



**The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics is a year-round fundraising and awareness movement organized by law enforcement officers from around the world.**

As the largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics, the LETR raised over \$51 million in 2014. Since its inception in 1981, it has grown extensively worldwide with over 85,000 volunteers spanning 46 nations, 12 Canadian Provinces and 50 US States; raising more than \$560 million for the Special Olympics movement. Fundraising is only part of what the officers involved with the initiative give to the movement. Our athletes say law enforcement officers are truly supportive of the cause — extending to them friendship, acceptance and encouragement. Each year, law enforcement officers from across the state raise money for Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) by participating in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.

### **How Does it Work?**

Law Enforcement officers run one to four mile legs of a relay that traverses their state or nation, carrying the lighted Special Olympics Torch to the Opening Ceremonies of their Special Olympics Games. Participating officers and agencies raise funds through various fundraisers such as the Polar Plunge and other events.

In addition to the relay, there are numerous special events that take place throughout the year to raise funds for SOPA. These Torch Run events raise untold awareness for the Special Olympics movement, and involve literally hundreds of law enforcement officers who volunteer their time to plan and organize events like the Polar Plunge and Truck Convoy.

### **What Agencies Are Involved?**

All law enforcement agencies are represented in the Torch Run, including police chiefs, police officers, Secret Service and FBI agents, military police, sheriffs, corrections officers and state troopers. In Pennsylvania we have huge representation and involvement from the Philadelphia PD, Pittsburgh PD, Pennsylvania State Police, Allegheny County Police Department, FBI – Pittsburgh, ATF – Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, USSS – Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, Penn Hills Police Department, Murrysville Police Department, Franconia PD, Upper Gwynedd Township Police Department and Bensalem PD just to name a few. In 2015 the LETR raised over 1.5 million for SOPA.

The IACP endorses the Torch Run, as do numerous federal, state, city and county law enforcement agencies. Every two years Law Enforcement Torch Run representatives from each participating state and nation carry the Special Olympics Torch to the Opening Ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Games.

### **The History**

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, the largest grassroots fundraising program benefiting Special Olympics, began in 1981 when Wichita, Kansas Police Chief Richard LaMunyon saw an urgent need to raise funds for and increase awareness of Special Olympics.

The idea for the Torch Run was to provide local law enforcement officers with an opportunity to volunteer with Special Olympics in the communities where the officers lived and worked. After three years of successful runs in Kansas, Chief LaMunyon presented his idea to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which endorsed Special Olympics as its official charity through the Torch Run. Today, all 50 states and over 46 countries have their own versions of the Torch Run.

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Norristown, PA, 19403  
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[www.specialolympicspa.org](http://www.specialolympicspa.org)



## Law Enforcement Torch Run Benefits to the Law Enforcement Community

1. The image of the law enforcement in many communities has been improved due to the involvement with the Torch Run and Special Olympics. Officers are seen as friends and people, rather than uniforms.
2. Working with Special Olympics through the Torch Run accomplishes many departments' community policing goals by providing a helping hand outside their regular law enforcement duties.
3. Working with the Torch Run provides excellent positive media exposure through coverage of the Torch Run itself and the special fundraising events associated with Special Olympics.
4. Working with the Torch Run and for Special Olympics provides personal fulfillment as well as departmental team achievements.
5. Creating and managing fundraising event and public awareness campaigns for Special Olympics requires time management, attention to detail and organizational skills. Potential leaders within the department can be identified and encouraged to develop their leadership skills.

**The Torch Run provides a common cause and bond for members of a department working shifts at various locations and times, and bonds officers with the larger brotherhood/sisterhood of law enforcement for a common cause.**

### How Can Your Department Become More Involved In The Law Enforcement Torch Run?

1. Encourage your fellow officers to participate in a local Torch Run. Run in a leg or start a new route through your area.
2. Encourage your fellow officers to participate in current special events and fundraisers in your area. Get a team together for your local golf tournament, Polar Plunges or any other fundraising event. Ask an athlete to be on your team.
3. Use Torch Run as a leadership training tool. By giving officers the opportunity to organize and run Torch Run events, you give them a chance to develop or enhance their leadership and management skills.
4. Adopt-An-Athlete programs give departments a personal relationship with one athlete and allow them as a group to track the athlete's progress.
5. Invite athletes to speak at your department meetings. Through our Athlete Leadership Programs and Global Messenger initiative, SOPA trains athletes to be public speakers. Hearing an athlete speak will give officers a better understanding of Special Olympics.
6. Bring officers to local Special Olympics Games to award medals and see our athletes compete. Close personal contact with the athletes during a competition is the best way to motivate officers to become more involved in Special Olympics.
7. Encourage officers to become Unified Sports® Partners. Special Olympics Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to train and compete on the same teams.
8. Encourage officers to become coaches. Help Special Olympics athletes reach their potential through sports by teaching them the skills they need to compete and win.
9. Create a new Torch Run fundraiser in your area. Your imagination is the limit, but be sure to work with your local Special Olympics Program to incorporate appropriate themes and messages.

**\$675,503,782**

**RAISED BETWEEN 1981-2016**

**\$56,641,050**

**RAISED IN 2016**

### FUNDS\* RAISED BY REGION 2

Delaware  
**\$598,409**

Pennsylvania  
**\$1,536,464**

Maryland  
**\$2,592,382**

Virginia  
**\$1,174,085**

New Jersey  
**\$3,517,373**

West Virginia  
**\$2,650**

New York  
**\$2,004,298**

\*Numbers based on  
2015 Audited Gross  
Fundraising



**112 PROGRAMS IN**

**45 COUNTRIES**



**United States (53)**  
**Canada (12)**  
**Europe (22)**  
**Caribbean (15)**  
**Oceania (7)**  
**East Asia (3)**

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