



Special Olympics

Health

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano**
FOUNDATION

Request for Proposals: Special Olympics International Seeking Consultants to Help Measure Health Outcomes

Background – Special Olympics Health Strategy

Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) is an international NGO providing sports training and competition to more than 4.9 million people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in 172 countries. With the support of almost 1.5 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 33 Olympic-type sports and more than 108,000 games and competitions throughout the year. In addition to sports programming, Special Olympics offers a number of supporting initiatives and programs, including Special Olympics Healthy Athletes and Healthy Communities, Unified Sports, Young Athletes, and Unified Strategy for Schools. With 220 country or state Programs¹, Special Olympics is providing opportunities for 5.7 million athletes and Unified partners, one million volunteers, and millions more, including family members, supporters, and fans.

Since 1997, SOI has provided a variety of health programs and activities to Special Olympics (SO) athletes, including free health screenings, education, and referrals for follow-up care. The [Healthy Athletes](#) program provides health examinations in the areas of vision, audiology, dentistry, podiatry, physical therapy, and health promotion. These screenings, which take place at local events and international competitions, have identified a high prevalence of health issues for people with ID. In 2012, SOI established the [Healthy Communities](#) initiative to expand on Healthy Athletes with a focus on enabling access to follow-up care and year-round local health and wellness opportunities. In addition, since 2014, fitness grants have enabled SO Programs to focus on embedding physical activity and nutrition into sport.

SOI has collected a wealth of data from this health programming over the past decade. This [data](#) includes a mixture of self-reported variables and clinical measures. With existing data, SOI is able to report the [prevalence](#) of certain risk factors for health conditions within the SO athlete population and highlight health disparities between people with and without ID.

To build on existing programming, SOI launched a new health strategy in 2016 with a goal of inclusive health – a world where all people with ID have equal health outcomes and equitable access to quality health care, education, and services throughout their communities. To accomplish this, SOI aims to normalize the inclusion of people with ID in mainstream health policies, programming and services, training programs, and funding streams. As part of this strategy, SO is working with influential health organizations to assist them in becoming more inclusive for people with ID. Ultimately, SOI aims to create a tipping point for inclusive health where the inclusion of people with ID in all health systems becomes normalized. This global health strategy is an integral part of [SOI's 2016-2020 strategic plan](#), and involves expanding Healthy Athletes, Healthy Communities, and Fitness, and catalyzing support from external partners for the provision of inclusive health, as well as activating communities to raise awareness of the health needs of people with ID.

¹Special Olympics Programs (SO Programs) are independent 501(c)3 organizations that are accredited to carry the Special Olympics name. Generally, these Programs operate at the state level in the US (e.g., SO Florida) and at the national level outside the US (e.g. SO Malawi).

Data Collection Methods and Rationale – Individual-Level Outcomes

SOI has worked towards identifying the best ways to demonstrate evidence of the impact of this global health strategy. To do this, SOI hired consultants (Roy McConkey and Laurence Taggart of Ulster University) to determine key individual-level and systems-level health indicators to help SOI understand its impact on individuals and progress towards reaching improved health outcomes for people with ID and the inclusive health tipping point. The main deliverables for this consultancy included (1) providing recommendations for a set of key individual-level and systems-level health indicators for SOI to track and (2) providing recommendations for the collection and compilation of this data. McConkey and Taggart's full report can be found [here](#).

In terms of measuring individual-level outcomes, SOI aims to create a core set of indicators that demonstrate the impact of SOI's health work. Given the breadth of health and wellness programming that local SO Programs offer, there are a number of relevant health indicators that could be used. To narrow down this list, SOI considered the following:

- Connection between indicators and long-term outcomes
- Availability of analogous indicators in other datasets for comparison to the general population
- Ability to help demonstrate impact
- Feasibility of data collection (i.e., data being collected or can be collected by SO Programs)

Based on recommendations from consultants and review of the above considerations, SOI seeks to continue to emphasize and expand fitness and healthy lifestyle measures already being collected to understand the impact of the global health strategy on individual-level outcomes. Specifically, the individual-level health outcomes that SOI plans to focus on are hypertension and obesity, as well the main contributors to these health issues – nutrition and physical activity. Therefore, the core indicators selected to measure these outcomes include:

- Blood pressure
- Body mass index
- Self-reported health (including nutrition)
- Physical activity

In addition to the above core set of individual-level indicators, SOI wants to focus on a set of “exploratory” indicators. These indicators are critical to understanding impact, but require more research and/or testing before they can be confirmed as core indicators. Different SO Programs focus on different areas of health, so having an expanded set of indicators will allow for flexibility among SO Programs. Potential exploratory indicators include social and emotional wellness, (un)healthy eating, general pain, quality of life, and healthcare access and utilization.

