

Chief Executive Officer



Special Olympics
Wisconsin

Join us – you will be helping to create a world of acceptance and inclusion for all!

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About the Organization

Special Olympics is a worldwide movement of more than 4 million athletes in 200 countries and jurisdictions, where one can act locally, but make a global impact. With competitions around the world, daily training sessions and family leaders, athlete leaders and volunteers extending our message every day, Special Olympics is not just an event. We are a movement, inviting the world.

History

From a backyard summer camp for people with intellectual disabilities to a global movement, Special Olympics has been changing lives and attitudes for 55 years. It all began in the early 1960s, when [Eunice Kennedy Shriver](#) saw how unjustly and unfairly people with intellectual disabilities (ID) were treated. She also saw that many children with intellectual disabilities didn't even have a place to play. She decided to take action.

Soon, her vision began to take shape, as she held a summer day camp for young people with intellectual disabilities in her own backyard. The goal was to learn what these children could do in sports and other activities – and not dwell on what they could not do. Throughout the 1960s, Eunice Kennedy Shriver continued her pioneering work — both as the driving force behind President John F. Kennedy's White House panel on people with intellectual disabilities and as the director of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. Her vision and drive for justice eventually grew into the [Special Olympics](#) movement.

In 1968, the first [International Special Olympics Games](#) were held at Soldier Field in Chicago. The belief was that the lessons these athletes learned through sports would translate into new confidence, competence and success in school, in the workplace and in the community. Above all, Mrs. Shriver wanted the world to see what these individuals could accomplish, to take pride in their efforts and to celebrate in their victories.

Today, Special Olympics Inc. is the world's largest provider of fitness, sports training, and athletic competition — coupled with social, life and leadership skill development opportunities — for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.



Special Olympics Wisconsin

Special Olympics Wisconsin, a 501(c)3 accredited program of Special Olympics Inc., was founded in 1972 and is the largest sports program in Wisconsin for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Wisconsin is divided into 7 regions. Each region is managed by both program and development staff and serves athletes in its assigned counties. Within each area, there are local programs that are divided into teams which are community, organization, school or independent-based. Each team trains and competes in one or more seasonal sports throughout the year.



Cultural Descriptors of Special Olympics Wisconsin

Positive	Family Friendly	Flexible	Collaborative
Inclusive	Transparent	Open door policy	Supportive
Excited	Eager	Passion for mission	Fun

Our Mission

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy while participating in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Our Vision

Sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities across Wisconsin. Globally, we strive to end discrimination against people with ID.

Our Strategic Goals

- Improve opportunities for athletes to perform at their best
- Build positive attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities
- Build capacity by improving resources
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Special Olympics Wisconsin

Programs

Sports - Special Olympics Wisconsin provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in 19 Olympic-type sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities 8 years of age or older. Athletes train in their sport, compete at an area level and may progress to the state level of competition.

Health - Special Olympics Wisconsin's health program improves access to health care for athletes through free event-based screenings and educational initiatives. With nearly 1,800 free health screenings provided annually, Special Olympics Wisconsin has emerged as a leading public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities.

Unified Champion Schools - Special Olympics Wisconsin's Unified Champion Schools program promotes social inclusion for students with and without intellectual disability through inclusive sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement, creating school climates of acceptance, respect and belonging for all.

Position Description

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reports to the chairperson of the board and is responsible for the overall leadership of the organization. The role serves as the primary ambassador of the organization and develops strong relationships internally and externally generating support to advance the organization, its mission and brand. The following is a high-level overview of the position.

Mission Commitment: Building a more inclusive world through the power of sports is the core of the organization's purpose. Provide leadership and effectively engage in advocacy as it relates to the mission.

- Foster and proliferate passion for the mission.
- Guide growth of sustainable high impact programs designed to provide a path toward empowerment and achievement.
- Determine gaps in services, explore innovative solutions and new or enhanced programs in alignment with community need.
- Increase organizational focus and results on mission without diminishing operational success

Community Relationships: Build upon existing and create new external relationships and serve as an advocate. Identify program/services growth to meet the needs of the communities.

- Represent the organization professionally and positively with all stakeholders including; Special Olympics Inc, state, local, LETR and community relationships throughout Wisconsin.
- Develop strategic alliances with community leaders and government officials.
- Build upon collaborative partnerships and sponsorships with other community organizations, and constituents including donors.

Leadership and Culture: Provide inspirational leadership and direction to ensure mission alignment.

- Engage, encourage and inspire the management team and employees while driving the organization forward.
- Cultivate and embody an organization that is inclusive, respectful, diverse, encourages innovation, and is collaborative.
- Make certain that the environment facilitates the achievement of mission and outcomes while also embodies diversity, equity and inclusion.
- In conjunction with Board of Directors, engage the organization in continuously reviewing and charting the desired vision; effectively managing necessary change to achieve goals.

