

The 17 sports currently offered in Minnesota at the statewide level include the following: Alpine Skiing, Aquatics, Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Equestrian, Figure Skating, Flag Football, Golf, Gymnastics, Poly Hockey, Powerlifting, Snowboarding, Softball, Tennis and Volleyball.