



ATHLETE INPUT COUNCIL



And the decision is...



...to include the athletes' voices from now on!

On November 9, 2018 the Special Olympics Indiana Board of Directors amended the SOIN By-Laws to ensure that athletes are heard in deciding the direction of the organization.

ATHLETE INPUT COUNCIL

ARTICLE I – Purpose

Special Olympics Indiana (SOIN) believes that participating athletes have an important voice in making decisions on how to grow and improve the Special Olympics Indiana Program. The best way to ensure athletes' opinions are heard and impact every level of the organization is to implement Athlete Input Councils (AIC) for all levels of the organization.

An AIC is a group of athletes who meet using a pre-determined agenda to discuss Special Olympics topics important to them and make recommendations to the State and/or County Program leadership. The AIC is designed to give every Special Olympics Indiana athlete a vehicle to communicate their ideas and concerns.

ARTICLE II – Athlete Input Council Membership

With SOIN athletes recruited and trained at the local level, all SOIN County Programs are strongly encouraged to form a **County AIC**, creating an avenue by which athletes are allowed to express their opinions and provide feedback. A County AIC meets routinely through the year, providing feedback to their respective County Management Team. A County AIC meeting may be open to all registered athletes of that program, or a targeted group (such as basketball teams). Annually, each County AIC elects a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

SOIN will host at least one face-to-face **Indiana AIC** meeting per year open to the Chairperson from each County Program's AIC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, and initiatives. In the event that a County AIC Chairperson is unavailable to attend the Indiana AIC, the Vice-Chairperson may attend. Additional Indiana AIC meetings may be held as needed by conference call with elected representatives of the Indiana AIC. The athlete representative(s) on the SOIN Board of Directors will serve as the Indiana AIC Chairperson (and Vice-Chairperson).

Items for the agenda can be recommended by any Indiana AIC member and / or the CEO of SOIN. The Chairperson and CEO will decide the final agenda. Recommendations of the Indiana AIC will be made to the CEO and reported to the Board of Directors by the Indiana AIC Chairperson.

ARTICLE III – Athlete Input Council Recommendations

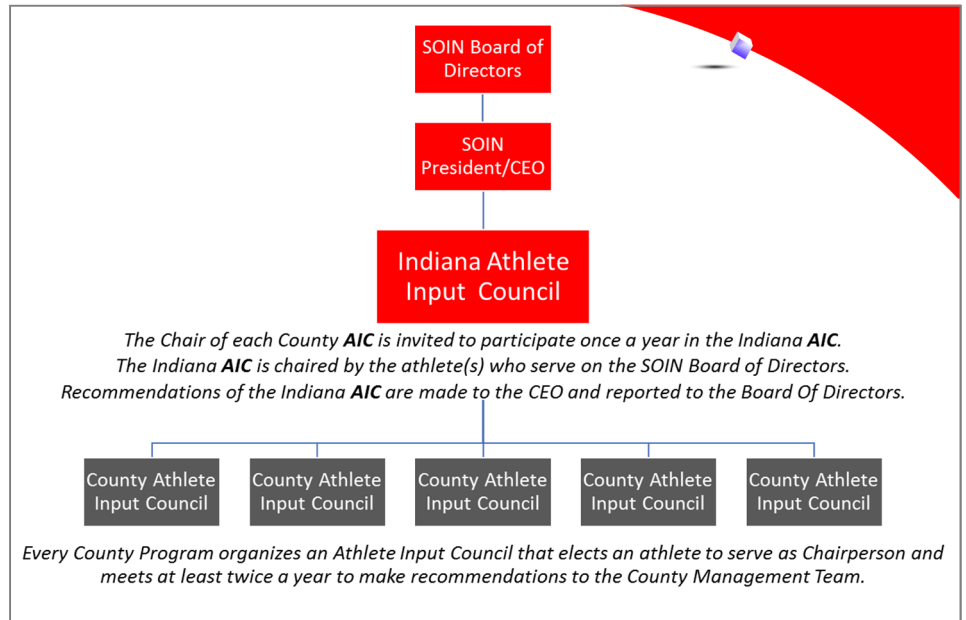
Recommendations from an AIC will be given due consideration by appropriate level of SOIN management. AIC recommendations are considered by the SOIN staff. AIC members can expect to be provided with a follow-up response from management.