Additionally, SOI seeks to collect demographic information side-by-side with both the core indicators and exploratory indicators. Potential demographic indicators include living arrangement, employment, ethnicity, etiology of an individual's ID, poverty, and diagnosis of specific health problems (e.g., diabetes, heart disease).

Data Collection Methods and Rationale – Systems Outcomes

To evaluate the impact of the global health strategy on health systems and to demonstrate SOI's progress toward the tipping point of inclusive health, there is also a need for indicators that can measure systems-level outcomes. To measure impact on systems, SOI plans to focus on evaluating impact on healthcare providers, including providers trained by SOI and those not trained by SOI. To measure this impact, SOI is currently developing a set of questions to evaluate the attitudes and

behaviors of healthcare providers in all settings (i.e., where SOI trains providers and with the general population of providers). This part of the work is outside the scope of this RFP, but relevant for applicants to understand the broader context of Special Olympics' plan to measure health outcomes.

In addition to the focus on evaluating impact on attitudes of healthcare providers, SOI plans to select key systems-level indicators to monitor. Potential indicators include:

- Curriculum changes in medical and other health professional schools
- Policy changes involving the inclusion of people with ID in health systems
- Inclusion of people with ID in national plans

Scope of Work

Grants to SO Programs

SOI is awarding selected SO Programs with small evaluation grants to help with the collection of core health indicators. SOI is also awarding larger evaluation grants to SO Programs to collect core indicators and pilot various methods of collecting exploratory indicators. It is expected that SOI will be able to distribute about 20-30 smaller evaluation grants and between 4 and 6 larger evaluation grants. SO Programs receiving larger evaluation grants (to collect both core and exploratory indicators) will also serve as collaborative evaluation partners with SOI and the consultant. SO Programs can use grant money for relevant expenses, such as paying for help collecting and entering data, staff time supporting data collection, collaborating with a local evaluation partner, and/or equipment.

SO Programs approved to receive evaluation grants will have existing health and wellness opportunities that athletes participate in for a minimum of 6 sessions. SO Programs will be guided in collecting consistent, high quality data on SO athletes (and in some cases, non-athletes) over time (i.e., before and after health and wellness programming). For example, if a SO Program is implementing a 6-week Fitness intervention program, data would be collected during week 1 and week 6 of the intervention.

The amount of data collected will vary by SO Program, geographic region, and type of health programming offered. With over 70 global SO Programs currently offering ongoing health, wellness, and fitness programming, there is an opportunity to collect a substantial amount of data. Based on some data that has already been collected from these Programs and on the number of athletes within geographic focus areas, SOI estimates that there is a potential to collect data on up to 120,000 athletes and unified partners.

Consultant Deliverables

SOI is looking for a consultant(s) (individual or organization) to lead the monitoring and evaluation of this health outcome work, including data collection of core and exploratory individual-level health indicators. The consultant(s) will manage the scope and coordination of the individual-level health indicators work, and will be responsible for creating a strategy for SO to measure additional health outcomes moving forward. The consultant(s) will be expected to work directly with SO Programs to collect individual-level health indicators. The main deliverables include:

- a. Managing data collection from SO Programs receiving small grants to collect core health indicators. Management includes advising on data collection methods, identifying and implementing a process for aggregating data from different SO Programs, and analyzing data.
- b. Managing data collection from SO Programs receiving large evaluation grants to pilot data collection of exploratory health indicators. Management includes collaborating with SO Programs to identify appropriate measures and methods for piloting data collection,

