**USA SWIMMING**   
**WESTERN ZONE OFFICIAL REIMBURSMENT PROGRAM**

The Western zone is currently the only Zone in USA Swimming to offer monetary support for officials attending and working the two Annual Zone Meets, Age Group and Senior.

Currently there are two separate programs for officials funding – the Mentor Mentee program and the Reimbursement program. These programs are funded by splash fees and relay entries. The goals of these programs, aside from monetary incentive, is to help foster athlete friendly mentoring learning environments for all officials. But especially officials newer to regional officiating where these meets might be the first ones they experience out of their LSC. Officials then take back their experiences to the LSCs. It is hoped this learning spreads an athlete friendly atmosphere and mentoring environment for officials. However, the administration of the two programs has beendifficult. It’s been hard to get officials from all LSC’s to participate and to separate the programs and distribute funds expeditiously.

For 2018, for the purpose of changing the program’s administrative challenges, the Western Zone *will* combine the two programs into a single program for each meet, Age Group and Senior Zones. It is imperative we maintain the original goals of the Mentor Mentee program – fostering a learning environment for all officials, creating feedback from Sr officials to officials newer to regional competition and keeping the athlete in mind. A combination of the two programs will allow more participation of officials in the mentoring aspect of the program.

There are several ways to encourage the Mentoring aspect of the programs – from deck assignments – toshort presentations of Sr. Officials about the differences between LSC Meets and larger regional and national type meets. Senior officials will be expected to offer suggestions and input and answer questions from newer officials about the larger meet format. Additionally, newer officials will be expected to take advantage of these interactions as well. This can be accomplished through informal interactions at the meet or in a formal Officials get-together as well.

To be eligible, officials should be nominated by their LSC Officials Chair – however, officials may apply to the Western Zone Officials Representative as well to be included. Officials will be expected to work all sessions but one and participate in the programs as described above. Officials cannot be receiving funding from any other source to be eligible for reimbursement from these programs.

Funding is available for two participants per LSC. There are 17 LSCs. This makes 34 slots for funding – if an LSC does not use their slots, the reimbursement money goes back into the pool and the next official applying will receive funding. It is anticipated all official~~s~~ meeting the criteria will be eligible for reimbursement; however, to date, there has never been enough applications to fill the full 34 slots. Let’s work together to change that for the future!

Thank you -

Mike Dill

Western Zone Officials Chair.