

2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN



**Special
Olympics**
Pennsylvania





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Introduction

The 2021-24 Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) Strategic Plan was developed with the intention of aligning with the broad elements of the Special Olympics Global Strategic Plan, but with a keen focus on achieving goals and outcomes relevant to the work needed to be undertaken in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The process of collecting feedback and insights from many stakeholders throughout the state helped provide important guidance.

It takes thousands of dedicated volunteers working in partnership with state and local staff to deliver the Special Olympics mission throughout the Commonwealth. This led to significant progress against the three interrelated goals from the previous 2016-20 Strategic Plan, but there is so much more we need to do together.

The 2021-24 Strategic Plan is a 1-2-3 approach incorporating one Vision, two Goals, and three Primary Areas of Emphasis. These will be achieved through the employment of three strategies and support of four enablers.



VISION

Our vision is an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live active, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

This vision is the foundation upon which the 2021-24 strategic plan is built, and emanates from the mission of Special Olympics:

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.



GOALS

Fulfilling such a broad and impactful vision requires the following two goals which will keep everyone focused and working towards common desired results.

Goal 1: *Improve local sports participation and well-being to strengthen communities, bringing sports training, competition, and adjacent programming to as many people with and without intellectual disabilities as possible.*

Goal 2: *Remove barriers to inclusion and expand reach through digital technology, using the global technological advances to develop opportunities previously thought unimaginable.*



While there are many strategies and programs contained in the strategic plan to reach the two goals, there are three primary and critical areas of emphasis. These are fundamental to the health, welfare, and needs of people with intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania, as well as creating more inclusive communities.

Health and Fitness: People with intellectual disabilities face alarming rates of chronic health conditions which lead to a reduced life expectancy of 20 years shorter than people without intellectual disabilities. Tragically, many of these can be prevented or lessened with interventions, including sport, fitness, and health programs offered by SOPA. There needs to be a consistent and driving force to both save and improve the quality of life for every athlete who participates in SOPA.

Inclusive: Inclusive communities lead to more opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, and ensure they are respected and contributing members. Using platforms such as Unified Sports, Unified Champion Schools, athlete leadership, Healthy Communities, and others lead to the empowerment of Special Olympics athletes. Further, inclusive communities create a legion of enthusiastic advocates through their participation as Unified partners, volunteers, and supporters.

More and Better through Regionalization: Regionalization provides a system and structure which unites SOPA as ONE and elevates resources and efficiencies for local programs. This provides current athletes with more and better sports training and competition experiences; fitness; health and wellness; and leadership development opportunities. It also allows additional athletes with intellectual disabilities to be served and receive the benefits of participation.

In the past several decades, we have discovered that there are two key ingredients to Special Olympics success. When an activity emphasizes the following two elements, promoting inclusion through sport becomes a reality:

- 1** Frequent opportunities for training, physical activity, and improvement of health for participants; and
- 2** Meaningful social interactions between people with and without intellectual disabilities on and off the sports field.

Thanks to the collective work of so many athletes, family members, volunteers, and staff, SOPA has been leading positive social change through sport in all communities of Pennsylvania. With presence in all parts of the state, our challenge is to become the most effective and sustainable community-based inclusion organization.

Pursuing the Vision and Implementing Goals

The 2021-24 Strategic Plan builds upon our successes and learnings over the past several years. The overall framework for our plan includes one vision statement, two overarching goals, and three areas of emphasis. All are implemented through three programmatic strategies with the support of four enablers.

The three following **strategies** are closely aligned with the vision and mission statements in pursuit of the two goals:



Improve the quality and reach of local programming. Having a laser focus on expanding and deepening SOPA's presence in local communities and improving the quality and frequency of sports are our primary areas of concern for the next four years.



Empower athlete leaders and other change makers. Special Olympics athletes are not only the most resilient sportsmen and sportswomen, but also incredible leaders and role models when given a chance. Providing volunteers, families, teachers, and other community members with tools and support on becoming more effective and persuasive leaders is needed to introduce the wider communities to athlete leadership capabilities on the playing field, in workplaces, and throughout the larger community.



Foster inclusive practices and settings. From the local to the state level, SOPA will play a larger role in creating an enabling environment for people with intellectual disabilities. This includes bringing about more systemic change through partners, organizational networks, and government so SOPA athletes can flourish on and off the playing field. This strategy is an important part of ensuring mainstreaming and sustainability of our effort.

