



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Special Olympics Washington Receives More than \$3.6 Million in Government Grants from Dan Thompson Memorial Developmental Disabilities Community Services Account

*Largest Government Funding in Organization's History Will Accelerate Beyond Gold Campaign to Build a More Inclusive Future for Washington*

Seattle, WA – April 13, 2023 – [Special Olympics Washington](#), one of the leading advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Washington, is thrilled to announce that it has received more than \$3.6 million in the form of three grants from the [Dan Thompson Memorial Developmental Disabilities Community Services Account administered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration \(DDA\)](#).

The Dan Thompson Memorial Developmental Disabilities Community Services Account was established by the Washington State Legislature in 2005 after the death of Dan Thompson, a longtime advocate for individuals with disabilities. Account expenditures supplement, and do not replace, supplant, or reduce, current state expenditure levels for home and community-based services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities.

“We are incredibly grateful to receive this funding and to cement a partnership with Washington State to serve individuals with IDD,” said David Wu, President and CEO of Special Olympics Washington. “This funding will be a game changer by allowing us to not only roll out new programming and technology, but to support new communities as well. These are imperative for turning our goal of an inclusive future into a reality.”

The grants, which in total are the largest government funding received by the organization to date from Washington State, will impact Special Olympics participants on the local level, as well as help establish new statewide programs under the organization’s Beyond Gold ([BeyondGoldWA.com](#)) multi-year campaign. Launched in 2022, the Beyond Gold campaign will reimagine and expand Special Olympics Washington’s reach and impact on the lives of people with and without IDD across the state.

On the state level, the funding will propel the advancement of two key Beyond Gold initiatives – supporting individuals with IDD in underserved BIPOC communities and promoting digital fluency for Special Olympics Washington athletes and other participants:

- The **Building Bridges** program will build inclusion for those most often left on the sidelines with little to no resources. To be designed in partnership with Indigenous leaders, Building Bridges will bring Special Olympics Washington sports, health screenings, and educational opportunities to Indigenous communities on the east and west sides of the state.

- Through its **Digital Equity** initiative, Special Olympics Washington will work with community and corporate partners to close the digital divide for athletes and other Special Olympics Washington participants. Funds from the Dan Thompson Memorial Developmental Disabilities Community Services Account will enable the organization to:
  - Purchase and adopt new and improved technology across all areas of the Special Olympics experience – from participant registration to volunteer training.
  - Launch a pilot program called Operation Tech Connect for All to empower athletes with the tools and skills required to thrive in an increasingly digitized world.
  - Develop an inclusive STEM curriculum that will be piloted with elementary-aged children through community partners.
  - Expand its Unified Robotics program to middle school and adult participants.

Grant funding was also awarded to a local Special Olympics program in South Kitsap County to replace and upgrade old sports equipment for athletes in Port Orchard.

### **About the Beyond Gold Campaign**

Beyond Gold is Special Olympics Washington's multi-year campaign to build a more inclusive future for Washington State. Launched in 2022, the campaign will advance four initiatives: Community through Competition; Leadership and Learning; Belonging and Inclusion; and Digital Equity. These initiatives respond to the needs of Special Olympics Washington athletes and redefine opportunities for community, learning, leadership, inclusion, and equity. Learn more at [BeyondGoldWA.com](https://BeyondGoldWA.com).

### **About Special Olympics Washington**

We are a catalyst for inclusion! Special Olympics Washington provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports, inclusive health programs, and community building for more than 11,900 children and adults with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Learn more at [SpecialOlympicsWashington.com](https://SpecialOlympicsWashington.com).

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