



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
MINNESOTA 2026

2026 Special Olympics USA Games – Unified Work Program

Corporate Forum

- Host a Unified Work Forum for corporate partners at the 2026 USA Games to encourage MN companies on hiring from the intellectually disabled community.
- Update MN Apprentice Network Playbook to incorporate Getting Started with Unified Work content including learnings from End-to-End Job Design for intellectually disabled population.
- Nov 2025 – Conduct Partner Forum on Unified Hiring for corporate sponsors – share experiences / learnings on Unified Work.
- June 2026 – Conduct Unified Work Forum for all MN Corporations at 2026 USA Games.

USA Games Store (Unified Jobs Lab)

- Open a USA Games store in Mall of America with a goal of staffing with a “Unified” team of Special Olympics athletes and our corporate partner volunteers.
- End-to-End Job Design for recruiting, training, mentoring staff with intellectual disabilities.
- Hire Store Manager (employee) to support store open (Fall 2025).
- Host corporate partners interested in Unified work, transition programs, etc.
- Operate Store through Aug 2026.
- Trained athletes / “Unified” teams will support merchandise sales on-site at USA Games in June 2026.

Athlete Forum

- Host a Unified Work Forum for athletes / families during the USA Games – focus on helping athletes from around the US develop interview skills, write resumes, LinkedIn profiles, try Virtual Reality training apps, etc.
- Showcase learnings from USA Games Store (Unified Jobs Lab).
- Showcase MN corporations involved in Unified Work – conduct panel discussions with athletes/line managers on learnings.
- Showcase MN-based employment resources for the intellectually disabled population.

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How State funding will support Unified Work (cont.)

- Support content development for Nov 2025 Partner Forum and June 2026 Unified Work Forum (both Corporate and Athlete).
 - National Corporate survey on Unified Work – who is doing it, learnings, barriers and best practices.
 - Update of MN Apprentice Network Playbook.
- Support End-to-End Job Design for roles in a retail environment for those with intellectual disabilities.
 - Assess which roles can be supported by people with intellectual disabilities in either an individual client facing role or jobs that can be filled by teams from intellectually disabled work programs/school transition programs (store cleaning, restocking, online order filling, etc.)
 - Look at all processes involved in hiring and supporting employees / volunteers with intellectual disabilities including recruiting, internships, training tools, mentoring programs, accommodations for barriers to hiring such as transportation.
- Cover cost of Store Manager for the Unified Intellectual Disabilities Jobs Lab (Mall of America USA Games Store).
- Cover costs of developing online/Virtual Reality training materials for intellectually disabled job roles at USA Games store.
- Cover cost of promoting Unified Work Forum to the MN business community.

The 2026 Special Olympics USA Games

The 2026 USA Games represent a platform for inclusivity both ON and OFF the field in Minnesota.

ON the Field



The Games will take place **June 20-26, 2026**, at world-class venues located at the **University of Minnesota** and the **National Sports Center**.

3,000+ athletes from all 50 states

16 Olympic-type team and individual sports

10,000+ volunteers

1,500 coaches

75,000 fans

OFF the Field

Health & Wellness

Addressing challenges with access to health service



Youth Inclusion

Inclusion as a focus at the earliest ages possible



Athlete Employment

Moving the inclusivity of sport to the workforce



Minnesota leading the way in unifying the workplace

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We are seeking \$500k to host a Unified Work Summit at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games to increase gainful employment of the ID community in our state.



Challenges to Gainful Employment

Did you know only 18.5% of people with ID are employed to the level of their ability?



Supporting the Mission, Off the Field

We aim to help move the inclusivity of sport to the workplace as part of the legacy of the 2026 USA Games.



Unified Work at the 2026 Games

Over 3,000 athletes will have the opportunity to gain helpful resume building and interviewing skills.



Our Goal

Empowering both athletes and Minnesota companies by providing tools and support to increase gainful employment of the ID community in our state.



Making a Difference

Minnesota funding will help us take actions that will reset the trajectory of inclusive employment.