Four **enablers** are identified to create the necessary resources to support the work delineated in the strategic plan:



Digitize the Movement: Improve the use of technology across our organization internally and in public activities to reach as many people as possible. This is a cross-cutting enabler that should be brought into all strategies and used in all other enablers.



Diversify Revenue: Expand the number and types of our donors to include more government, non-government, and private funding through innovative fundraising mechanisms.



Build the Brand: Use the uniqueness and reputation of the Special Olympics brand to reach more people with stronger messages of inclusion, calling all stakeholders for action to fight exclusion and discrimination.



Drive Excellence: Provide support, training, and resource development to local programs to assist with the implementation of higher standards which leads to improved quality, knowledge expansion, and the capacity of volunteers and staff. Additionally, promote good project management practices to work smarter.

Conclusion

We don't just want to be an organization that organizes sports activities for people with intellectual disabilities without their integration into an improved, more inclusive society. We want to be known as the leader for inclusion through sport that elevates and shows leadership of people with intellectual disabilities through their abilities, resilience, and kindness. The data received through outcome-based evaluation will demonstrate the lasting impact of our work and allow us to use our resources more effectively.

This strategic plan supports our intention to increase the quality of life of our athletes and meaningful inclusion into the wider society. We will put our athlete leaders at the front of every decision we make and include them in the decision-making process so that they become the true owners of our organization.

We will integrate SOPA into the fabric of every community in Pennsylvania and use the power of partnerships and technology to facilitate this process. This approach will make SOPA the most recognizable nonprofit brand that attracts many more athletes, families, volunteers, donors, and organizational partners than ever before.

All the elements of this four-year plan are deeply interconnected with the purpose of reducing silos and avoiding waste of resources and duplication of effort. If the three programmatic strategies are implemented well and guided by outcome-level data, then the productivity of existing resources should increase and generate more impact.



Measuring Progress Against the Plan

A companion scorecard has been created that breaks the plan down into annual measurables and associated action items for each of the four years. We will use this document as an ongoing living blueprint to monitor progress and adjust approaches as necessary.

Within the strategic plan, each of the three strategies and four enablers have Focus Areas, which consist of tactics and measurable indicators of success. This is designed to organize work under common themes, and provide clear benchmarks pertaining to the effectiveness of executing tactics.



STRATEGY 1: Improve quality and reach of local programming

SOPA will focus on sustainable development of local programming that benefits everyone in the community. This means focusing on the organization and expansion of activities in diverse urban and rural communities to enable lifelong athlete involvement in quality sports as participants and leaders and actively promote healthy lifestyles and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.



FOCUS 1: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

When developing this strategy, we heard that our athletes' biggest concern was related to the quality and frequency of training. Athletes want to see more and better training and competition in all sports, including traditional and Unified Sports. This focus area will enable us to reach many more athletes than before and improve their health and well-being.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- All active training sites will undergo a bi-annual Training Site Assessment to ensure standards are being met; follow-up action plans will be implemented as needed. Regions will provide at least 2 competition opportunities for all athletes per sport. In addition, they will host Regional competitions for each sponsored sport.
- Increase the number of initial allocations at State events by 4-12% overall (1-3% each year), where budget permits.
- Unified Sports
 - All local programs/regions offer at least one community based Unified Sport.
 - Regions in their second year will sponsor at least one Unified team sport. By year 3 they will have at least 3 teams in that sport and offer league play.
 - Each region that has been active for at least 2 years offers Unified opportunities and competition in 25% of their sponsored sports.



FOCUS 2:

EMPOWER ATHLETES TO LEAD LONG, HEALTHY LIVES AND COMPETE AT THE TOP OF THEIR ATHLETIC ABILITY

Good general health is an important prerequisite for Special Olympics athletes' success and many factors are at play: accessibility and effectiveness of public and private healthcare, the level of athlete fitness, healthy eating habits and a support system around the athlete.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Increase health screenings by 1,200 totaling 3,300 by the end of 2024.
- Increase Healthy Habits and/or Performance Stations by 75% to be hosted at 35 total competitions.
- Add at least 865 new providers to the network totaling 1,030 providers.
- At least 75% of training sites have integrated Athlete Performance Training into their sports season.
- Athletes and coaches statewide use the SO Fit Now app.
- 25% of active athletes are tracking goals in a SOPA system (i.e.: VSys, GMS).



