



House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
Pre-budget Consultation Process for 2018 Federal Budget

Submission from
Special Olympics Canada
July 27, 2017



Executive Summary - Federal Government Funding Request

Beginning in 2018, Special Olympics Canada asks the Federal Government to **renew and increase incremental funding, over a four-year period, to support the continued growth and on-going delivery of high-impact,**

cost-effective, community-based programs for athletes with an intellectual disability. Request of annual incremental funding for a four-year total of \$14.0 million as follows:

2018-2019 - \$3,325,000
2019-2020 - \$3,415,000
2020-2021 - \$3,515,000
2021-2022 - \$3,745,000

The impact and benefits of sport are multi-dimensional. For athletes with an intellectual disability the impact is even more far reaching. Special Olympics develops healthier athletes with life-long physical fitness habits and instills confidence, self-esteem and other life skills. These attributes extend far beyond the field of play and establish lasting positive impacts for the individual, their families and their communities. Special Olympics contributes to social change by transforming attitudes and creating a more inclusive society that combats negative stereotypes and misperceptions. Special Olympics builds communities by bringing people together and promoting volunteerism and civic engagement. **In order for these benefits to be sustained and extended, continued support is required to ensure both the quality and the growth of sport programs that contribute to personal development and productivity and result in building stronger, more inclusive Canadian communities.**

In each of our twelve provincial / territorial chapters, more athletes are experiencing the transformative power and joy of sport, yet the potential and the need to provide more opportunities for more people are so significant. Special Olympics is the largest organization in Canada dedicated to providing quality sport programs and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. Our community based programs reach athletes ages 2 to as high as mid-80's. Considering the low economic status of the vast majority of people with intellectual disabilities, we are proud to offer our programs at no to little cost – no person is denied access to our programs because they can't afford it. From early childhood physical literacy to sport participation at a recreational level to pursuit of a competitive pathway that can lead to representing Canada on the world stage, Special Olympics is the only organization that provides grassroots programming and multi-level competitive opportunities for athletes with an intellectual disability, and we do so in 18 official summer and winter sports. **Special Olympics Canada is the sole organization providing a comprehensive playground to podium sport experience for Canadians with an intellectual disability.**

In 2018 Special Olympics will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Global Movement and we want to ensure that Canada remains an innovator in both its vision and actions toward a 'sport for all' Canadian sport system. As determined by a Bain and Company Ltd. pro bono study, every \$1 invested in Special Olympics Canada community sport programs results in more than \$7 of social return on investment through improved athlete health and employment. Investment in Special Olympics results in significant benefit to our athletes, their families, our volunteers and to society as a whole. **As current incremental funding sunsets in March 2018, we respectfully request the Government of Canada continue to provide incremental funds that will help to sustain our current momentum and further grow and enhance Special Olympics Canada as a leader in delivering sport opportunities that enrich the lives of Canadians with intellectual disabilities and in so doing, create more inclusive Canadian communities.**

Impact of 2014 Federal Budget Announcement

The Government of Canada supports our shared vision of 'sport for all', through its generous and on-going financial contribution to Special Olympics in Canada. In addition to annual funding through Sport Canada and as a result of Special Olympics Canada's Hill Day 2013, the Federal Government made an historic commitment to Special Olympics with the 2014 Federal Budget announcement confirming \$10.8 million in incremental funding, over four years, to support Special Olympics Canada's mission of enriching the lives of Canadians with an intellectual disability through sport.

Since 2014, the most impactful outcomes of the incremental funding are as follows:

- Total **athlete registration increased by 12%**, doubling athlete growth from the two-year period prior to Hill Day funding;
- Young athlete growth, **ages 2 to 21, increased by 16%**;
- In two years, total **athlete participations increased 18%**. On average, each athlete is participating in 2 sports;
- Total **volunteer registration grew by 14%**;
- Total number of **community sport programs increased by 15% to 5666**;
- Number of **chapters offering the Healthy Athletes program expanded from 4 to 9**;
- Our **largest Special Olympics Team Canada competed at the 2015 World Summer Games** bringing home 144 medals, an increase of 19 medals over the 2011 World Games;
- Based on the STEAM assessment conducted by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance the **2016 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games, with a budget of \$1.8 million, had an economic impact of \$4.5 million** to the host city of Corner Brook, NL;

Special Olympics Canada

Special Olympics Canada is dedicated to enriching the lives of Canadians with intellectual disabilities through sport. As a national multi-sport organization, Special Olympics Canada provides year-round community sport, training and competition opportunities to over 42,565 athletes of all ages and abilities. The organization is supported by a network of more than 20,505 volunteers, including more than 15,766 trained volunteer coaches.

Incorporated in 1969, Special Olympics Canada enjoys a rich history within Canada and is viewed as a leader within the broader Global Movement. We have a diversified revenue strategy that includes corporate, individual, foundation and both federal and provincial/territorial government funding. Of \$32 million in Pan-Canadian revenue in 2015, we received \$2.8 million as reference level funding from Sport Canada, \$2.8 million in incremental Hill Day funding and approximately \$1.46 million from provincial/territorial governments. The remaining \$24.9 million was raised through corporate sponsorships, individuals, events and foundations. Additionally, we are the charity of choice for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police through the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics (LETR), the movement's largest grassroots fundraising partnership. Committed to ensuring we have a diversified revenue portfolio, Special Olympics Canada and its provincial/territorial chapters are implementing a Pan-Canadian fundraising strategy that includes plans to increase individual giving. Federal support complements these significant investments and allows Special Olympics programs to improve and grow.

