



Each year, Oregon's beloved event Polar Plunge inspires thousands across the state to brave icy winter waters while fundraising for Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR) athletes. In 2023, Polar Plunge returns bolder than ever to support athletes across the state. With the addition of two all-new Plunge sites, plus the return of our Plunge at Home social challenge, this will be the biggest year of Plunge yet!

As the signature fundraising event for SOOR, Polar Plunge is responsible for bringing in more than \$500,000 annually. Each participant commits to raising a minimum of \$50 to Plunge, but most people raise much more than that! Whether you take your efforts to social media, start an email campaign, or organize a virtual FUNdraising event, raising money can be quite fun and engaging with your network. Keep exploring this Toolkit for helpful fundraising tips and tricks or connect with us at polarplunge@soor.org to create an individual fundraising plan that works for you!

How can your donation make an impact?

The heart and soul of SOOR is **our athletes**. Your participation and fundraising for the Polar Plunge will directly impact athlete experience at both a local & state level. SOOR provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

- \$50 – support one athlete with virtual connection through [SOOR Active](#)
- \$500 – fund ten athletes' engagement in a season of sport
- \$1,000 – sponsor one athletes' journey to USA Games
- \$2,400 – support programing for a year at one Unified Champion School

I am signed up, now what?

Getting started

Follow these first steps to set up your campaign and begin fundraising:

- Create your page. Your Classy Campaign Center is your fundraising base where you'll customize your page, share your story, send emails, and access fundraising tools. Log in with the username and password you created when you registered.
- Raise the bar. We recommend setting your goal above the default \$250 (how does \$1,000 sound?). Most participants find it much easier to exceed the minimum than they expect.
- Make your first ask! Post on social media, email your BFF, call your mom—tell your network your goal in supporting SOOR and you will be amazed at how many will want to support you.

PRO-Tip Duplicate your Classy fundraiser to Facebook. The two will sync automatically so that all the funds you raise on social media will transfer to your Classy Campaign Center.

Matching Gifts

Want to double your donations? Don't miss out on the easy money to be raised through donor matching opportunities.

Finding matching gift opportunities is easy! Ask your donors to contact their employer's HR departments to find out if their company matches charitable donations, and to get specific applications and instructions. Most companies match their employee's contributions dollar for dollar. Some companies double the contribution or more!

Top Oregon companies that match charitable donations:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| - Nike | - AT&T |
| - Intel | - Bank of the West |
| - US Bank | - Kaiser |
| - Wells Fargo | - Moda Health |
| - AT&T | - Pacific Power |

Check out a full list [here](#). Have more questions? Check out [Matching Gifts](#) page!

Polar Plunge Teams

Team Overview

A team can consist of two or more participants and can be a combination of Plungers and runners/walkers in the Frozen 5K. It can be a group of co-workers, family members, club members, or simply a group of friends who want the camaraderie that a team provides. Anyone can join or start a team. Below are some frequently asked questions (and answers) about how teams work.

What are the advantages of being on a team?

A team can provide support and encouragement, helping you overcome any fears or hesitation you might be experiencing. Teammates can motivate you to train (if you're preparing for the Frozen 5K), and they can help you achieve your fundraising goal. Teammates can be inspiring sources of creativity, especially when it comes to fundraising. For a first-time Plunger, a team is a great way to get involved with the Polar Plunge community.

Can someone donate to a team?

Yes, donors can make gifts to a team as well as to individual participants. Donations cannot be split among team members or transferred from one participant to another. Each individual must raise the minimum \$50 to participate, and donations made to a team will not count towards any one participant. When a donor visits a team page, they will see a list of team members, with links to their individual pages where they can donate as well as a main link to donate to the team in general.

What is a Team Captain?

