



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**

2025-26 SONJ UCS Funding and Grant Application Guide

2025-26 Application

**Special
Olympics**
New Jersey



- There are still a lot of questions about funding for next year, but we know how important it is to open the application and get award letters out before the end of the school year
- Application will open May 9, 2025
- We'll be issuing award letters assuming we have a 25% reduction in UCS funding.
- Questions are very similar to the past two years
- We accept applications on a rolling basis, so there isn't a due date.

New for 2025-26



- Each school awarded a UCS grant must organize at least one fundraiser to support either their Unified initiatives or SONJ.
- The required fundraising amount is based on your funding level
- Participation in a Cool Schools Challenge can fulfill this requirement, provided the amount raised meets the minimum threshold.

UCS Grant Award	Level 1 Up to \$1499	Level 2 \$1500-2999	Level 3 \$3000-\$4999	Level 4 \$5,000+
Fundraiser Required	\$300	\$500	\$800	\$1,250

General Application Info



- Please submit a separate application for each school
- Self-sustaining schools should complete the application and indicate where asked that you are not requesting funding.
- If your application doesn't make it clear what you're offering and what you need to spend grant funds on, we cannot fund it.
 - Please share who, what, where, when.
 - We already know why 😊
- Information about your district cost-share and plan for self-sustainability is especially important this year

General Application Info



- We need concrete plans, not fluff
 - Example A (good!):
 - Offering Unified Soccer and Unified Basketball. Both teams will participate twice a week for an hour after school for at least 8 weeks. We plan to have at least 6 games each and participate in Unified Cup for each sport.
 - Example B (not so good):
 - Unified Sports brings together our students with intellectual disabilities with students who don't have disabilities to play on the same team and foster inclusion and friendship. Our students love Unified Sports and make everyone feel welcome.

General Application Info



- We need concrete numbers and an itemized budget
 - Example A (good!):
 - Unified Sports supplies total budget: \$480
 - Unified Sports supplies itemized budget:
 - 6 soccer balls x \$20 = \$120
 - 12 basketball uniforms x \$30 = \$360
 - Example B (not so good):
 - Unified Sports supplies total budget: \$1000
 - Unified Sports supplies itemized budget: Supplies \$1000

For us to consider your application

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- Returning schools must be in good standing
 - Submitted all reports and trackers, completed UMass survey
- Application must be complete and thorough
- Itemized budget items must be in line with UCS strategy and funding guidelines
- Review this presentation and enter the password EKS

Realistic Requests

- The grant award determination considers many factors, but these ranges are generally considered reasonable asks

School Level	Year	Request	Year	Request	Year	Request
Pre-School	1	\$500-750	2-4	Up to \$900	5+	\$500-750
Elementary	1	\$1,000-\$1,500	2-4	Up to \$2,000	5+	\$1,000-\$1,500
Middle	1	\$1500-\$2,500	2-4	Up to \$4,500	5+	\$1500-\$2,500
High	1	\$2500-\$3,500	2-4	Up to \$8,000	5+	\$2500-\$3,500

Examples of Allowable Expenses



- Stipends for Unified Sports coaches
 - Coach certificate must be on file with SONJ
- Transportation to/from interscholastic competitions or practices
- Facility rental fees (such as bowling) for interscholastic competitions or practices
- Officials' fees (up to 3 competitions per interscholastic sport)
- Supplies not readily available at your school
- Uniforms (must be pre-approved)

Examples of Unallowable Expenses

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- Food, drink, snacks of any kind
- Prizes, gifts, trophies
- Swag to accompany sports uniforms, such as jackets, pants, hoodies
- Expenses for events or activities which are not considered ongoing and/or sustained
- Expenses which are considered superfluous
- This is not an exhaustive list. Please see the UCS Funding Guidelines on the UCS Dashboard.

Award Letters



- We aim to send award letters within 2 weeks of receiving your application
- Please sign and return y our award letter within 60 days

Remember...



The goal of the UCS Strategy is to create **sustained, repeated** opportunities for **meaningful inclusion** of students with and without intellectual disabilities.

The UCS team is here to help! Please don't hesitate to reach out!