

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

In November 2019, the Special Olympics Indiana Board of Directors amended the SOIN bylaws to ensure that athletes are heard in deciding the direction of the organization. In May 2021, the board also approved the athlete-led recommendation requiring every county program to have an Athlete Leadership Council by the end of 2022.

ARTICLE I — PURPOSE

SOIN believes that participating athletes have an important voice in making decisions on how to grow and improve the SOIN Program. The best way to ensure athletes' opinions are heard and impact every level of the organization is to implement Athlete Leadership Councils (ALC) for all levels of the organization.

An ALC is a group of athletes who meet using a pre-determined agenda to discuss Special Olympics topics important to them and make recommendations to the State and/or County Program leadership. The ALC is designed to give every SOIN athlete a vehicle to communicate their ideas and concerns.

ARTICLE II — ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

With SOIN athletes recruited and trained at the local level, all SOIN County Programs are required to form a county ALC, creating an avenue by which athletes are allowed to express their opinions and provide feedback. A county ALC meets routinely through the year, providing feedback to their respective County Management Team. A county ALC meeting may be open to all registered athletes of that program, or a targeted group (such as basketball teams). Annually, each county ALC elects a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

SO Indiana will host at least one in-person Indiana ALC meeting per year, open to the chairperson from each county's ALC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations on SO Indiana policies, programs, events, issues and initiatives. If a county ALC chairperson is unavailable to attend the Indiana ALC, the vice-chairperson may attend. Additional Indiana ALC meetings may be held as needed by conference call with elected representatives of the Indiana ALC. The athlete representative(s) on the SOIN Board of Directors will serve as the Indiana ALC chairperson (and vice-chairperson).

Items for the agenda can be recommended by any Indiana ALC member and/or the CEO of SOIN. The Chairperson and CEO will decide the final agenda. Recommendations of the Indiana ALC will be made to the CEO and reported to the Board of Directors by the Indiana ALC Chairperson.

ARTICLE III — ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from an ALC will be given due consideration by the appropriate level of SOIN management. ALC recommendations are considered by the SOIN staff. ALC members can expect to be provided with a follow-up response from management.

ALC members are asked to understand that not all recommendations will be accepted. These members can expect to be provided with a rationale for any recommendation not accepted.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

COUNTY ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

1. County Athlete Leadership Council meetings must be held at least twice a year but can be held more often.
2. County ALC meetings may be open to any interested athlete in the County Program, or a targeted group (such as basketball teams, athletes over age 40, athletes who attend Athlete Leadership University). Participants in a county ALC should be at least 16 years old.
3. Items for the agenda can be submitted by the athletes and/or the county management team.
4. At the first ALC meeting, the group should elect an athlete to be chairperson. The athlete receiving the second most votes will serve as the vice-chairperson. It is recommended that officer elections are held in November or December.
 - A. The ALC chairperson is the official representative of the county program for the annual Indiana Athlete Leadership Council meeting.
 - B. An athlete elected as chairperson may serve as the chairperson and member of the Indiana ALC for a term of up to three years, after which they must rotate out of the role for at least one year. At the conclusion of three years, SOIN will notify the County Coordinator.
 - C. The ALC chairperson is usually included as a member of the county management team.
 - D. Athletes serving as chair and vice-chair are encouraged to attend Athlete Leadership University for Governance training.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

5. The county management team should work with the ALC to provide a volunteer facilitator who assists the chairperson in planning the meeting, taking notes, and supporting the work of the group without inserting their own opinions into the discussion.
6. By a majority vote, ALCs may make recommendations to the county management team at regularly scheduled meetings.
7. County programs document their required ALC activities by submitting meeting minutes to the designated person at SOIN.

INDIANA ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

1. SOIN will host an annual full-day ALC meeting open to the chairperson from each county's ALC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, and initiatives.
 - a. The vice-chairperson of a county ALC may attend if the chair is unable to attend.
 - b. The Indiana ALC is held annually in conjunction with the SOIN State Conference.
 - c. During the annual ALC in-person meeting, athletes from each area will select one member to participate in quarterly conference calls to review progress on recommendations and plan the annual meeting.
 - d. Agenda items for the annual meeting can be recommended by any Indiana ALC member and/or the CEO of SOIN. The chairperson and CEO will decide the final agenda. The agenda will routinely include discussion of SOIN Strategic Plan.
2. The athlete(s) currently serving on the SOIN Board of Directors shall serve as chairperson (and vice-chairperson).
3. All participants in the Indiana ALC will be provided Governance training by Athlete Leadership University instructors in conjunction with their attendance at the annual meeting.
4. Subject to the approval of SOIN, an ALC member who needs the support of a volunteer/mentor to meaningfully participate in the meeting may request such support.
5. Subject to the approval of the Indiana ALC, SOIN will appoint a facilitator and additional volunteers as needed to assist with meetings and calls.
6. Committees may be appointed by the chairperson to study and report on significant issues.
7. The Indiana ALC recommendation requires approval by a simple majority of ALC members in attendance at any annual meeting.
8. Recommendations of the Indiana ALC will be made to the CEO and reported to the SOIN Board of Directors by the ALC chairperson.
9. Members of the Indiana ALC will be primary candidates to serve on the SON Board of Directors.

