

The Reach out grant applications have been posted on the Montana Swimming website and are due to me by October 16. The grant program awards funding to Montana Swimming teams to provide opportunities for low income/outreach, minority, LGBTQ, and disabled athletes to participate in swimming through such activities as learn to swim camps, scholarships, providing training equipment or swimsuits and more. Only Montana Swimming member teams may apply for the grant funding. The grant program requirements and applications are posted on the Montana Swimming website under the diversity/disability tab. I would like to thank to Montana Swimming Athlete Representative Addy Lewis (MAC) and Finance Vice Chair Tracy Flikkema (BAC) for serving on the grant committee. Thank you everyone for the continued support of the program. I am amazed by the applications we have received and how the funding has helped the teams reach out to deserving athletes in their communities. The 2023 spring grant applications are posted on the website and are due March 20.

I have been a member of the Western Zone DEI committee since it was founded. In March I was formally appointed as the Western Zone DEI Coordinator by USA Swimming. The WZ DEI committee meets monthly on the first Monday of the month at 8:00 pm Pacific time. I am also a member of the USA Swimming DEI Alignment group, and we meet monthly. The group includes Leland Brown II, USA Swimming DEI Program Coordinator, Noah Wilson, USA Swimming coordinator of DEI programs and education, the four zone DEI coordinators, and Maritza McClendon, and Wade Atkins.

The WZ DEI Committee proposed increasing the WZ DEI funding from the current ten cents per every registered athlete member of each of the 17 Western Zone LSCs to twenty cents affective for the 2023 registration year. The proposal passed during the Western Zone meeting Sunday.

The Hardin Otters Swim Team are hosting a swim clinic and workshop plus a swim meet the third weekend in November in Hardin. Kristen Wyatt will lead a great team of coaches who will be teaching the athlete portion of the swim clinic. I will be joined by either Leland Brown or Noah Wilson from USA Swimming to teach the parent workshop. The parent workshop will include discussions on DEI, safe sport, and officiating. There will also be a talk about DEI and safe sport for the athletes. It will be exciting to have USA Swimming representatives visiting Montana!

Information about the Montana Swimming athlete outreach membership policy can be found on the website. This past fall we voted to add swimmers with a disability to qualify for outreach membership. Part of the qualifying process requires teams to submit a letter to the Montana Swimming Registrar verifying the athlete is disabled and the athlete must register as a disability athlete in the appropriate category (P1, P2, P3). The COVID-19 pandemic outreach memberships will be phased out at the end of August. A year-round outreach membership is \$7.00 per athlete. If a family member has lost his/her/their job or had hours reduced, please check out the outreach membership as your children may qualify.

I have been contacted by several persons in the LSC who are interested in learning more about DEI. Thank you to Pat King (GFST) for reaching out to me to learn more about DEI and how make an impact in the Great Falls community. I also spoke with Megan Belasco (BOZ) about how we can improve services for disability athletes in the LSC. I hope to host some online meetings so members of Montana Swimming can discuss how to include DEI in their clubs. Look for an announcement to be posted on the website for upcoming meetings.

I would also like to encourage conversations between coaches, athletes with disabilities, and officials at swim meets to determine needed accommodations for a swimmer. As part of the discussion, this spring I have had the opportunity to talk with a few officials about how to provide better start commands for deaf/hard of hearing swimmers by asking where the athlete would like the starter to stand. Sometimes moving a step or two to one side or the other can make it so much easier for a hearing-impaired athlete to see the starter. Also, USA Swimming has updated the officials N2 and N3 starter evaluation guidelines to include starts for hearing impaired athletes and the new evaluation templates which have been posted online. Robert Scandary, Colorado Swimming, worked with and evaluated starters at the Speedo Sectional meet at Mt Hood and at Junior Nationals in Irvine over the summer. Robert worked specifically with the starters to improve their skill set to start hearing impaired swimmers. There were several proposals dealing with hearing impaired start procedures debated during the USA Swimming HOD meeting but were defeated.

I would like to encourage all our athlete members and non-athlete members to check the box for ethnicity when registering with USA Swimming this fall using the new online member registration (OMR) process. The information is used by USA Swimming and helps them understand if programming and resources are of value to everyone in the organization. The information does not identify individual persons.

USA Swimming announced their new Policy 19 for transgender athletes this spring. The policy is posted on the website. The policy explains how a transgender athlete may compete in USA Swimming. FINA also announced their transgender policy this summer which deals with elite level athletes at the international level.

The Montana Swimming website features a tab for diversity and inclusion as well as disability swimming. Numerous resources can be found there.

If you have question about diversity and inclusion, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Huckleby
Montana Swimming DDEI Chair
September 26, 2022