A Team Captain serves as a liaison between SOOR staff and the team members. They will help keep the team motivated and excited for the plunge! Team Captains take on a leadership role and help with the following:

- Register the team online and set up team page
- Recruit people for team
- Share fundraising tools with teammates and drive fundraising!
- Help create a great team costume
- Motivate
 - Show enthusiasm!
 - Share goal and progress with teammates
- Educate
 - Let donors and teammates know how they are fulfilling a very important mission
 - Learn about SOOR

Corporate Teams

Lots of workplaces have teams of their own! Joining a team with your workmates can be a great bonding experience and improve employee morale. It can also make the Polar Plunge feel less intimidating because you'll be there with peers. Employees will promote the company's participation to their friends, families and professional networks through fundraising campaign and ask for pledges of support. Companies can elect to match employee fundraising and/or their own donations, create cause marketing or vendor campaigns and promote their support of Special Olympics Oregon! Here are some great corporate team benefits and incentives available for teams that fundraise over \$10,000:

- Company able to use SOOR logo to promote support
- Company logo on local Polar Plunge t-shirt
- Company logo on banner and signage at the 2023 Polar Plunge
- Social media acknowledgement from SOOR and Polar Plunge Oregon
- Emcee acknowledgement of team before they take the Polar Plunge

For more information about Corporate Teams or to connect with staff about partnership, email polarplunge@soor.org

Fundraising Tips

Social Media

Utilize Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram to reach out to your network when asking for donations. Make sure to include the link to your Classy Campaign to your posts so it's super easy for people to donate right to you! Always follow up with anyone who likes your post. People are busy and can often need reminders and prompting to remember to donate.

Get creative! Feel free to share pictures and videos to your posts. Have a personal story? Share it with your followers and let them know why you Plunge.

Tag Special Olympics Oregon in your posts @SOORstate to be reshared on our social feed

Use our event hashtags to be reshared on our social media! #SOOR #PlungeOregon

Sample Social Media Posts

Help me support over 14,000 participants in Special Olympics Oregon. Please donate to my Polar Plunge page! #plungeoregon <insert link to personal Plunge page>

You can make a difference! Help me reach my fundraising goal as I take the Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Oregon. #plungeoregon <insert link to personal Plunge page>

PRO-Tip: Make sharing your fundraising page a breeze by creating your own vanity URL to share with your network! Simply login to your Classy Campaign Center and click on the Details tab to edit your campaign. In the 'Set your vanity URL' box you can set your custom link with your name or fun tagline (example: <https://give.classy.org/PamsPlunge2023>). Short URLs are easier to share and look nicer on social media.

Setting Up Your Classy Fundraising Center

One of the easiest ways to further your fundraising efforts is to personalize your fundraising page. With more people fundraising online than ever, make your page stand out in the crowd and let visitors know how much you care about the cause you're asking them to support. Start by uploading your own photo (if you're a team captain you should also do this for your team), create an eye-catching headline, and let donors know why you are fundraising and what you want to accomplish. Raising your goal makes it more likely that you will receive a larger gift, as your supporters will want to help you succeed! Don't forget to take advantage of creating a unique fundraising URL that you can share with your network over text, email, and social media. You can even print your new vanity link on business cards to hand out to prospective donors. Watch our [video tutorial](#) on setting up your page to get started!

Facebook Fundraiser

In addition to regular social media posts, connecting a Facebook Fundraiser to your Classy fundraising page is a great way to further your efforts. You can connect a Facebook fundraiser to your page in a few easy steps! First, login to your Classy fundraising page. Second, click 'Manage' in the upper right corner. Third, select the tab that says 'Facebook' and then click 'Create'! You now have a Facebook fundraiser and donations will sync directly to your Classy page. Watch this quick [video tutorial](#) to guide you through the process.

Recurring Donations

A great tool for maximizing your fundraising potential is to promote recurring gifts to your donors. When a donor is making a gift in Classy, they can choose a monthly option instead of a one-time gift. This allows the donor to spread a gift out over a designated number of months that they can choose! Not everyone may be able to afford a donation of \$100, but if you ask a potential donor to pledge to support you with four monthly donations of \$25, that may be much easier for them to budget.

PRO-Tip: Don't be afraid to ask for a donation of \$50, \$100 or more from your potential donors. Asking for a specific amount makes it much more likely that you will receive it. If you

tell donors, “donate any amount”, they may give you \$20 on average. However, if you ask for a larger donation, you are 75% more likely to get it!