Seeking Funds to Meet Critical Needs

As the important work of providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to change their lives through sport continues, and Special Olympics Canada strives to grow and expand its reach, additional funds are required in the following critical areas:

I. Expanding & Improving the Athlete Experience

Increasing the Number of Registered Athletes

There is so much potential for growth and so many more individuals with intellectual disabilities that could, and should, benefit from increased physical activity and the numerous benefits that come from involvement in sport. **Increased funding is required to reach more athletes in all twelve provincial / territorial chapters.**

Youth Development

Over the two years of investing incremental federal funds into young athlete programs, registration of athletes ages 2 to 12 has increased by 43%, as compared to 25% in the two years preceding the incremental funds. Engaging children early and keeping them active for life is a sound investment with long term benefits. **Increased funding is required to reach more young athletes and their families.**

School Programs & Unified Sport

School programs specific to students with intellectual disabilities or Unified Sport (a program that brings students with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same team to train and compete), are essential to keeping young athletes engaged in sport and leading active healthy lives into adulthood. **Increased funding is required to develop school programs and Unified Sport opportunities that foster open and inclusive education environments.**

Diversity & Inclusion Strategies

Our work must engage and meet the needs of Canada's diverse population. Implementation of diversity strategies will help us expand our outreach to diverse cultural groups. **Increased funding is required to implement our diversity strategy and further reduce barriers to participation by diverse cultural groups.**

Grassroots Program Delivery & Competition Opportunities

The development and delivery of new and quality programs and competitions in more communities, especially in remote northern communities, is vital to engaging more athletes and volunteers across Canada. **Increased funding is required to conduct community outreach, support grassroots program costs and provide quality competitions.**

National Games

National games organizing committees require increased funds to match their local fundraising efforts as they strive to meet the demand of delivering larger games to more athletes. **Increased funding is required to support the planning and execution of larger, multi-sport national games.**

National Team Program & World Games

The envy of many countries within the Global Movement, our National Team Program ensures optimal performance preparation for Special Olympics Team Canada to proudly represent our country on the world

stage. **Increased funding is required to support Special Olympics Team Canada to prepare for and compete at the World Games.**

Healthy Athletes Program

Our Healthy Athletes Program provides free health exams and education to athletes and through volunteer healthcare practitioners, changes the way the health system interacts with people with intellectual disabilities. **Increased funding is required to implement more Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programs across Canada – helping to improve health and reduce chronic health conditions for people with intellectual disabilities.**

Athlete Leadership

Ensuring our athletes are engaged in meaningful roles across the organization supports their personal growth and productivity outside of sport and demonstrates to the broader community the true meaning of inclusion. **Increased funding is required to support Athlete Leadership Programs that build confidence and promote inclusiveness beyond the sport field.**

II. Expanding & Improving the Volunteer Experience

Increasing the Number of Volunteers

More volunteers are required to maintain a high quality program delivery standard that best serves our athletes. **Increased funding is required to recruit more volunteers to support more athletes and more programs.**

Quality Volunteer Training & Coach Education

Quality volunteers result in quality sport programs, which in turn result in quality athlete experiences. **Increased funding is required to develop resources and deliver quality volunteer on-boarding and training.**

III. Building Organizational Productivity & Capacity

Technology Systems

Updating and investing in technology systems and processes that are national in scope will help us maximize economies of scale and work more efficiently and effectively. **Increased funding is required to strengthen organizational capacity, from grassroots to national, by improving technology systems that drive internal efficiencies for maximum external impact.**

Human Resource Capacity

Continued funding will ensure we have the staff resources, in all twelve chapters, to maintain our current momentum and continue to grow. **Increased funding is required to maintain and increase human resource capacity imperative to Special Olympics Canada being able to provide more opportunities to more people with intellectual disabilities.**

IV. Building Positive Attitudes

Public Education

People with intellectual disabilities still face stigma, discrimination and social isolation. We can create change from others engaging and witnessing our athletes participate in sport. We can improve awareness of what people with intellectual disabilities can achieve and ultimately change people's attitudes. **Increased funding is**

required to improve public education that increases awareness, leading to more athletes benefitting and ultimately, to more inclusive communities.

Research

Focused efforts to monitor and evaluate multiple aspects of our organization can assist in identifying barriers to participation and better defining the elements of impactful and transformative programs. **Increased funding is required to undertake research that can provide quantitative and qualitative measures that substantiate Special Olympics' impact on athletes, their families and communities.**

Conclusion

The incremental Federal funding announced in 2014 has, simply put, been a 'game changer' for Special Olympics in Canada. **Through the final stage of the four years of incremental funding and into what we hope will be renewed funding for the next four years, we remain committed to effectively and strategically using Federal funds to support the growth and on-going delivery of high impact, cost effective, community based programs for our athletes.**