FOCUS 3:

INCREASE ATHLETE NUMBERS BY UTILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Partners and communities have always played a big role in the volunteer-driven model of Special Olympics. SOPA will continue to use these important resources to promote and scale our activities.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Increase the number of SOPA athletes by 23% to 21,000.
- Retain 80% of athletes.
- Add at least 6 new Young Athletes sites totaling 19.
- Host a Young Athletes exhibition at one Eastern, one Central and one Western invitational/sectional competition, for a total of at least 5 exhibitions each year by the end of 2024.
- Transition 25% of active Unified Champion School participants to community-based programming.





**FOCUS 4:
INCREASE THE QUANTITY AND DIVERSITY OF PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS BY
UTILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

SOPA would not exist without the incredible efforts of our volunteers. Recruiting additional dedicated individuals allows us to be able to increase our capacity for more programs and activities. Using different approaches to attract new volunteers through existing networks and partners, as well as improved marketing, will help us achieve our vision faster.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Increase the number of new volunteers by 970 to support the projected athlete growth goal.



**FOCUS 5:
IMPLEMENT A VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (VEP) TO DEFINE THE
PROCESS TO ONBOARD NEW VOLUNTEERS AND MAINTAIN/RETAIN
CURRENT SOPA VOLUNTEERS**

Special Olympics PA sites have used various approaches to onboarding volunteers, causing inconsistent levels of performance and engagement. Additionally, there is a need to increase the percentage of volunteers who return each year. An improved and standardized approach and database will allow all sites to follow the same practices and better use valuable volunteer resources developed by SOPA.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Develop and implement standardized Region/Program volunteer onboarding, placement and tracking criteria.
- Identify retention baseline within established regions and increase that baseline year to year by collecting feedback from Class A coaches after the conclusion of their competition season.



**FOCUS 6:
INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COACHES AND PROVIDE HIGHER QUALITY OF
TRAINING**

Coaches are foundational for our sports organization. We will work on training more and better coaches to satisfy the ambition of increasing the number of sites and athletes.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Increase the number of coaches and their certification status: recruit 400 first time certified coaches; reach 50% certification status for current coaches; retain 80% of current coaches.
- Add 80 new coaches to the Coach Training and Progression Plan (CTPP); 50 Bronze level, 20 Silver level, 10 Gold level.
- To allow better access to sport certification training, regions will create a consistent schedule per season.
- Increase opportunities for online continuing education by 10% per year and provide sport specific Advanced Education videos or Clinics for all sports.



STRATEGY 2: Empower Athlete Leaders and Other Change Makers

SOPA will 'Lead Unified' and 'Work Unified', creating inclusive communities where everyone's skills and gifts are valued.

In the previous Strategic Plan, Special Olympics stated that when the world sees the talents of our athletes, attitudes are changed. Unfortunately, we have seen that changed attitudes do not always and automatically change practices and policies in communities to integrate people with intellectual disabilities into all areas of life in meaningful ways. Such change requires leadership, skills and, most importantly, intention on the part of community and company leaders. The focus of Strategy 2 will move more towards influencing people without intellectual disabilities to behave more inclusively. Through active social interaction and the leadership of people with and without intellectual disabilities, the values and needs of our athletes are better understood and embraced.



FOCUS 1: ADOPT UNIFIED LEADERSHIP WHICH WILL ACTIVATE MORE ATHLETES, CREATE ADDITIONAL ATHLETE LEADERSHIP ROLES, AND SHOWCASE TALENTS TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE ON AND OFF THE PLAYING FIELD

Seeing Special Olympics athletes on the playing field provides inspiration and joy, as well as showing their resiliency. However, when people interact with athletes on the playing field, at work, or in the community, they learn so much more about who they are as well as their many talents. This is why athlete leadership and Unified Leadership (leadership of people without ID) go hand in hand to create truly inclusive communities.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Offer Athlete Leadership University sessions each year in-person and/or virtually to train 168 Athlete Leaders.
- The Center for Unified Leadership will analyze content from each Athlete Leadership University session to improve curriculum and resources provided to Athlete Leaders and Mentors.
- Recruit at least 25 new Mentors for interested Athlete Leaders.
- Athlete Leaders work with staff to organize and co-facilitate sessions at Leadership Conference during non-Athlete Congress years to better engage all attendees.
- Create at least one formal athlete volunteer leadership position within the state Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) leadership team.
- Initiate Athlete Fellowship position within SOPA Development Office with sustainable funding (3-year commitment).



