



Special Olympics New York Athlete Leadership Council

Operating Procedures 2022

Purpose: The Special Olympics New York Athlete Leadership Council (SONY ALC) is a recognized group of Special Olympics NY athlete leaders who meet on a regular basis to:

1. Provide feedback on ideas/policies that would significantly affect SONY athletes,
2. Present ideas to the SONY Staff from other athlete leaders, and
3. Promote Athlete Leadership throughout New York and throughout Special Olympics.

Membership: The SONY ALC will be comprised 1-2 athlete leaders from each of the SONY Regions: NYC and Long Island Regions (combined); Hudson Valley Region; Capital District and North Country Region (combined); Central and SO Tier Regions (combined); Genesee Region; and Western Region.

Membership is a provisional appointment based on the athlete's commitment and ability to attend regularly scheduled leadership meetings, convey SONY priorities and calls to action, as well as participate in supporting a variety of regional events throughout the year.

Selection: SONY ALC members are appointed by SONY staff; peer nomination and endorsements are welcome. SONY regional staff will consider all SONY athletes who are involved in our SONY sports program as an athlete, coach or official. Athletes that demonstrate leadership abilities, commitment and sportsmanship, a positive outlook and independent thinking, while motivating others around them, will be given the highest consideration. ALC members must embody the Athlete Code of Conduct and address organizational calls to action through increased participation in a wide variety of regional activity.

*All athletes considered for the SONY ALC should be experienced athlete leaders who are at least 18 years of age and have developed the ability to participate independently in meetings through experience on a Regional ALC or Regional Committee. They should also meet the requisite criteria set forth in **Appendix A.***

Appendix A. Suggested Criteria for Qualified Athlete Leaders to Serve on the SONY ALC

These suggested criteria were written by the U.S. Athlete Input Council to be used when selecting qualified athlete leaders to serve on Board of Directors. These criteria have been approved and now adopted by the SONY ALC:

- Athlete Leadership Courses Completed:
 - 1) Introduction to Athlete Leadership
 - 2) Understanding Leadership
- Be a high school graduate or have equivalent education
- Have a minimum of 5 years of Special Olympics NY experience
 - 1) Currently a registered athlete
 - 2) Involved in Athlete Leadership, either:
 - experience on Regional ALC, or
 - experience on a SONY Committee
 - 3) Participated in a sport competition/program within the last 5 years
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have access to transportation to get to and from meetings, etc.
- Have access to a computer and basic computer use skills
- Have an email address and be a confident user of email and be able to participate in virtual meetings
- Be knowledgeable about Special Olympics NY
- Have effective communication skills (oral, listening, written)
- Able to contribute in meetings independently (readability, comprehension, discussions)
- Has a professional demeanor, can conduct themselves appropriately, and can honor the confidential nature of ALC business
- Can commit to time, requirements and expectations of the role

Terms and Attendance: Each statewide SONY ALC member is asked to serve at least one 2-year term. The structure will consist of 10 meetings per year, with 3 in-person meetings and 8 virtual calls. Active participation is required for these sessions.

The in-person meeting will typically convene for 1-2 days. Two in-person meetings will take place at the SONY headquarters office and one in-person meeting will be prior attached to Fall Games. These will require planning for ALC members and Unified Coordinators to request time off from work as needed and travel in order to participate in meetings.

Similarly, the regional ALC's will schedule local meetings and focus on regional and local topics as well as leadership skill development.

Officers: The SONY ALC members will elect the following officers:

Chairperson: The Chairperson will serve a term of 2 years. The Chairperson provides leadership to the SONY ALC; collaborates with the SONY Athlete Leadership Committee to ensure effective ALC operation; collects feedback for agenda from the Vice Chair, Secretary, Staff/Athlete Liaison and members; collaborates with the SONY ALC to facilitate calls/meetings; attends calls/meetings regularly; represents the SONY ALC on the Mid-Atlantic Region's ALC; works with the SONY Athlete Board Member to prepare an Athlete Board report as needed; and performs other duties as assigned by SONY.

Vice Chair: The Vice Chair will serve a term of 2 years. The Vice Chair performs Chair's responsibilities when Chair is unavailable; assists the Chair as needed; serves as time keeper for discussions during the calls/meetings; follows up on outstanding items as needed on the agenda or as requested by Chair or SONY Athlete Leadership Committee.

