

## **Selection Process for Special Olympics USA Games or World Games**

Special Olympics offers higher level competitions in almost all sports on a rotating schedule.

**USA Games** are held every four years and typically offer competition in all summer sports. Winter sports are not offered at USA Games. USA Games first began in 2006.

**World Games** are held in summer and winter sports, alternating every two years. For World Games, Minnesota is part of the larger Special Olympics USA delegation and SOMN selects athletes to represent the state. Coaches are selected through an application process managed by the Special Olympics USA Management Team.

For both USA and World Games, there is a standard timeline and selection process. It's an involved process for Special Olympics athletes, coaches and staff. Below are general timelines for these types of competition.

### **2 Years in Advance**

Host location of the Games determines sports and number of athletes it can host in each sport. Countries and/or states then request quota based on various factors including participation levels in available sports, when sports were last represented at a higher level of competition and financial resources to support their quota request.

Countries or states are notified what their quota allocation will be, including sports, number of athletes, gender and sometimes ability level within a particular sport.

### **1-2 Years in Advance**

State programs select the athletes, Unified partners and coaches to represent the organization. Athletes typically must train, compete and earn a gold medal at a qualifying event for their given sport. Typically, the qualifying event is the state competition about one year prior to USA or World Games. Sometimes registration deadlines may change this timeline.

Athletes who are eligible to apply will be notified of the opportunity via their Head of Delegation. Athletes then go through the process of applying. Application forms must be completed, and deadlines must be met on time. Once a deadline passes, Special Olympics Minnesota staff will follow up with all applicants.

Final selection is done through a random draw in each sport from a pool of all athletes who applied and met the necessary qualifications outlined in the application process.

### **Year Leading Up to the Games**

Athletes commit to a training program as outlined by their USA or World Games coach. Athletes must train locally and attend state level competitions in the sport for which they have been drawn.