



Position Profile: Chief Executive Officer

Special Olympics Kentucky

Location: In-person, Frankfort, KY

About Special Olympics Kentucky

Sports and athletic competition matter: as a venue for physical fitness and health, a source of joy and connection, and a pathway for developing lifelong skills and friendships. Special Olympics Kentucky (SOKY) exists to provide children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) access to individual and team sports—and the lifechanging benefits these athletic opportunities offer. Working closely with volunteers and partners across the state, Special Olympics Kentucky provides access to year-round sports training and competition and much more:

- Consistent training, combined with competition among those of equal abilities, helps athletes develop, test, and strengthen their sports skills. Special Olympics Kentucky offers training and competition opportunities in 15 sports and serves just over 11,300 athletes each year.
- The organization benefits from a vast network of committed volunteers. More than 5,000 individuals donate their time each year to serve as coaches, officials, organizers, and partners.
- Special Olympics competitions—at the community, state, national, and global level—are patterned after the Olympic Games. Each year, Special Olympics Kentucky hosts 10 state competitions, along with dozens of local, area & regional competitions and activities. SOKY has sent a delegation to each of the most recent national and world games.
- Caring for athletes beyond the field of play is equally important. Special Olympics Kentucky offers seven “healthy athlete programs”—Special Smiles, Opening Eyes, Healthy Hearing, FUNfitness, Fit Feet, Health Promotion, and MedFest—that enable athletes to develop better health and fitness, while also training healthcare professionals about the needs of patients with intellectual disabilities.
- Special Olympics Kentucky assists schools in our state with implementing opportunities for Unified Sports, youth leadership for students with and without intellectual disabilities, and whole-school engagement. Together, these activities promote inclusion and belonging.



The impact? People with intellectual and developmental disabilities benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually—and carry these benefits into their daily lives at home, in the classroom, on the job, and in the community. Families are strengthened as they learn a greater appreciation of their athlete’s talents. And together we create a community that values equality, respect, and acceptance.

The Opportunity

Special Olympics Kentucky seeks a visionary, values-driven leader to oversee the continued growth and evolution of the organization's work as a provider of high-impact programs and as an advocate for individuals with IDD. The incoming Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be a thought partner to a committed Board of Directors and leader to an experienced, long-tenured staff that share an unwavering commitment to Special Olympics Kentucky's mission and to the individuals they serve. They must be "brave in the attempt" of leading this impactful organization.

The incoming CEO will assume leadership of the organization after a period of stable growth. In partnership with a dedicated and long-tenured executive team and through an athlete-focused approach, SOKY has effectively responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving community needs, all while maintaining an exceptional standard of programming and a sound financial position. The incoming CEO will embrace this commitment to service and operational excellence, bringing a desire to work joyfully with athletes, families, coaches, staff, and other stakeholders.

The next CEO will be an experienced nonprofit leader with a proven track record of building relationships with diverse and inclusive communities. As the leader of a prominent statewide organization, the CEO will represent Special Olympics Kentucky with diverse and high-profile audiences including athletes, families, community partners, funders, lawmakers, and other nonprofit leaders. They will develop and implement a strategic approach to engage key partners and community leaders, aiming to expand the organization's reach and establish a sustainable model for long-term growth. The incoming leader will bring extensive management experience and a commitment to working collaboratively, fostering strong operational capacity and productive relationships with the staff. With a volunteer base that is germane to the success of the operation, the CEO must understand how to maximize its staff but also recognize and appreciate those who volunteer their time.

