

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS (ALC)

ALC Policy

On November 9, 2018 the SOIN Board of Directors amended the SOIN by-laws to ensure that athletes have input into the direction of the organization. On May 14, 2021, the Board of Directors approved the recommendation from the Indiana ALC to require all County Programs to have a local ALC.

ARTICLE I – Purpose

SOIN believes that participating athletes have an important role in making decisions on how to grow and improve the SOIN Program. The best way to ensure athletes' opinions are considered and impact every level of the organization is to implement **Athlete Leadership Councils** 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 is open to all registered athletes of that program.

SOIN will host at least one face-to-face **Indiana ALC** meeting per year open to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from each County Program's ALC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, and initiatives. Each County ALC has one vote to cast by the Chairperson. If a County ALC Chairperson is unavailable to attend the Indiana ALC, the Vice-Chairperson may cast the vote. Additional Indiana ALC meetings may be held as needed with elected representatives of the Indiana ALC. The athlete representative(s) on the SOIN Board of Directors serves as the Indiana ALC Chairperson (and Vice-Chairperson).

Items for the agenda of the annual Indiana ALC meeting are recommended by any Indiana ALC member and / or the CEO of SOIN. The Indiana ALC Chairperson and CEO decide the final agenda. Recommendations of the Indiana ALC are 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 are given due consideration by appropriate level of SOIN management. ALC recommendations are considered by the CEO of SOIN and select members

of the SOIN staff. The CEO of SOIN or a designated member of the SOIN staff submits a follow-up response to the ALC with a rationale for any recommendation not accepted for further consideration or implementation.

ALC Structure

The foundation of the ALC system is athletes at the county level discussing topics of interest and having input to their County Program. In addition, County ALCs participate in discussions regarding topics that have state-wide impact. Their ideas and feedback are brought to meetings of the Indiana ALC.

Members of the Indiana ALC have a final discussion considering the input of the County ALCs. Discussions conclude with a vote on which recommendations are given to State leadership.

Operating Guidelines

Complementing the SOIN by-laws, there are operating guidelines for the county and state level ALCs. The Indiana ALC approved revisions to the operating guidelines in March 2025.

County Athlete Leadership Councils

1. County ALC meetings must be held at least twice a year but can be held more often.
2. Participants in a County ALC must 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 County ALC meeting each year, the ALC selects an athlete to be Chairperson through a simple majority vote.
5. Candidates for Chairperson must be approved by the County Coordinator.
 - a. The athlete receiving the second most votes serves as the Vice-Chairperson. It is recommended that officers are selected before the first Indiana ALC meeting of the calendar year.
 - b. The ALC Chairperson is the official representative of the County Program for the annual Indiana Athlete Leadership Council meeting.
 - c. An athlete selected as Chairperson may serve on the Indiana ALC for no more than three consecutive years. After which they must rotate out of the role for at least one year.
 - d. The County ALC must submit list of ALC officers and a membership count at the beginning of each year.
 - e. It is recommended that the ALC Chairperson is a member of the County Management Team (CMT).
 - f. Athletes serving as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are encouraged to attend Athlete Leadership University for Governance training.

6. The CMT must 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 his/her own opinions into the discussion.
7. By a majority vote ALCs may make recommendations to the CMT at regularly scheduled CMT meetings.

Indiana Athlete Leadership Council

1. 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.
2. Subject to the approval of the Indiana ALC, SOIN will appoint a facilitator and additional volunteers as needed to assist with meetings and calls.
3. Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson to study and report on significant issues.
4. SOIN staff may request discussion topics for Indiana ALC meetings.
5. The Indiana ALC recommendation requires approval by a simple majority of ALC members in attendance at any annual meeting.
6. Members of the Indiana ALC may apply to serve on the SOIN Board of Directors.

ALC Inclusion

An ALC is not simply a box to check—it plays a valuable role in the makeup of a County Program. Effective two-way communication between the ALC and CMT is essential to sharing ideas and getting the input of athletes in the county. Working hand in hand strengthens collaboration and the partnership which helps both athletes and the County Program thrive.

Including the ALC Chairperson on the CMT is not just about having a seat at the table but giving true representation to the athletes served by the program. It is having the opinion of the athlete heard, acknowledged, and valued by all members of the County Program. It includes giving the ALC Chairperson:

- a vote in all matters relating to the local program
- time on the agenda to share updates, topics, or requests from the ALC
- information related to the athletes the need a vote or decision made

Athlete leaders remind us of the saying “Nothing about us without us.” Their contributions are essential to the long-term success of the organization.

If your county does not have an ALC, contact your Regional Manager for assistance.




**Special
Olympics**
Indiana
Athlete Leadership