**FOCUS 2:
UTILIZE UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS (UCS) STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP YOUTH LEADERS WITH AND WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE**

Unified Champion Schools provide meaningful inclusive sports and co-leadership opportunities for SOPA athletes and their peers without intellectual disabilities. Through the implementation of UCS programming, school climates become more socially inclusive. Additionally, we seek to create meaningful leadership opportunities and roles for UCS high school and SO College participants in local programs and regional offices.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Add a minimum of 40 schools per year to include elementary, middle and high schools. UCS will have representation in 53 counties.
- Active Unified programming in elementary and middle schools in 15% of UCS districts.
- Achieve sustainability in 50% of high schools. Sustainability is defined as a school which fully funds, manages, and staffs its UCS program.
- Active Youth Leadership clubs in 90% of returning high schools and 50% of new schools on an annual basis; clubs will run at least 3 Whole School Engagement activities per year.
- As regions activate, create a Regional Youth Advisory Committee to work with Regional Staff on transition, sustainability and building community based Unified offerings.
- Active youth leaders on Local Program committees (event, fundraising) within each region.
- 35 colleges will be recognized as SO Colleges.



**STRATEGY 3:
Foster Inclusive Practices and Settings**

SOPA will work with targeted government entities and organizations to (1) tackle injustice and inequality and (2) create more access to services and opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. By serving as an inclusion catalyst in non-sport sectors, SOPA is helping to facilitate more inclusive opportunities for athletes.



**FOCUS 1:
UTILIZE CITIES OF INCLUSION (COI) TO HELP DRIVE SOPA'S CORE WORK IN PHILADELPHIA, PITTSBURGH AND YORK**

SOPA will utilize Cities of Inclusion as a platform to advance its work in three primary areas.

Education: We will work in partnership with the school districts of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and York to bring Unified Champion Schools into every eligible school. This will serve as an important means for engaging youth in the process of making their cities more inclusive.

Health: We will expand health care access and provide fitness/wellness programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Community-Based Unified Sports: We will provide accessible inclusive sport and recreation opportunities so that more people with and without intellectual disabilities benefit from engagement with each other.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Unify the entire School District of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the greater York area by implementing UCS in all schools with a measurable population of students with intellectual disabilities.
- Develop partnerships with the Department of Parks and Recreation in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and York.
- Offer Unified Sports programming in at least 3 new sites within Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.



FOCUS 2: REMOVE BARRIERS FOR ATHLETE PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

SOPA will create age and ability matched team sport opportunities for younger athletes (ages 8 - 14). Children frequently struggle with finding teams where they can compete with peers of similar abilities and age. Additionally, athletes of all ages will be better engaged through accessible materials such as using 'easy language' formats.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Create regional training opportunities for 8-14 age groups in 2 of the 3 training seasons.
- Written, graphic and video materials produced and shared by SOPA are easily understood by a wide range of athletes.
- Ensure multi-language materials are available for regions that cater to broad bi-lingual audiences.





FOCUS 3:
**BROADEN AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENT, HEALTH,
SPORTS, AND COMMUNITY ENTITIES**

Support and engagement of government, health, sports, and community stakeholders is vital for the success of this strategic plan and sustainability. Their active involvement will ensure that SOPA is included in their plans and invited to the table for key decisions affecting the lives and future of people with intellectual disabilities.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Create and launch an Executive Advisory Council (EAC) in the Greater Lehigh Valley and Pocono Region, followed by the establishment of EACs in all future regions.
- Create and launch the Pittsburgh COI Executive Council and the City of York COI Executive Council.
- Engage Executive Council/EAC members to establish at least 5 new corporate partnership agreements, including both program and funding opportunities.
- Key urban areas, starting first with Philadelphia, are recognized as “Cities of Inclusion.”
- Trademark “Cities of Inclusion” with SOI legal department.
- Utilize COI standards document to focus and define the work of the Cities of Inclusion initiative.
- Secure resources and potential funding opportunities with 4 sports National Governing Bodies (NGB).
- Partner with 3 state level organizations to enhance state events, recruit volunteers and further develop coach education offerings.