The ideal candidate will thrive in strategic and visionary roles, bringing the expertise to create the operational infrastructure and community support needed to achieve ambitious goals. Building on the organization's signature programs, and in collaboration with Special Olympics Kentucky's exceptional board and staff, the new CEO will chart a course to expand the organization's impact. They will reach new and diverse audiences through programs and partnerships that help athletes develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in sharing gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

About the Position

The Chief Executive Officer provides strategic and servant leadership and day-to-day management of SOKY, reporting to the organization's Board of Directors. The CEO will:

- provide vision and articulate a strategy for Special Olympics Kentucky's future; strengthen the organization's position as a leader in providing lifechanging programs and advocacy for its athletes.
- collaborate with local and regional leaders to identify pathways to expand geographic reach and deepen impact.
- demonstrate a passion for and knowledge of the organization's mission and provide strong leadership to staff, athletes, and volunteers; understand and implement best practices of nonprofit board governance.

Key Position Functions

Vision and Strategy

- In partnership with the Board of Directors and other key stakeholders, set the organizational direction and strategy to advance the organization's mission and purpose.
- Provide leadership in developing and implementing programmatic, organizational, and financial plans and policies.
- Identify and drive changes needed and build relationships required for advancing SOKY's mission and implementing the organization's strategic plan.
- Perform regular assessments of future business needs and sustainability.

Financial Management

- Maintain and implement the overall policies and administrative procedures for SOKY and SOKY's Investment Fund as authorized by the Board of Directors.
- In partnership with the Senior Director of Finance and Administration and the Finance Committee, develop, manage, and meet the overall SOKY annual budget and long-term investment strategy.
- Prudently manage the organization's resources within budget guidelines according to current laws and regulations.

Board Relations

- Develop, maintain, and engage with the Board of Directors through strong governance standards and practices.
- Maintain communication with the Board of Directors and other constituencies; discuss matters requiring board attention with the Executive Committee and provide the board with other information to enable them to effectively exercise their duties.
- Make recommendations to the Board of Directors concerning policy, procedures, and strategic plan initiatives, ensuring the best interest of the overall programs.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and on all board committees.

Administration

- Oversee administration of all SOKY programs.
- Oversee the operation of large-scale events that involve local and statewide partners, volunteers, staff, and constituents.
- Ensure the organization complies with relevant legal requirements and meets principles of sound governance and accepted environmental, health, safety, and quality standards.
- Ensure the organization maintains accreditation status with Special Olympics International (SOI).

Resource Development

- Oversee and meet fundraising goals for supporting operations, and all programming efforts, including identifying sources of support and establishing development strategies.
- Maintain strong partnerships with current and potential funders.



- Provide leadership in the development, planning, and implementation of means for securing needed financial resources for current and future operations.
- Assure the agency and its mission, programs, products, and services are consistently presented in a strong, positive image to relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure strong collaboration across the resource development team and with other departments and staff within the organization.

Leadership and Management

- Provide leadership, guidance, and support to staff, board, and volunteers sufficiently to develop, inspire, and motivate those individuals to achieve success and strive for excellence in their SOKY activities.
- Oversee all staffing decisions and professional development. Develop and maintain a high-performance team, and regularly evaluate performance.
- Promote and maintain a strong culture of inclusion, accountability, transparency, and communication.
- Advance SOKY's inclusion mission and vision throughout the operation of the organization.

Advocacy and Community Relations

- Partner with contracted lobbying firm on SOKY's advocacy and lobbying efforts with state and local legislators to facilitate funding, recognition, and broad support for SOKY's mission.
- Serve as official spokesperson for SOKY statewide and oversee plans for interpretation and promotion of SOKY through the media and SOKY materials.
- Serve as a liaison with SOI and Special Olympics North America (SONA). Participate in policy decisions that affect SOKY programs and leverage national fundraising opportunities. Initiate appropriate responses to directives from SOI.
- Ensure all activities align to SOI general rules and SOKY policies.