AIC members are asked to understand that not all recommendations will be accepted. These members can expect to be provided with a rationale for any recommendation not accepted.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

County Athlete Input Councils

1. County Athlete Input Council meetings must be held at least twice a year but can be held more often.
2. County AIC meetings may be open to any interested athlete in the County Program, or a targeted group (such as basketball teams, athletes over age 40, athletes who attend ALPs). Participants in a County AIC should be at least 16 years old.
3. Items for the agenda can be submitted by the athletes and/or the County Management Team.
4. At the first AIC meeting each year, the group should elect an athlete to be Chairperson. The athlete receiving the second most votes will serve as the Vice-Chairperson.
 - a. An athlete elected as Chairperson may be re-elected two additional times. An athlete elected for three consecutive terms is eligible to be elected again after one year.
 - b. Athletes serving as Chair and Vice-Chair are encouraged to attend ALPs University for Governance training.
 - c. The AIC Chair is the official representative of the County Program for the annual Indiana AIC.
 - d. The AIC Chairperson is usually included as a member of the County Management Team.
5. The County Management Team should work with the AIC to provide a volunteer Facilitator who assists the Chairperson in planning the meeting, taking notes, and supporting the work of the group without inserting their own opinions into the discussion.
6. By a majority vote AICs may make recommendations to the County Management Team at regularly scheduled CMT meetings.
7. County Programs document their required AIC activities by submitting minutes of meetings to the designated person at SOIN.



Helpful Hints for Operating a County Athlete Input Council

1. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AIC is subject to the approval of the County Coordinator. It is best practice to have the County Coordinator identify 3 to 5 acceptable candidates that are voted on by the athletes.
2. It is best practice to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair mid-year (after Summer Games) so he/she has time to settle into the position before the State AIC meeting in the Fall.
3. County AIC meetings can be any size, but the best discussions take place in a group of 8 to 15. A council that includes 2 or 3 athletes from each sport might be a way to ensure the right number and good representation.
4. Two meetings a year are required, but monthly or every-other-month meetings keep people more engaged.
5. The best way to prepare athletes for leadership roles is to get them involved in ALPs University which is held twice a year, usually in April and October. Check out the Program Information Guide for more info.



OPERATING GUIDELINES

Indiana Athlete Input Council

1. Special Olympics Indiana will host an annual full-day AIC meeting open to the Chairperson from each County Program AIC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, and initiatives.
 - a. The Vice-Chair of a County AIC may attend if the Chair is unable to attend.
 - b. The Indiana AIC is held annually in conjunction with the SOIN State Conference.
 - c. During the annual AIC face-to-face meeting, athletes from each of Indiana's 10 Areas will select one of their members to participate in quarterly conference calls to review progress on recommendations and plan the annual meeting.
 - d. Agenda items for the annual meeting can be recommended by any Indiana AIC member and/or the CEO of SOIN. The Chairperson and CEO will decide the final agenda. The agenda will routinely include discussion of SOIN Strategic Plan.
2. The athlete (s) currently serving on the SOIN Board of Directors shall serve as Chairperson (and Vice-Chair).
3. All participants in the Indiana AIC will be provided Governance training by ALPs University instructors in conjunction with their attendance at the annual meeting.
4. Subject to the approval of SOIN, an AIC member who needs the support of a volunteer / mentor to meaningfully participate in the meeting may request such support.
5. Subject to the approval of the Indiana AIC, SOIN will appoint a Facilitator and additional volunteers as needed to assist with meetings and calls.
6. Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson to study and report on significant issues.
7. The Indiana AIC recommendation requires approval by a simple majority of AIC members in attendance at any annual meeting.
8. Recommendations of the Indiana AIC will be made to the CEO and reported to the Board of Directors by the AIC Chair.
9. Members of the Indiana AIC will be primary candidates to serve on the SOIN Board of Directors.



What you will need to know before you register your County Athlete Input Council

- Who is the AIC Chair (name, email, phone, date elected)?
- Who is the AIC Vice-Chair (name, email, phone, date elected)?
- Who is the AIC Facilitator (name, email, phone)?
- How often will the County AIC meet?
- When is the AIC Chair elected annually?
- Approximately how many athletes will participate in the County AIC?
- Would you like for a representative of SOIN to attend one of your AIC meetings to help as you get started?

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