ENABLER 1: Digitize the Movement

We need to ensure people with intellectual disabilities, and the Special Olympics movement, are not left behind as technology becomes omnipresent. We have an opportunity to significantly increase the reach and effectiveness of our work using digital solutions that meet the future demands of our existing stakeholders, and enable us to connect with more athletes, families and coaches. We need to invest time and resources into an analysis of our current platforms, identification of gaps and opportunities, and collaborate with external providers to create effective solutions.



FOCUS 1:

PRIORITIZE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS THAT CREATE A SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMMUNITY BY ENABLING COMMUNICATION, INTERACTION AND LEARNING THROUGH SECURE ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

There are two key tactics which fall under this focus. First, state/regional websites, social media structures, and media resources look professional, use proper branding, and are of high quality. Second, we will use social media more effectively statewide to attract target audiences through marketing and communications.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- As a region becomes active, ensure that a consistently branded website (total of 9 regional websites by 2024) and social media structures are established, increasing statewide visibility.
- Guidelines for regional website and social media implementation, maintenance and growth are created, and the process frequently assessed.
- Develop and execute a state and regional social media plan for public relations outcomes and create content that engages people outside of the movement and attracts their attention.
- Increase social media engagement by 20% (5% annually).



FOCUS 2:

MAXIMIZE SOPA SOFTWARE EFFICIENCIES

SOPA will evaluate and maximize efficiency of its software systems. Ensuring our databases are configured and maintained in a way to support our work will reduce human error, allow for more automated grant reporting on compliance, streamline the budgeting process, and substantially ease workload for both staff and volunteers.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Develop a cross departmental and collaborative team of staff currently working with SOPA data to regularly review the use, maintenance, and storage of data, and to identify challenges, needs and efficiencies. This process will culminate in annual plans for VSys, GMS, Raiser's Edge, Classy, Microix and Success Factors.



FOCUS 3:
INCREASE ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

SOPA will identify gaps in access and technology in regions and local programs throughout the state. Resources will be cultivated to provide solutions and meet the identified needs. Additionally, education and training opportunities must be provided to enhance technology usage. The lack of digital fluency – or knowledge of how to use technology to serve various purposes – frequently becomes the biggest barrier to unleashing its potential.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Complete a technology needs assessment for existing regions and within each local program.
- Secure at least \$25,000 per year in financial support for technology and capacity building.
- Create an educational library of resources available to volunteers and athletes based on varying levels of experience to increase comfort in working with technology.



ENABLER 2: Diversify Revenue

SOPA will utilize new and different strategic approaches to raise funds from diverse revenue sources while also continuing to propel forward with fundraising around the pillars of the Inclusion Revolution campaign. This will enable us to generate sustainable financial support and quickly react to change.



FOCUS 1:
BUILD AND STRENGTHEN A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY FOR SOPA STAFF AND KEY VOLUNTEER STAKEHOLDERS

We will promote a culture of philanthropy among key SOPA stakeholders, with a focus on board members, staff and LETR officers.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Transition the Inclusion Revolution Campaign into an ongoing fundraising vehicle and communication platform to 1) broaden and strengthen understanding of SOPA’s cause, 2) support specific annual statewide and regional goals, and 3) demonstrate the impact of contributions.
- Develop solicitation and stewardship teams comprised of key SOPA staff and volunteers, for at least 10 priority donor accounts which include corporate, government, foundation & individual funding sources.
- Expand LETR officers across the state by 10%.
- Engage LETR representatives in all nine SOPA regions, with a focus on community engagement opportunities, local program volunteering, Sectional and State competition events.
- Establish an LETR organizational chart, training program, and succession plan for state and regional LETR membership.
- Offer annual education opportunities for SOPA Board and staff members on pertinent topics specific to philanthropy.
- 100% of SOPA Board and staff members will make a gift to the Inclusion Revolution Campaign.