- identifying and implementing a process for aggregating data from different SO Programs, and analyzing data. Management of data collection should also include creating training materials for Programs that plan to work with local evaluation partners to support the data collection process.
- c. Coordinating and leading an in-person meeting for SO Programs receiving large grants to train SO Programs on data collection methods and discuss challenges and successes with current data collection processes.
 - d. Evaluating exploratory health indicators data to determine the best data collection method and whether these indicators should be included within the core set of indicators.
 - e. Providing a recommendation for data future SO Programs should collect and how health outcomes should be evaluated in the future, including methodology for collection and reporting results.
 - f. Identifying and implementing a process for linking health indicators data to other existing SO health data, including fitness data.
 - g. Recognizing opportunities for coordination by supporting work on systems-level outcomes.
 - h. Communicating regularly with SOI and SO Programs and submitting quarterly reports to SOI. Regular communication with SO Programs should include regular webinars and calls.

Activities to meet these deliverables will likely include:

- Reviewing the health data that SOI currently collects to evaluate whether and how this data demonstrates impact. In order to fully understand this work and be successful, it will be critical to understand the scope of the data SOI has already collected and how it has been used in the past.
- Gaining an understanding of SO's health strategy and local activities through review of documents, conversations with SOI and SO Program staff, and possible field observation.
- Soliciting regular feedback from the SOI Research and Evaluation team and the SOI Health team on indicators and data collection. This includes participating in an initial planning meeting with selected members of the SOI Research and Evaluation and Health teams.
- Attending site visits to evaluation grantees.
- Communicating regularly (at least on a monthly basis) with SO Programs (via calls and/or webinars) to determine best methods for data collection (working with partners, etc.) and to ensure appropriate reporting of data.

Funding Amount: Up to US \$120,000. In addition, SOI will cover agreed upon travel costs, including site visits to evaluation grantees. Preference given to those who can minimize or waive overhead costs. The consultant(s) will be expected to work the equivalent of full-time (or close to full-time) basis to complete this work.

Timeline: SOI is looking to hire a consultant(s) as soon as possible, and this scope of work must be completed by March 31, 2019.

Applications and Eligibility

A maximum of one award will be given, but joint proposals between multiple consultants will be considered. For example, a lead consultant may apply with other individuals to coordinate and help manage data collection efforts. If applicants choose to submit a joint proposal, consideration will be given to the combined experience of all individuals and the range of expertise within the group. Interested applicants should submit a proposal to SOI by **May 7, 2018**. Proposals should include a narrative describing a plan for meeting deliverables, a budget, a timeline, and relevant curriculum vitae.

Proposals applying for this consultancy should be a maximum of 8 pages (1.5 spacing), excluding curriculum vitae. Preference will be given to applicants with experience managing international research and evaluation projects, experience managing large health datasets, experience with data collecting for people with intellectual disabilities, experience with data analysis, and those with a background in public health or global health. An additional desired qualification is familiarity with the work of Special Olympics, particularly that of their health programs.

This work will be funded in part by the Golisano Foundation and is being proposed to be funded in part out of a USA Federal Award received by SOI from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. Applicants can be from within the U.S. or outside the U.S., but each of the Applicants and/or Joint Applicants to the RFP must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Applicants must be eligible to receive USA Federal funding and maintain such eligibility until completion of the task. Further, the applicant(s) or their organization's name should not have been included in the "List of Excluded" parties for doing business directly or indirectly with USA Federal Government.
- 2) In case the Applicant is a legal entity/ or an organization, it must already have obtained or undertake to obtain DUNS registration before a final offer is made by SOI in the event of their selection.
- 3) The Applicant must have USA Tax Identification Number (TIN) or must have a tax exemption certificate from U.S. federal agencies.

Compliance with Applicable Privacy and Data Security Requirements

Personal data should be collected and secured in compliance with applicable privacy and data security laws. The selected consultant(s) should be able to meet applicable compliance requirements and contractually agree to take financial and legal responsibility for its compliance, including defense and indemnification for government or other third party claims and remediation for data breaches resulting from the consultants' negligence or non-compliance with applicable privacy and data security requirements.

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.

Proposals and questions should be sent to:
Special Olympics Research and Evaluation
research@specialolympics.org
202-824-0334