Fundraising: Ensure organization has the necessary financial resources to achieve annual and long-term sustainability goals and be actively engaged in fundraising.

- Champion and lead the efforts of the development team in the cultivation and solicitation of philanthropic gifts, budget-relieving resources, and partnerships.

Communications: Raise visibility and awareness of full range of programming and services. Position the organization as a high impact and strong community partner while incorporating the athlete's voice in all messaging.

- Promote the importance and necessity of society to become more inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Increase visibility of programs, services and activities in the community; ensuring the organization is perceived positively and accurately.
- Maintain high ethical standards and work closely with marketing team to ensure good public relations in the community and on social media.
- Provide leadership and direction to brand building and organizational reputation protection.

Governance and Board Development: Assure establishment of and adherence to bylaws, policies and procedures in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

- Arrange for nonprofit board training as needed to develop effective high functioning governance.
- Build relationships to engage board members and encourage active participation.
- Serve as primary liaison to the Executive committee, Board development, committee and strategic planning committee to assure strong governance and organization oversight.
- Oversee staff liaisons to Board committees to ensure they are provided with the information and support necessary to fulfill their objectives.
- Identify, recruit, and recommend board candidates to the Board nominating committee.

Human Resources: Develop and retain talent necessary to achieve organizational goals.

- Ensure adherence to best practices related to human resource policies and laws.
- Ensure productive and effective staff performance measurements are in place to enhance the performance of management level professionals.
- Recruit, hire, retain and develop a top leadership team that can effectively implement the programs and strategic plan.

Financial Planning: Direct the financial growth of the organization and ensure a strong and sustainable financial strategic plan is in place. Be a responsible steward of all of the organization's resources.

- Align the budget and financial plans with the strategy.
- Responsible (along with Board of Directors) for the financial solvency and sustainability of the organization.
- Responsible for long-term financial plans taking into account continuing operations recovering from or during difficult times.
- Ensure development, implementation and monitoring of the annual budget in collaboration with financial management staff and Board Treasurer.

Business Operations: Ensure all necessary administrative and operational systems are in place to support effective operations and fulfill the mission.

- Manage and maintain facilities in alignment with the desired image and brand of the organization.
- Ensure efficiencies and optimization of the systems, equipment, people, programs and processes needed to achieve highest mission impact.
- Ensure adherence to all Special Olympics Inc. rules and processes and adhere to operational KPI's.
- Ensure continued compliance with all regulatory and audit requirements.

Strategic Planning: In collaboration with the board; ensure, oversee and update as appropriate, a strategic planning process that results in the development and implementation of a workable plan.

- Ensure and oversee the identification and evaluation of opportunities for improvement and implement the plans for improvements.
- Engage the board in shaping the long-term vision and aspirations.

THE REVOLUTION
IS INCLUSION



Key success indicators of the new CEO:

- Achieve a positive rapport with athletes and their families.
- Develop effective and strong relationships with community partners including donors, corporate sponsors, sports teams, civic leaders and law enforcement community throughout Wisconsin.
- Build upon the legacy of the partnership with the volunteer leadership of the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) to achieve its continued growth.
- Move the needle forward on the metrics aligned with the strategic plan.
- Increase awareness of the continually expanding role beyond events that Special Olympics serves in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, healthy athletes, fitness programs, Athlete Leadership, Unified Champion Schools, etc.
- Effectively lead the philanthropy function, including positive donor relations and identification of additional resources, resulting in the increase of funding and dollars raised.
- Cultivate an inspired team; increasing morale, providing clarity of purpose, goal setting and collaborating to set aspirational, achievable career paths.

Qualifications

- Previous “C” suite experience or VP level enterprise-wide leadership experience preferably across a multi-location and large geographic region.
- Ability to lead and manage change.
- Passion for mission-driven work and ability to advocate for the mission of Special Olympics Wisconsin.
- Knowledge of the Wisconsin community is important but not required.
- Experience in programs specifically designed for people with disabilities.
- Experience in nonprofit operations particularly governance and board development.
- Strong background and successful track record in fundraising/development.
- Bachelor’s Degree from accredited university.
- Ten (10) years of direct experience in senior management roles.

Location

This position is based in Wisconsin either in Madison (Dane County) or in Brookfield (Waukesha County).

Inquiries

For a confidential conversation and to learn more about this opportunity please contact Spano Pratt Executive Search. Rose Spano Iannelli | rspano@spanopratt.com | T: 414.839.5083.

Spano Pratt Executive Search shall provide equal opportunity to all qualified candidates, and will refer candidates without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected basis.

Special Olympics Wisconsin: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are at the heart of all that we do. We value, celebrate and respect all differences, and inclusion creates a stronger organization.