FOCUS 2:

SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE INCLUSION REVOLUTION CAMPAIGN AND CONVERT EXISTING DONORS INTO ANNUAL OR MULTI-YEAR SUPPORTERS, MAKING MAJOR GIFTS OF \$1,000+ DIRECTLY TO SOPA

SOPA will secure a total of \$1.75MM in corporate multi-year commitments; \$550,000 in individual gifts with at least \$300,000 comprised of gifts of more than \$5,000; and \$750,000 in significant commitments from key foundations.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Renew at least 75% of all expiring multi-year corporate and individual commitments each year.
- Add \$250,000 in new or expanded commitments from at least 10 corporations per year.
- Add \$185,000 in new or expanded individual gifts per year for three years.
- Clarify key foundation targets and develop a rolling list of opportunities, submitting at least five \$50,000+ proposals and a total of \$500,000 in asks each year to qualified foundation targets.



FOCUS 3:

LAUNCH THE SUE PATERNO ENDOWMENT FUND

The Sue Paterno Endowment fund will benefit Special Olympics Pennsylvania in perpetuity. Each year, a portion of the earned interest of the invested gift will be used to support athletes to improve their health and fitness, develop leadership skills, connect with others (those with and without intellectual disabilities) – all through competitive sports.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Secure at least \$500,000 in assets for the Fund.



FOCUS 4:

CULTIVATE AND CONVERT SOI'S INTEGRATED DIRECT MARKETING PROGRAM (IDMP) HIGH DOLLAR DONORS TO DIRECT SOPA DONORS

SOPA will fully operationalize development office processes for IDMP donor conversion with performance metrics for development staff.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Track assigned IDMP donor value rates per year, with annual growth targets established.





FOCUS 5:
**REFOCUS STATE FUNDRAISING EVENTS TO OPTIMIZE REVENUE AND LOCAL/
REGIONAL REVENUE SHARE OPPORTUNITIES**

SOPA will grow revenues from state fundraising events to \$2 million and strengthen existing state competition events as fundraising vehicles. Additionally, improved region-based revenue share models will be developed.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Develop and execute annual revenue growth strategies for Philadelphia Plunge, Pittsburgh Plunge and Beaver Stadium Run to reach \$1.75 million combined gross revenues.
- Add two new annual events to the state fundraising event portfolio to achieve at least \$250,000 in net revenues.
- Establish statewide Sponsor Benefits packages for SOPA's state competition events, with an annual fundraising goal of \$250,000 gross / \$175,000 net over existing sponsor revenues.
- Secure a cumulative total of \$400,000 in new revenue. Of this new revenue, at least 50% will be shared with regions and/or local programs.



ENABLER 3: Build the Brand

SOPA will increase awareness of the brand through existing and innovative digital and traditional channels to enhance relevance and influence. The goal is to attract more people and enlist new audiences, especially at the community level.



FOCUS 1:
**CONNECT DONORS TO THE MOVEMENT THROUGH INCREASED AWARENESS,
COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

We seek to increase the awareness of special events and initiate strategic donor communications.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Increase digital donor engagement 12% (3% annually) by participating in organic, SOI-driven and IDMP campaigns year-round, and creating triannual donor communications.
- Develop and execute a marketing plan to successfully promote the public phase of the Inclusion Revolution Major Gifts Campaign and help increase the donor participation rate.



FOCUS 2: IMPROVE EXTERNAL AWARENESS THROUGH PUBLIC RELATIONS, CELEBRITIES AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Statewide marketing and media partnership strategies will be employed to increase awareness of SOPA to recruit volunteers and athletes. SOPA's existing Games, competitions and programmatic offerings will be used to include more sports, entertainment and media celebrities.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Develop and execute a marketing plan that includes increasing Games and programmatic promotion, as well as raising the awareness of the Unified Sports program and Unified Sports Experiences on the state and regional level.
- Promote year-round, life-long fitness through the development of tools for recruitment and education, digital and online sharing, and new resources for at-home/in-person fitness training, competition and community activities.
- Build a pool of 12 additional highly talented celebrities to serve in external ambassador roles at all levels.
- Generate high-level media placements in print, broadcast and digital media that emphasize athletes/volunteers and programmatic offerings. Increase media impressions by 20% (5% annually) and track success.
- Publicize the Unified Leadership culture through mini marketing campaigns and media pitches to encourage inclusive climates.
- Develop an LETR social media strategy to develop meaningful, easily accessible content that activates LETR members statewide and highlights their relationships with our athletes at competition and fundraising events.





