

SOSO AWARD CRITERIA



The Spirit of Special Olympics (SOSO) awards program recognizes athletes, coaches, families, volunteers and Law Enforcement Torch Run® officers who have demonstrated outstanding support of SOIN. Each accredited program is encouraged to nominate individuals from the following categories who have exemplified the Special Olympics spirit of skill, courage, sharing and joy, and demonstrated an overall commitment to the program.

GENERAL RULES

1. Nominations must be submitted to the State Office by **8:00 a.m. on Monday, April 6**, and should reflect achievements from the past year.
2. Nominations must include:
 - a. Nominees must be in good standing with Special Olympics (A person may only receive the State award once in the same category but may receive the Area award multiple times.)
 - b. Area Director or County Coordinator signature
 - c. Include a photo of nominee
 - d. Each nominee's nomination form must be completely filled out to be considered (Except for the Family Award, each person nominated must have their own nomination form filled out to be considered.)
3. Areas Management will select winners for each category. Members of the SOIN Board of Directors will review the nomination forms of the Area winners and select the State award winners.
4. **Notify all 2025 Area winners by May 17th. The State Office will contact Athlete Award winners about Summer Games participation on May 18th**

CRITERIA FOR THE ATHLETE AWARD

1. May be given to an individual of any ability level.
2. Describe the athlete's participation in a single sport or the number of sports in which the athlete trains and competes.
3. How much time, on average, does the athlete spend per week in training?
4. Describe any characteristics that demonstrate the athlete's leadership role among fellow athletes.
5. What are the levels of participation (personal achievements or best results) that the athlete has achieved at local, state or world activities and games?
6. What other roles or responsibilities has the athlete assumed within Special Olympics, such as Athlete Leadership, coaching, fundraising, council meetings, etc.?
7. What other responsibilities does the athlete have at home or in the community (i.e. church group, scouts, etc.)?

CRITERIA FOR THE COACH AWARD

1. Requirement: Must be a registered Class A volunteer.
2. What Special Olympics coach certifications has the nominee obtained?
3. How many years has the coach been involved in SOIN?
4. If the coach currently has an athlete in their family, in what sports is the athlete involved?
5. If the coach does not have an athlete in their family involved, what motivates them to continue to coach athletes?
6. Describe the coach's abilities to impact the training of athletes.

CRITERIA FOR THE FAMILY AWARD

1. Requirement: Must have an athlete in the family.
2. Describe to what extent all family members (beyond the parents) are involved with the athlete.
3. Describe the family's participation in a sport or multiple sports in which the family trains athletes to compete.
4. How many years has the family been involved in SOIN activities and sports?
5. Has the family initiated a new program or refined an existing activity? If so, please describe.
6. Describe the impact of the family's involvement with athletes.
7. Describe the impact and support to other parents or groups in their Area.

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CRITERIA FOR THE VOLUNTEER AWARD

1. Requirement: Must be a registered Class A Volunteer.
2. Describe the volunteer's role in the Area or County SOIN program.
3. How many years has the volunteer been actively involved with SOIN?
4. How much time, on average, does the volunteer spend per week with SOIN activities or games?
5. Describe the type and extent of the volunteer's involvement, for example, as a Unified Sports® partner, chairperson of an event, etc.?
6. Describe the volunteer's outreach to other volunteers and impact on the awareness of SOIN in the community.

CRITERIA FOR THE UNIFIED PARTNER AWARD

1. Requirement: Must be a registered Class A, Unified Partner
2. Describe the partner's role in the County SOIN program.
3. How many years has the partner been actively involved with SOIN?
4. How much time, on average, does the partner spend per week training for SOIN activities or games?
5. Describe any characteristics that demonstrate the partner's leadership role among fellow competitors.
6. What are the levels of participation (personal achievements or best results) that the partner has achieved at local, state or world activities and games?
7. What other roles or responsibilities has the partner assumed within Special Olympics?