

“What We Heard From You” – Leadership Conference 2018

Reorganization Related Items

1. Why were smaller programs not represented on the Reorganization Committee?

Response/Follow-Up – While a diverse group of volunteers were included on the committee, we agree that not having representation from smaller, more rural Programs was a miss. This had also been brought to the committee’s attention via early feedback from local Programs. The committee discussed prior to Leadership and determined they will address this “gap” by ensuring adequate representation from these Programs as part of the larger groups of stakeholders being added to the sub-committees which will be conducting the next phase of work.

2. Multiple concerns were expressed about the proposed Regional Structure including:

- Regions are too large
- Smaller programs may get “swallowed up” or forgotten in these larger regions (allocations, loss of control, etc.)
- Distances athletes must travel for trainings/general transportation concerns
- # of athletes not comparable across regions

Response/Follow-Up – The committee reviewed multiple factors (i.e. travel distances, potential athlete growth, potential donors, media markets, etc.) as they outlined the initial proposed regional map. In the next phase of work, one or more of the sub-committees will be asked to take another look at all of these concerns to ensure they are understood and fully addressed.

3. Not enough information was provided on how future fundraising and current local program funds will be managed.

Response/Follow-Up – The initial work of the Reorganization Committee was focused primarily on structure. The critical need to address and resolve fundraising and finance-related questions, raised by many of you during Leadership, was also noted by the committee itself during their Phase 1 work. However, recognizing the importance of these issues, the committee determined that the best approach would be to dedicate the efforts of one of the sub-committees in Phase 2 specifically to financial-related topics. This will permit the team to focus appropriate energy and attention to addressing these important matters while ensuring a broad and representative group of stakeholders are included.

4. Programs don’t want to lose their local program identity.

Response/Follow-Up – Similar to questions related to finances noted above, the committee itself noted the importance of local identity during their early work. This was reinforced by many of you throughout the weekend via your comments and questions. We understand and agree – any final solution proposed must address important issues of local identity for both

athletes and volunteers. These issues will be the primary focus of one of the reorg sub-committees.

5. There was interest in reviewing and understanding what other states that have reorganized have done and how it has worked out.

Response/Follow-Up – The committee met with, interviewed, and obtained data from multiple other states as part of their work. Due to time constraints, only a very high-level summary could be presented at Leadership. But, the data is available to anyone who is interested in reviewing it. There is a significant amount of information available which by its sheer size and scope makes it difficult to post and share. So, if you are interested in reviewing any of this information, please contact Susan Wyland directly at swyland@specialolympicspa.org and she can provide the most relevant information based on your particular interest or question.

6. There was significant interest and support reinforcing the committee’s effort to make changes to realign roles and shift administrative tasks to enable local volunteers to focus their time on working directly with athletes.

Response/Follow-Up – One of the guidelines provided to the reorganization committee from the very start was to align roles and responsibilities (and workload) appropriately and equitably to ensure we are getting the best from all staff and volunteers while providing enjoyable, enriching, rewarding experiences. Your feedback at Leadership underscored the importance of this, and it will remain a focus as the committee continues their work.

General

7. There are ongoing struggles with the background clearance and volunteer registration processes which are causing programs to lose current volunteers and deterring new volunteers from registering.

Response/Follow-Up – We have been working for many months with the vendors for both Vsys (database/registration) and Verified Volunteers (background checks) to develop and implement process and software changes to make things easier and faster. While many changes have already been implemented behind the scenes, several of the key fixes we’ve identified to improve our processes have yet to be implemented. Thank you for sharing your ongoing concerns with us. We are not satisfied with the progress we’ve been making to address these critical needs and are redoubling our efforts. We expect the final upgrades and changes will be implemented over the next two months.