Direct Reports

- Director of Communications
- Director of Sports and Competition
- Director of Unified Champion Schools
- Senior Director of Finance and Administration
- Senior Vice President of Development
- Vice President of Field Outreach and Services



Qualifications

Education

- Bachelor's degree in public or business administration, sports management, social work, or related field. *Master's degree preferred.*

Required Experience and Qualifications

- Five or more years' experience in senior or executive leadership in a nonprofit organization of equivalent size.
- Ten or more years of personnel management experience, with proven success leading cross-functional teams and supervising manager- and director-level staff, ideally within multi-site organizations.
- Experience developing positive relationships with local governments and community groups.
- Exemplary verbal and written communication.
- Demonstrated leadership in nonprofit financial management and budgeting.
- Experience with and willingness to participate in set-up and breakdown of events.
- Valid driver's license.
- Ability to maintain physical presence in the Frankfort office.

Competencies and Attributes for Success in the Position

- Balances stakeholders
- Builds networks
- Business insight
- Collaborates
- Communicates effectively
- Customer focus
- Directs work
- Drives vision and purpose
- Financial acumen
- Instills trust
- Interpersonal savvy
- Resourcefulness
- Situational adaptability
- Strategic mindset

Compensation

The projected minimum salary for this position is \$150,000, commensurate with experience, and a comprehensive benefits program including medical, dental, and vision insurance; long-term disability insurance; Basic Life benefits; a 401(k) with employer contribution; 8 paid holiday days per year and PTO package.

Equal Opportunity Employment

Special Olympics Kentucky, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. The organization is committed to a work environment that supports, inspires, and respects all individuals. Personnel processes are merit-based and applied without discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, age, disability, national or ethnic origin, military service status, citizenship, or other protected characteristics.



Application Process

Benefactor Group is pleased to be assisting Special Olympics Kentucky with this executive search. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All applications are considered highly confidential. To be considered for this position, please send a resume and formal cover letter in pdf format to:

Benefactor Group Recruitment Team

HR@benefactorgroup.com

<http://www.benefactorgroup.com>

To learn more about Special Olympics Kentucky, please visit <https://soky.org/>

Please do not contact Special Olympics Kentucky staff or board with questions or interest in the role. All inquiries about the position should be directed to Benefactor Group.

About Frankfort, Kentucky

Often called “Kentucky Distilled,” this capital city embodies the essence of everything that makes Kentucky special: natural beauty, a commitment to education and healthcare, and unique cultural amenities—encompassing history, bourbon, art, agriculture, and more. These features—combined with a cost of living 15% lower than the national average—make Frankfort an attractive, affordable place to call home.

Frankfort’s landscape is home to countless murals, historic architecture, and distinctive stained-glass features—earning it the title of the “Public Art Capital of Kentucky.” In particular, many are drawn to the Josephine Sculpture Park, which features over 70 works of art across 40 acres of native meadows and forested areas. The city’s lively arts community also offers an endless selection of cultural opportunities: among other institutions, the Bluegrass Theatre Guild produces a variety of Broadway and off-Broadway shows throughout the year; the Frankfort Arts Foundation presents an annual series of concerts, plays, and poetry readings; and the Grand Theater has a full schedule of movies, concerts, and live performances.

Green spaces abound in Frankfort and the surrounding region, as well. The city’s parks department operates nine major parks consisting of more than 1,000 acres that provide spaces for aquatics, baseball, soccer, football, softball, golf, tennis, volleyball, basketball, hiking, biking, canoeing, and picnicking. The Elkhorn River—with its mild whitewater and beautiful scenery—is fast becoming Kentucky’s most popular canoeing stream. And Kentucky’s unique topography offers over 130 known caves for exploration across the state, including Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Lost River Cave, Hidden River Cave, and Diamond Caverns.

Healthcare in Frankfort is top notch. Frankfort Regional Medical Center has attained Magnet® recognition, the nation’s highest recognition in nursing excellence. Only six other hospitals in Kentucky and 8% nationwide have achieved Magnet distinction. Furthermore, the county ranks 9th out of 120 Kentucky districts in public health, reflecting its commitment to wellness.

And of course, Frankfort’s location in the heart of Kentucky—perfectly positioned on the shores of the Kentucky River, less than a one-hour drive to both Louisville and Lexington—makes it a convenient hub for exploring the state’s many attractions.