Secretary: The Secretary will serve a term of 2 years. The Secretary takes attendance on calls and at meetings; provides input into the agenda for upcoming calls/meetings in a timely manner; sends thank you correspondence as needed and as requested by Chair, Vice Chair or SONY Athlete Leadership Committee; attends calls/meetings regularly; and

performs other duties as assigned by the Chair or SONY Athlete Leadership Committee.

Members may be invited to return as an ALC Member Emeritus.

Athlete Leadership Council Member Emeritus: Member Emeritus serves as a mentor to new Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) members. They will actively participate in leadership, advocacy and public speaking trainings while at ALC meetings, encouraging their peers to become more involved and active within their home regions. These athlete leaders must be able to communicate their experience and knowledge as former ALC members and lead by example demonstrating their leadership and advocacy skills.

ALC Member Emeritus Membership: ALC Emeritus membership is a provisional appointment based on the athlete's performance and professionalism demonstrated as an ALC member. ALC Member Emeritus are appointed by SONY Staff and the Athlete Leadership Planning Committee. Members that portray leadership abilities, commitment and sportsmanship through demonstration of a positive outlook and independent thinking while motivating others around them will be given the highest consideration. ALC Member Emeritus must be actively involved in SONY sports programs as an athlete, coach or official. They must continue to demonstrate appropriate athlete behavior at all times and address organizational calls to action through increased participation in a wide variety of regional activity.

ALC Member Emeritus Term and Attendance: Each ALC Member Emeritus is asked to serve an additional 1-year term and attend both in-person meetings and virtual calls at the state level.

Unified Leadership Coordinators: While every SONY ALC member is expected to be able to participate independently in meetings, each may choose to be accompanied by a Unified Leadership Coordinator for conference calls and in-person meetings as a non-participating listener and supporter. The role of the Unified Leadership Coordinator is to provide the support as needed for the SONY ALC member's preparation to successfully participate in meetings and calls. The Unified Leadership Coordinator's support can be as minimal as help with travel or conference call logistics; or as much as sitting in SONY ALC meetings as an observer

and assisting with pre- and post-meeting analysis. At no time should Unified Leadership Coordinator insert their personal views in a meeting or during preparation. SONY ALC members are not required to have a Unified Leadership Coordinator if they are able to travel and participate without one.

SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee: The SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee provides input and expertise in developing content for SONY leadership programs, working primarily with the SONY staff to plan, organize and implement the Athlete Leadership programming. This committee is responsible for ensuring that each meeting has an agenda, minutes and is organized and runs efficiently.

SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee Membership: Members of the SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee must possess a strong knowledge of leadership skills development and of SONY sports and athlete leadership programming. Members of the SONY Athlete Leadership Committee are selected by SONY staff. Membership includes:

- SONY Athlete Leadership Council Volunteers
- SONY ALC Member Emeritus
- SONY Staff

Responsibilities of the SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee include:

- Assists with the preparation and planning for each SONY ALC meeting, including the SONY Athlete Congress held once every 3 years (if a Congress is held)
- Participates in conference call planning meetings, as needed
- Assists in identifying community members and resources to achieve the goals of the SONY ALC
- Maintains regular communication with SONY Staff responsible for athlete leadership to ensure that the council's discussion and work supports the overall SONY Athlete Leadership plan
- Follows up with members as needed to confirm participation in meetings
- Ensures that each member's opinion is heard and offer strategies to the council for full engagement and participation as needed
- Assists with preparation of presentation materials, public speaking, training and leadership documents

- Completes Class A Volunteer certification

SONY Staff/Athlete Liaison: This person must be a member of the Special Olympics NY staff and a participating athlete. The role of the SONY Athlete/Staff Liaison is to support the needs of the SONY ALC, while ensuring the overall goals of SONY are being followed. This staff role is responsible for utilizing the SONY ALC members to gather meaningful athlete input on topics relevant to our program and the movement and to ensure the SONY ALC is utilized in meaningful ways towards reaching the overall goals. This staff position works closely with the SONY Athlete Leadership Planning Committee to support and manage the SONY ALC's business and operations.