**FOCUS 3:
ELEVATE THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS BRAND BY USING CITIES OF INCLUSION (COI) TO POSITION SOPA AS A COMMUNITY LEADER**

Cities of Inclusion will be leveraged to convene the broader community, amplifying our voice and establishing SOPA as a leader in advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Host COI Summits in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and York, with targeted representation in each market. These are based on securing appropriate funding and partnership development timelines.
- Leverage the “Flame of Hope” stop in Philadelphia on the Final Leg for the 2022 USA Games to highlight COI efforts in the city.
- Work with Philadelphia250 to include COI milestones as part of the city’s celebration of the nation’s 250th anniversary in 2026.



ENABLER 4: Drive to Excellence

Seeking to do more and be better, SOPA’s regionalization will provide the essential infrastructure to elevate quality, reach more athletes, and access more funding and resources through increased partnerships and donors. Additionally, we must improve how we recruit and work with diverse staff, coaches and volunteers, and ensure they have the tools and skills necessary to achieve a commitment to excellence in program delivery. This leads to the success of our programs in sports, health, youth and leadership.



**FOCUS 1:
IMPLEMENT STATEWIDE REGIONALIZATION FOR IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY AND ALIGNMENT**

SOPA will launch nine regions that are fully staffed. Goals per region are identified in year one which will assure financial sustainability. The first region, Greater Lehigh Valley and Pocono, went live in January 2020. Due to COVID, no new regions were launched in 2021.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Successfully launch all 9 regions:
 - *2 regions begin Jan. 2022*
 - *3 regions begin Jan. 2023*
 - *3 regions begin Jan. 2024*



FOCUS 2:

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF SOPA STATEWIDE DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS TO IDENTIFY EFFICIENCIES / REDUCE DUPLICATION; IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH DONORS, REGIONS AND LOCAL PROGRAMS; AND GROW REVENUES

Tactics include (1) implementing standard development operations across the state in order to reduce inefficiencies and time spent on training and troubleshooting; and (2) creating a statewide stewardship and cultivation plan to foster increased engagement and giving to SOPA.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Finalize a clear and up-to-date fundraising guidebook and ancillary documents which provide standardized training for staff and volunteers.
- Develop a calendar of meetings with local programs, regions and state stakeholders to alleviate challenges with following policies and procedures.
- Create and implement a plan to best identify, qualify, cultivate and steward major gift prospects.
- Create a comprehensive communications calendar for all SOPA donors and key stakeholders.
- Integrate more localized communication to donors which align with SOPA communication strategies.



FOCUS 3:

PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY

SOPA will cultivate and support the growth of diverse leaders at all levels by providing ongoing, graduated learning opportunities that further professional development and performance. This includes enhancing the diversity and effectiveness of the Board of Directors.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Active individual professional development plans are in place for 100% of SOPA staff.
- Identify and activate staff on internal and external development opportunities.
- Form a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee of the Board. Members will include current Board members, staff, athletes and volunteers.
- Identify and connect staff to training and development opportunities and networks through SOI or regional Special Olympics Programs.
- Develop and implement a plan to improve diversity hiring practices.
- The President and CEO develops and maintains succession plans for the CEO and key SOPA leadership positions.



FOCUS 4:

ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKING IS GUIDED BY THE COLLECTION OF DATA AND EVALUATION OF INFORMATION

We will strengthen outcome evaluation & research, and use results data to inform strategies and activities. Strong data will help demonstrate that Special Olympics is an absolutely crucial contributor to a sustainably improved quality of life for athletes and the people around them. Evaluation results will be used to drive decisions, determine priority needs in education, health, and athlete leadership, and demonstrate impact and return on investment to current and potential funding and program resource partners.

Key indicators of success over the next four years include:

- Develop and implement an evaluation tool to assess SOPA programming impact by region.
- Review fitness and health data collected from athletes annually to modify programming and demonstrate impact.
- Use data collected by SOI's national UCS research partner, as well as any evaluations conducted on behalf of SOPA, to assess UCS program impact and make any necessary changes to improve outcomes.
- Create and conduct research studies through the Center for Unified Leadership to evaluate athlete leadership programs and Unified Leadership outcomes.
- Use an attitude research study to measure the impact of Cities of Inclusion over time.





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The strategic plan reflects the collective thinking of our athletes, volunteers, Board members, and staff. Our process included the recommendations of these groups and input from various other stakeholders. Thanks to everyone in our SOPA community who participated and contributed.



2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

