

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

PURPOSE

SOIN's work in Athlete Leadership empowers athletes to take on meaningful roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities across the state. Through leadership skills training and practical experience, athletes gain the confidence to use their talents and abilities in positions of influence and leadership throughout the Special Olympics organization, both on and off the playing field.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

SOIN offers programs that provide athletes the opportunity to learn, practice and use leadership skills. Through these programs, athletes find, create and re-imagine ways to contribute to the organization and their communities.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Athletes who participate in Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) discuss ideas and problems, respond to program proposals and make recommendations to the state office and county programs. Athletes have opportunities to participate in their county ALC and state ALC. The Special Olympics Indiana Board of Directors approved the athlete-led recommendation for every county program to have an ALC by the end of 2022. The Indiana ALC was reimagined in 2019 and added to the SO Indiana organizational by-laws. The policy provides guidelines to county programs for participation in the statewide ALC.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY

Indiana has been providing training in Athlete Leadership since 1997. The program was formalized and expanded in 2003 with the introduction of Athlete Leadership University, which provides education for athletes in a variety of leadership topics. Using a university model where athletes receive credit for attending courses and completing practical experience. Students can earn degrees in communication, events, governance, health and fitness, sports, technology, and visual arts.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP WEBINAR SERIES

Throughout the year, enrichment and professional development topics are offered in a virtual setting. Topics vary from leadership skills to health and wellness to issues that impact our communities.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

SOIN leadership programs support athletes throughout the state in a variety of meaningful roles. Some of the many roles in which athletes are currently serving are:

- Athlete Leadership Council members
- Global Messengers or public speakers
- Committee and Board members
- Coaches
- Health Messengers
- Technology specialists
- Storytellers through Visual Arts
- Fundraisers
- Social Influencers
- Emcees and event hosts
- Podcasters
- Event managers
- Volunteers
- Mentors
- Instructors



COUNTY PROGRAM CERTIFICATION

Area and County Programs that seek to involve athletes in leadership roles (coaches, volunteers, management team members, speakers, etc.) are required to have a management team member attend a two-hour certification session. During this training, the program's Athlete Leadership Coordinator will learn of the various roles available for athlete leaders, ALCs, Athlete Leadership University requirements, expectations for volunteers (mentors), and development of an action plan to meet these requirements.

The Athlete Leadership Certification is offered at the state conference and available for areas or counties (via Zoom) if multiple management team members are being trained.