Thank You Gifts

Hit fundraising milestones throughout the year and receive one of our awesome thank you gifts! Not only will you increase your Polar Plunge wardrobe, but you’ll be helping SOOR grow closer to giving athletes continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Plunge Day Checklist

- Plunge costume
- Shoes to Plunge in
- Change of clothes for after Plunge
- Towel
- Plastic bag for wet clothes
- Offline donations
- Friends

Letter Campaign

This is one way to raise a lot of money in a short amount of time! Set aside a few hours one day and you can have it all done. Write personal letters or emails to your family, friends, and coworkers and let them know you are plunging.

Make it easy for people to donate! Consider including a self-addressed envelope (stamped or not) in the envelope when you mail a letter. People are overwhelmed with emails these days. A personal handwritten letter or card can really make an impact!

Early on, make the ask. Don’t limit your donors! Ask for a specific range. Ask for “\$10, \$20, \$50 or whatever your budget will allow.”

Give a 10-day deadline for response. People will respond when there is a sense of urgency.

Copy the letters. Before stuffing into the envelope, handwrite in colored ink, on the top of the letter the person’s name and a quick line, “Hope you can support me.” Sign it to add that personal touch.

Feel free to use our sample letter on the following page. Remember to share sample letter with team members to get them started. Also, make sure your plunge date is correct (the sample letter is for the Portland Plunge, so for others you should change it accordingly).



Dear [Insert Name],

On [insert your Plunge date], I will be participating in the 2023 Polar Plunge in [change to your Plunge city]. I have decided that it's **COLD** enough, and I'm **BOLD** enough to take a freezing dip into the [change to the body of water you will be plunging in] for the athletes of Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR)!

I have set a personal fundraising goal of \$[insert amount], and I need your help to reach it! I have started off my fundraising with a self-donation of \$[insert amount] to kick off my efforts. Would you join me in support of SOOR by **matching my gift**? Or if you are feeling bold as well, would you consider doubling my gift and splitting over four months? No matter what you can give, every little bit gets me that much closer to my goal.

There are three easy ways to support my Plunge:

1. **Online donation:** Credit or debit card. Visit [insert your donation URL]
2. **Offline donation:** Make checks payable to "Special Olympics Oregon" then mail to Special Olympics Oregon, Attn: Polar Plunge, 8313 SW Cirrus Drive, Beaverton, OR 97008. If you do it this way, please be sure to include "Polar Plunge" and my name in the memo area so that the staff will know where to credit the contribution.
3. **Join!** Join my team [insert team name] at plungeoregon.org

To learn more about this amazing winter fundraiser, visit plungeoregon.org to find out all the chilly details.

Think warm thoughts for me as February [change to your Plunge date] approaches. Can you believe how much **WARMTH** can come out of so much **COLD**? Your support changes lives!

Thank you!

[Plunger Name]

Special Olympics Oregon Fact Sheet

WHO WE ARE: Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR) is a statewide year-round sports program for Oregon's children and adults with intellectual disability. Oregon offers training and competition opportunities in 14 different Olympic-style sports. We serve the largest disability population in the state, more than 14,000 participants, ages eight and above.

OUR MISSION AND VISION: The mission of SOOR is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

The vision of SOOR is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected, and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens.

OUR HISTORY: The concept for Special Olympics was born in the early 1960s when Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a day camp for people with intellectual disabilities at her home in Rockville, Maryland. The first International Special Olympics Games were held in 1968 at Soldier's Field, Chicago with 1,000 athletes participating from 26 states and Canada.

HOW WE'VE GROWN: Mrs. Shriver's vision of an international sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities, one that would bring the joy and pride developed through sports competition to those the world believed could not learn or play sports, has grown into one of the largest and most successful sports and volunteer organizations in the world. Special Olympics programs are in every state and in over 160 countries worldwide, serving close to four million athletes every year.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Eligible athletes are all children and adults, at least eight years old, with intellectual disabilities, a cognitive delay, or a closely related developmental disability. Children age six and seven may participate in Special Olympics training but may not compete.

OUR GAMES ARE ALWAYS: There are training and competition opportunities every day throughout the year. Our programs are free to all eligible athletes and are possible thanks to the generous support from individuals and businesses who believe in Special Olympics athletes. Financial support comes from individuals, organizations, corporations, and foundations. The average cost of supporting one athlete, for one season is \$150.00. Your support changes lives.