



# 2025 Overview



**Special Olympics** is the **world's largest sports and public health organization serving people with intellectual disabilities (ID)**. Worldwide, more than 4 million athletes and Unified Sports® partners and one million coaches and volunteers in 200 countries participate in our programs year-round. In Connecticut, participants include:

**7,307 athletes      6,671 Unified Sports® partners      1,595 coaches      9,000+ volunteers**

**Our Mission** To provide 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
- experience joy
- and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.



**Traditional and Unified Sports®** Traditional Sports programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Unified Sports® program for teammates with and without disabilities to promote acceptance and inclusion for all.

We offer Traditional and Unified Sports® through our **69 Local Programs** in communities across the state. We also partner with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) to offer Unified Sports® in:



**129 high schools, 66 middle schools and 60 elementary schools**

Why this program is so critical:



- ✓ Reduces bullying and exclusion
- ✓ Promotes healthy activities and interactions
- ✓ Overturns stereotypes and negative attitudes
- ✓ Eliminates hurtful language in schools and in all settings
- ✓ Engages youth as leaders



**Additionally, 95%** of liaisons say this program has created a more socially inclusive school, **100%** say it's valuable for the whole school, **95%** report increased participation of students with intellectual disabilities in school activities, and **85%** report increased attendance.

**Healthy Athletes®** Free screenings, health education, and resources for follow-up care (i.e. prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids, referrals) for athletes through 8 Healthy Athletes® disciplines:



**Fit Feet**  
Podiatry



**FUNFitness**  
Physical Fitness



**Healthy Hearing**  
Audiology



**Health Promotion**  
Prevention/Nutrition



**Opening Eyes**  
Vision and Eye Health



**Special Smiles**  
Dentistry



**Strong Minds**  
Emotional Health



**MedFest**  
Physical Exam



**1,045** Free health screenings provided to our athletes at no cost to them and **272** Health professionals and students trained in treating people with intellectual disabilities by our staff in 2024.

Why this program is so critical:

**80%** of athletes are either overweight or obese  
**85%** have flexibility problems  
**59%** have balance problems  
**57%** need new prescription glasses

**Athlete Leadership** Athletes receive training to serve as spokespersons, ambassadors and decision-makers for our organization.

**2 Board of Directors Members** who are athletes

**60 Global Messengers** who inform the public about our mission, programs and impact

**13 Health Messengers** who educate the public about our health and wellness programs and train health practitioners on serving individuals with ID

**Sports Seasons** **26** Olympic-type sports are offered \* **5** Annual State Games and opportunities for our participants to compete in Special Olympics USA and World Games



### Winter Games

December — March  
Alpine Skiing  
Cross-Country Skiing  
Curling  
Figure Skating  
Floorball  
Gymnastics  
Snowboarding  
Snowshoeing  
Speed Skating



### Traditional Basketball Tournament

January — March  
Basketball



### Summer Games

March — June  
Athletics  
(Track & Field)  
Cycling  
Soccer  
Swimming  
Tennis



### Unified Sports® Fall Festival

June — September  
Bocce  
Cornhole  
Croquet  
Flag Football  
Golf  
Long-Distance  
Running  
Sailing  
Softball



### Unified Sports® Holiday Classic

September — November  
Basketball  
Bowling  
Powerlifting  
Volleyball



## Opportunities to Get Involved

**Athlete** – a participant with intellectual disabilities, email [emilyp@soct.org](mailto:emilyp@soct.org)

**Unified Sports® Partner** – a participant without intellectual disabilities, email [troys@soct.org](mailto:troys@soct.org)

**Coach** – experienced or non-experienced coaches, training and certification classes offered, email [derrickf@soct.org](mailto:derrickf@soct.org)

**Volunteer** – short- and long-term opportunities available, email [kathryny@soct.org](mailto:kathryny@soct.org)

**Health Volunteer** – help meet the needs of our athletes, email [caitlind@soct.org](mailto:caitlind@soct.org)

**Fundraiser** – support our Penguin Plunge, Over the Edge, Plane Pull and Law Enforcement Torch Run events and more throughout the year, email [jackiet@soct.org](mailto:jackiet@soct.org)

**Sponsor** – support a sports or special event, opportunities at all levels, email [sharonr@soct.org](mailto:sharonr@soct.org)

**Donor** – make a donation and enrich the life of an athlete and become a champion for inclusion, email [christym@soct.org](mailto:christym@soct.org)

For every \$1 donated, 77 cents directly impacts our athletes.

Learn more: [soct.org](http://soct.org) \* Email us: [specialolympicsct@soct.org](mailto:specialolympicsct@soct.org)

Connect with us:

