

**USA Swimming Athlete Partnership Agreement**  
**January – August 2026**  
**Policy Manual**





## APA Contacts

### General APA Questions

Stacy Michael-Miller, Director, National Team Support and Services [smichael@usaswimming.org](mailto:smichael@usaswimming.org)

### USA Swimming Staff Contacts

<https://www.usaswimming.org/meet-the-team/national-team>

### APA Contacts:

Stacy Michael-Miller, Director, National Team Support and Services [smichael@usaswimming.org](mailto:smichael@usaswimming.org)  
Wendy Bartlett, Senior Manager, Athlete Marketing [wbartlett@usaswimming.org](mailto:wbartlett@usaswimming.org)

### Athlete Partnership Review Committee -Training/Competition

Billy Doughty	Steering Committee Chair
Katie Meili	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative
Caitlin Leverenz Smith	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative (alternate)

### Athlete Partnership Review Committee – Marketing

TBD	Board of Directors Representative (appointed by the Chairman of the Board)
TBD	Board of Directors Representative (appointed by the Chairman of the Board)
Katie Meili	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative
Caitlin Leverenz Smith	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative (alternate)

### Taxes

As indicated by the USOPC about direct athlete support (including stipends): “Please be aware that all USOPC grants, except Tuition Grants, will be reported to the IRS and are subject to federal and state income tax. Since no taxes are being withheld by the USOPC, you may have a tax liability at the time you file your tax return, and you may want to consider setting aside some funds for this purpose. The USOPC is not offering tax advice, but recipients of USOPC funding and benefits are advised to retain their own tax professionals to receive guidance regarding tax implications.”

USA Swimming provides equitable support for its athletes and complies with the Equal Pay for Team USA Requirements of the Act. The USA Swimming Equal Pay Policy can be found in this Manual.



## January – August 2026 Athlete Partnership Agreement Qualifying Criteria

- **To be eligible for the Athlete Partnership Agreement athletes must:**
  - Have reached the age of 18 years
  - Have exhausted or given up his/her NCAA eligibility
  - Meet the [established criteria](#).
    - Athletes may only qualify in one category (pool or open water)



### Athlete Partnership Eligibility Form

Please return via email to Stacy Michael-Miller ([smichael@usaswimming.org](mailto:smichael@usaswimming.org)).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a professional athlete and certify that I have exhausted my NCAA eligibility and am eligible to receive the monthly stipend established in the Athlete Partnership Agreement. I understand that I am responsible for paying taxes on all funds that I receive. I understand the important implications listed below that accompany the acceptance of these funds.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a professional athlete and certify that I have relinquished any future NCAA eligibility and am eligible to receive the monthly stipend established in the Athlete Partnership Agreement. I understand that I am responsible for paying taxes on all funds I receive. I understand the important implications listed below that accompany the acceptance of these funds.

\_\_\_\_\_ I decline the opportunity to sign the Athlete Partnership Agreement. I understand that I will receive the monthly stipend for qualified athletes at the reduced rate. I understand that I am responsible for paying taxes on all funds that I receive. I understand the important implications listed below that accompany the acceptance of these funds.

All funds will be reported to the IRS and are subject to federal and state income tax. Since no taxes are withheld, you may have a tax liability at the time you file your tax return; if you anticipate such a liability, you should consider setting aside some funds for this purpose.

Athlete's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 2026 Competition Requirements Pool

Unless excused in writing by USA Swimming due to injury or other circumstances, Athlete shall compete in the following events:

### Pool:

A minimum of four (4) USA Swimming or World Aquatics-sanctioned LCM competitions from January 1, 2026 – August 31, 2026.

- a) Two (2) of these competitions must be TYR Pro Swim Series competitions
- b) One (1) must be the 2026 Pan Pacific Championships or the 2026 Toyota National Championships if not participating in the 2026 Pan Pacific Championships
- c) One (1) must be a LCM competition of the athlete's choice

### Open Water:

A minimum of four (4) USA Swimming or World Aquatics-sanctioned LCM competitions from January 1, 2026 – August 31, 2026. These competitions must include the following:

- a) 2026 Open Water National Championships.

## Actively Training and Competing

“Actively training and competing” for pool athletes means that an:

- Athlete's primary coach submits a quarterly training acknowledgement to USA Swimming and
- Athlete must compete in a minimum of four USA-Swimming or World Aquatics-sanctioned LCM competitions from January 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026. Two of these competitions must be Pro Swim Series stops. One must be either Nationals or Pan-Pacific Championships.

“Actively training and competing” for open water athletes means that an:

- Athlete's primary coach submits a quarterly training acknowledgement to USA Swimming and
- Athlete must compete in a minimum of four (4) USA Swimming or World Aquatics-sanctioned LCM competitions from January 1, 2026 – August 31, 2026. These competitions must include the 2026 Open Water National Championships.

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## Administrative Deadlines

### **APA Requirements:**

- *Maintain current USA Swimming membership including all Background Screen and Athlete Protection Training requirements.*
- *Comply with all applicable rules and requirements of AQUA, WADA, USADA, and the U.S. Center for SafeSport, including without limitation, doping control rules, guidelines and deadlines.*
- *Comply with deadlines for forms, information requests, etc. as required by USA Swimming.*
- ***Not complying with deadlines may result in a delay on payment of the athlete's monthly stipend.***

### **Doping Control**

These deadlines are established to ensure compliance with AQUA/ITA and USADA deadlines.

#### Quarterly Whereabouts Filings:

April - June Whereabouts Filing Due

March 15, 2026

#### Daily Training and Competition Travel Updates:

Doping Control updates must be submitted anytime an athlete's schedule changes from what s/he listed on the quarterly whereabouts filing, as well as for competitions and travel. Competition updates must be submitted to USADA prior to travel to the event and should be submitted in Athlete Connect. Updates must be submitted for any changes to the quarterly schedule submitted to USADA. This list is not inclusive.

Toyota National Championships

10K World Cup Series

Travel to Olympic and Paralympic Training Centers

USA Swimming National Team/International Team trips

All appearances (including non-USA Swimming appearances)

Travel to compete or train internationally

TYR Pro Swim Series

National Team Camps

APA Appearances

World Aquatics World Cups

Personal travel

### **Forms Required to Receive APA Stipend**

1. 2026 Athlete Designee Form **due** upon receipt of email from USOPC
2. 2026 W-9 form **due** when APA contract is signed.\*
3. 2026 Direct Deposit form **due** when APA contract is signed.\*

\*If nothing has changed with the account information on file, no w9 form/direct deposit form, is required.

If you need to update this information please email Stacy ([smichael@usaswimming.org](mailto:smichael@usaswimming.org)) and she will ensure you receive the required forms.

The USOPC requires all athletes receiving Direct Athlete Support to submit an Athlete Designee Form each year. USA Swimming is then responsible for providing the USOPC with a list each month confirming who is eligible to receive payment for the next month. USA Swimming shall work with the USOPC to make every effort to have the funds deposited on or before the 5th of every month during the Term.

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## Menu of Appearances

**APA Requirement:** Athletes have two appearances to complete for the January – August 2026 APA contract period. Each appearance is a commitment up to 4 hours. Appearances can be defined in multiple ways to provide the most flexibility to the athlete. A full schedule will be created with timelines and a sign-up form for athletes to designate their participation on a first come, first serve basis. This is NOT exhaustive but provides examples to show the options. Athletes are able to pick any option between January – August 2026 and both sides would jointly approve. Athletes should work with the USA Swimming’s Senior Manager, Athlete Marketing to identify appearances at least 30 days in advance in an effort to prevent past or near-term appearances. USA Swimming would also become a promotional partner to help support these events (see PR Support below).

### **Guiding Principles:**

Understanding that athletes are involved in a wide variety of philanthropic opportunities, the “spirit” is to ask that the athlete appearances achieve the following:

- Support the values and mission of USA Swimming
- Encourage kids to take up swimming as a healthy and positive activity
- Directly promotes swimming and the healthy lifestyle that the sport represents
- Provide the best opportunity to attract positive media attention (ex. traditional or social)
- Be a positive representative of our sport
- Athlete is the key focus of the promotional activity
- Athlete has not already been compensated or otherwise obligated to perform the appearance

### **Potential Appearance Opportunities to include: (In-Person or Virtual)**

- **Charity Participation:**
  - Participation in USA Swimming Foundation events or camps
  - Athlete creates his/her own charity event/promotion (See guiding principles above)
- **Events/Speaking Opportunities:**
  - Autograph signing at TYR Pro Swim Series meets, National Championships and/or U.S. Open
  - Pre-event promotions to drive awareness of events
    - National Championships
    - Olympic Trials ticket sales
    - TYR Pro Swim Series
    - Toyota U.S. Open
  - Coaching clinics and workshop & leadership events guest speaker
  - National Diversity Camp guest speaker
  - Safe Sport promotion
  - Select camp guest speaker
  - Swimposium speaker appearance or photo shoot to promote USA Swimming’s grow the sport initiatives
  - Appearance to promote USA Swimming’s New Member initiatives and other USA Swimming marketing programs

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- USA Swimming Productions
- **Community Relations:**
  - USA Swimming organized school, military or hospital visits around events or camps
  - USA Swimming organized surprise visits or clinics for member swim teams or inner-city clubs
- **Social Media:**

Athlete agrees to participate in two (2) USA Swimming social media campaigns. “Participation” will be defined as any/all of the following:

  - Tweets
  - Instagram posts

Specific responsibilities for each campaign will be outlined in the initial request from USA Swimming. Participation will be at zero cost to USA Swimming.

### **APA Appearance Request Form**

If an athlete is approached to do a non-sponsored/non-paid community event, please send the details of the appearance in the form below to Wendy Bartlett. USA Swimming will review the opportunity and let you know if it's an acceptable appearance. You must submit the appearance form at least two weeks in advance so we have time to promote it to the community. Past appearances will not count towards your requirements.

1. Event Name:
2. Short Description of event:
3. Is this event sponsored by anyone?
4. Event Website (If applicable):
5. Date:
6. Time Commitment (up to 4 hours based on athlete contract):
7. Location:
8. Responsibilities of athlete (i.e. – motivational talk, autographs, photo, etc.):
9. Event Contact's Name:
10. Email:
11. Phone:
12. Do you need autograph cards?
13. How many do you need?
14. Where would you like the cards mailed?

### **Corporate Partner Networking:**

USA Swimming will make best efforts to introduce athletes to corporate partners through networking events such as the following:

- Meet and greet with donors or corporate partners
- Receptions with donors or corporate partners
- Sponsor workshops

**Public Relations Support:**

For items selected on the menu above, USA Swimming will provide promotional resources to help increase publicity for the athlete and his/her appearance. When an athlete selects an appearance from above and it's considered mutually newsworthy from both parties, we will work together to promote these efforts.

USA Swimming will provide the following:

- *Media Coverage:* USA Swimming will endeavor to work with the athlete to garner media coverage in their local market for the event.
- *Social Media:* USA Swimming will selectively use posts to highlight the event and the athlete's experience during their upcoming appearance in an effort to build both fan bases. A member of USA Swimming communications staff will reach out to the athlete prior to the appearance to provide additional guidance on maximizing exposures through social media platforms.

Athlete will provide the following:

- *Quote:* Athlete will send a quote (2-3 sentences) about the upcoming event to the USA Swimming communications staff via email or by phone at least three (3) days prior to event.
- *Social Media:* It is recommended to post a minimum of three (3) dedicated posts on your social channels to help promote your activity in the community (X, Facebook, Instagram, etc.). The recommended times is one (1) before the event, one (1) during the event and one (1) after the event. In the real-time posts, please include photos and mention @USASwimming when possible.

**Travel Reimbursements for Appearances:**

Athletes will receive reasonable travel reimbursements for all appearances, not surrounding a major competition. If you are competing at a major competition and receiving National Team travel assistance, you will not receive additional travel reimbursements for the appearance. Please see below some general guidelines on how you will be reimbursed for appearances. Please do not hesitate to ask prior to the appearance how you will be reimbursed.

- Local Appearance:
  - Local appearances to be considered as within 3 hours of your residence
  - Mileage or Cab fare to/from appearance
  - Parking and/or Tolls
  - Meal reimbursement to be determined based on length of appearance
- Non-Local / Out-of-State Appearance:
  - Non-Local appearance to be considered as 3+ hours from your residence
  - Flight to be booked through USA Swimming travel agency
  - If you decide to drive, you will be reimbursed up to the average cost of the flight (Mileage/Tolls/Parking)
  - Rental car
  - Cab fares to/from airport or appearance
  - Meals
  - Hotel
  - Incidentals
- Appearance at a Major Competition:
  - If you are receiving the National Team travel assistance for competing, you will not receive additional travel reimbursements for the appearance
  - If you are not competing and decide to participate in an appearance surrounding a major competition, you will be reimbursed similar to a local or non-local / out-of-state appearance



## **Athlete Partnership Agreement Checklist**

***Not complying with deadlines may result in a delay in payment of the athlete's monthly stipend.***

### **I have completed the following:**

- Submitted my signed APA contract to Stacy ([smichael@usaswimming.org](mailto:smichael@usaswimming.org)) by December 27
- Submitted my 2026 Athlete Designee form to USOPC upon receipt of USOPC email and no later than January 2 to be paid on January 12.
- Updated my W9/Direct Deposit information on file with USOPC if needed by sending an email to Stacy requesting the documentation
- Confirmed my 2026 USA Swimming membership, and my Background Screen and Athlete Protection Training requirements, are up to date and in good standing as of 12/31/2025
- Scheduled my appearances with Wendy Bartlett [wbartlett@usaswimming.org](mailto:wbartlett@usaswimming.org) to be completed by December 31, 2026
- Participated in at least two (2) APA appearances (supporting the USA Swimming Foundation or USA Swimming)
- Submitted my April - June 2026 Whereabouts Filing Due March 15, 2026
- Competed in the competitions required in the Athlete Partnership Agreement



## Dispute Resolution

The National Team Division will track compliance with all aspects of the APA. If either party disputes compliance or finds the other party in breach, the following steps will be taken:

### **Athlete Fails to Deliver Benefits to USA Swimming**

1. Complaints from the NGB must be made in writing to the Managing Director, National Team and the USA Swimming USOPC AAC Representative and shall detail the alleged violations by the athlete. The Managing Director, National Team shall forward a copy of the complaint to the Athlete.
2. The athlete will have fifteen (15) days to respond, in writing, to the complaint.
3. All complaints will be referred to the appropriate Athlete Partnership Review Committee for review and resolution. The Athlete Partnership Review Committee may request any additional information from the parties that it believes is necessary to reach a decision on the matter submitted. The Athlete Partnership Review Committee may, but is not required to, hold a hearing on the subject matter of the complaint.
4. The Managing Director, National Team will create a complete report of the meeting including remedial actions taken, penalties imposed, and deadlines established. The report will be signed by and distributed to all parties. It will be retained on file by the National Team.
5. The Managing Director, National Team will monitor that the parties fulfill the stipulations and obligations detailed in the Dispute Resolution Report, and provided that athlete complies with those stipulations and obligations, funding will be reinstated if it was withheld.

### ***Appeals Process***

1. If the athlete or the NGB disagrees with the findings of the Athlete Partnership Review Committee, an appeal may be made to the USA Swimming Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be provided with all materials submitted and may, but shall not be obligated to, hold a hearing on the subject matter of the complaint.
2. Appeals from the USA Swimming Board of Directors may be made to the American Arbitration Association using the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the AAA.

### **Athlete Partnership Review Committee -Training/Competition\***

Billy Doughty	Steering Committee Chair
Katie Meili	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative
Caitlin Leverenz Smith	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative (alternate)

\* Subject to change during funding term due to governance term limits

### **Athlete Partnership Review Committee – Marketing**

TBD	Board of Directors Representative (appointed by the Chairman of the Board)
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Katie Meili	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative
Caitlin Leverenz Smith	USOPC Athletes Advisory Council Representative (alternate)

*\*In the event of a conflict of interest, the President of USA Swimming shall appoint one or more alternates*

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### ***Accountability***

The Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee will keep records on all dispute resolution proceedings.

### **USA Swimming Fails to Deliver Athlete Benefits**

In the event that the NGB fails to deliver services or funding as agreed upon in the Athlete Partnership Plan, the following steps will be taken:

1. Athlete shall file a written report detailing USA Swimming's alleged failure to deliver services or funding. The Complaint shall be sent to the Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee and the Athlete's Advisory Committee Chairperson.
2. USA Swimming will have fifteen (15) days to respond, in writing, to the complaint.
3. All complaints will be referred to the appropriate Athlete Partnership Review Committee for review and resolution. The Athlete Partnership Review Committee may request any additional information from the parties that it believes is necessary to reach a decision on the matter submitted. The Athlete Partnership Review Committee may, but is not required to, hold a hearing on the subject matter of the complaint.
4. Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee shall notify the athlete, USA Swimming and appropriate Athlete Partnership Review Committee in writing of the decision, including any plan to correct default.
5. USA Swimming shall correct any defaults as required by the order and the Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee shall notify the athlete and Athlete Partnership Review Committee when such cures have been implemented.

### ***Appeals Process***

1. If USA Swimming fails to correct any default identified in the order, athlete has right to terminate partnership without penalty.
2. If the athlete or the NGB disagree with the findings of the Athlete Partnership Review Committee, an appeal may be made to the USA Swimming Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be provided with all materials submitted and may, but shall not be obligated to, hold a hearing on the subject matter of the complaint.
3. Appeals from the USA Swimming Board of Directors may be made to the American Arbitration Association using the Commercial Arbitration Rules of the AAA.

### ***Accountability***

The Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee will keep records on all dispute resolution proceedings.

### **Other Partnership Violations**

Suspension from National Team for any reason will result in suspension from the Athlete Partnership Plan and its funding and services. However, suspension from the Athlete Partnership Plan will not, in and of itself, result in suspension from the National Team; any possible suspension shall be addressed through the appropriate rules.

***Doping Violation:*** Services/funding will be suspended in the event of a doping violation according to the rules of the anti-doping authority handling the testing and USOPC National Anti-Doping Policy.

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**Safe Sport:** Services/funding could also be suspended in the event of a violation, or an alleged violation, of the SafeSport Code for the Olympic and Paralympic Movement, as determined or imposed by the U.S. Center for SafeSport or USA Swimming at the discretion of USA Swimming.

***Morality Clause Violation:***

The following shall be considered violations of the Athlete Partnership Agreement. If the athlete:

- fails to conduct him/herself with due regard to public conventions and morals;
- or engages in any situation or occurrence including, but not limited to, the use of illegal drugs or prohibited substances;
- or otherwise brings him/herself into public disrepute, contempt, scandal, or ridicule,

Penalties may include withheld funding, loss of services, or removal from the program and shall be imposed by the Managing Director, National Team or his/her Designee. Athlete may challenge the imposition of penalties according to the “Athlete Fails to Deliver Benefits to USA Swimming” section above.

***Failure to meet required deadlines or deadlines:*** Not complying with deadlines may result in a delay on payment of the athlete’s monthly stipend.

***Injury or condition preventing training:***

Unless otherwise agreed by USA Swimming in writing, Athlete shall train for peak swimming performance at key national and international events held during the Term. Athlete’s training shall be in accordance with his/her Athlete Training and competition calendar. Athletes must be actively training at an elite level and competing at an elite level in due course after that, to receive USA Swimming athlete performance funding. In the event Athlete incurs an injury or condition, physical or otherwise, USA Swimming may request and athlete shall authorize, a treating physician or provider to verify to USA Swimming (i) the injury or condition for which the physical or provider is treating athlete; (ii) that in the physician or provider’s professional opinion that Athlete cannot train for peak swimming performance at key national and international events held during the Term; (iii) that Athlete continues to benefit from the treatment or care of the physician or provider; and (iv) the estimated time frame in which Athlete is expected to return to training for peak swimming performance at key national and international events.

***Pregnancy.*** If Athlete becomes pregnant during the Term and notifies the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) of such pregnancy during the Term, Athlete will receive the same level of USOPC Elite Athlete Health Insurance (“EAHI”) and athlete funding she was receiving as the date of notification to the USOPC for the duration of her pregnancy and for one year after the pregnancy ends, provided Athlete intends to return to competition at an elite level and complies with the USOPC’s Retention of Benefits Terms and Conditions. Athlete shall not have any obligation to adhere to training or competition throughout her pregnancy or the one-year period following the birth of child or end of pregnancy. Upon conclusion of the one-year period, Athlete must re-qualify for USOPC EAHI and/or athlete funding. USA Swimming shall keep this status confidential and shall not discriminate or retaliate against Athlete for being pregnant.

## **Equal Pay Act Policy**

### **Section 1: Equivalent and Non-Discriminatory Consideration for Athletes**

*Pursuant to USA Swimming’s Equal Pay Act Policy (this “Policy”), all athletes, regardless of competition category,<sup>1</sup> representing the U.S. at an equivalent level of competition shall receive equivalent and non-discriminatory compensation, wages, benefits, medical care, travel arrangements, and reimbursements for expenses. This Policy ensures that USA Swimming provides equitable support and encouragement for participation by all athletes, regardless of competition category, as required by Ted Stevens Olympic & Amateur Sports Act (the “Act”), including its Equal Pay for Team USA requirements. This Policy applies to Covered Athletes, defined in the following three categories:*

- 1. Athletes selected annually to the Pool and Open Water National Teams, as defined by the Selection Procedures, here respectively: <https://www.usaswimming.org/meet-the-team/national-team>; <https://www.usaswimming.org/swimmers-parents/swimmers/open-water#national-team-hub>*
- 2. Athletes selected annually to the Pool and Open Water National Junior Teams, as defined by the Selection Procedures, here respectively: <https://www.usaswimming.org/meet-the-team/national-jr-team>; <https://www.usaswimming.org/swimmers-parents/swimmers/open-water#national-team-hub>.*
- 3. Athletes selected by USA Swimming to represent the U.S. in any international competition.*

*As demonstrated in each Selection Procedures document, selection criteria and priorities are identical for both competition categories.*

*Information on specific compensation, wages, benefits, medical care, travel arrangements, and reimbursements for expenses (“Athlete Funding”) for Covered Athletes can be found below. Though this Policy is not comprehensive nor is it a guarantee of benefits, USA Swimming will ensure that all athletes, regardless of competition category, representing the U.S. at an equivalent level of competition are offered the same benefits. This applies only to benefits provided by USA Swimming – outside parties may provide benefits to athletes in their own discretion, and USA Swimming shall not require that the athlete decline if similar benefits are not offered to others.*

*USA Swimming reserves the right to consider merit, performance, seniority, and quantity of play in determining compensation decisions. USA Swimming may also, in its discretion, provide more beneficial terms to athletes representing the U.S. to address disparities in outside income or any disparities in the compensation provided in international competitions. USA Swimming may elect to provide additional funding that is not equivalent to athletes regardless of competition category should it deem the additional funding necessary to enhance the development of a historically underdeveloped program. USA Swimming currently has no criteria in place that would result in gender disparities in opportunities for Athlete Funding, apart from the Donor Athlete Partnership Program (“DAPP”) described below, in which it considers financial need in athlete selection.*

USA Swimming will provide this Policy annually in a report to Congress, describing its compliance with the Equal Pay for Team USA provisions of the Act. USA Swimming will take all reasonable steps, in collaboration with affected athletes and its Athletes’ Advisory Council, to advocate to international

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<sup>1</sup> USA Swimming competition categories are “Men’s” and “Women’s.”

federations and event organizers for equal prizes, compensation, funding, and other athlete support, *such as through formal letters and/or direct advocacy.*

*In addition to the Athlete Funding requirements below, Covered Athletes should ensure that they also abide by the following:*

- 1.) Athletes competing for their High School Association must receive approval from their High School Association before accepting Athlete Funding.*
- 2.) Athletes who plan to compete in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (“NCAA”) but have not yet enrolled must contact the NCAA Eligibility Center for guidelines on accepting Athlete Funding.*
- 3.) Athletes who are currently competing in the NCAA must receive approval from their college or university’s compliance office before accepting Athlete Funding.*

## **Section 2: Compensation, Wages, and Benefits**

*USA Swimming provides compensation, wages, and benefits to athletes through (a) Direct Athlete Support, (b) the Athlete Partnership Agreement (“APA”), (c) DAPP funding, (d) other National Team and National Junior Team benefits, and (e) other competition benefits.*

### *A. Direct Athlete Support*

*Direct Athlete Support (“DAS”) is a stipend paid directly to athletes by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) based on eligibility criteria established by USA Swimming. National Team athletes qualify for DAS from the USOPC, provided they meet established eligibility criteria. USA Swimming applies eligibility criteria for DAS equally, regardless of competition category, and such criteria can be found here: <https://www.usaswimming.org/meet-the-team/national-team>.*

*Athletes selected to represent the U.S. in certain international competitions, such as Operation Gold competitions, may qualify for DAS if they meet the established qualifying criteria. Specifically, Operation Gold is a program funded by the USOPC that rewards athletes financially for qualifying and medaling in USA Swimming’s most competitive senior international competition of the year. The Operation Gold qualifying competitions are defined in a funding schedule agreed to by the USOPC and USA Swimming, along with the payment amounts for qualification and medaling. In some instances, more than one Operation Gold meet may be designated in a year. Any exceptions and/or additions are specified in the funding schedule.*

### *B. Athlete Partnership Agreement*

*USA Swimming may offer increased stipends through the APA to athletes. The APA provides funding to athletes who meet certain competition/appearance requirements and other criteria found in the Athlete Partnership Manual, which is published semi-annually and can be found here: <https://www.usaswimming.org/meet-the-team/national-team>. USA Swimming offers this funding equally, regardless of competition category. However, per NCAA rules, USA Swimming can only offer the APA to athletes who have exhausted or relinquished their NCAA eligibility.*

### *C. Donor Athlete Partnership Program*

*Athletes may also qualify for the USA Swimming Foundation’s DAPP funding. Through DAPP, the USA Swimming Foundation partners eligible athletes with donors who provide financial support and mentorship. Criteria for athlete eligibility are as follows, regardless of competition category:*

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- a. *Must be a current National Team member, have competed in the Operation Gold meet the previous year, or received a DAPP grant in the year preceding;*
- b. *Must not be currently competing in the NCAA or intend to compete in the NCAA;*
- c. *Must be actively training and competing in USA Swimming competitions; and*
- d. *Must be eligible to represent the U.S. in international competition.*

*Athletes who wish to participate in DAPP must complete an application demonstrating eligibility, interest, and need. Athletes will be paired with a donor, pending availability of donors.*

#### *D. Other National Team & National Junior Team Benefits*

*National Team athletes, regardless of competition category, shall receive the following benefits: an elite developmental tool, a communications tool, access to body workers at high-level domestic meets, race analysis and video support at high-level domestic meets, access to mental health resources, an invitation to an annual National Team camp, access to USOPC resources (e.g., nutrition professionals, strength & conditioning professionals, mental health resources, etc.), and periodic discounts on products or services provided by USA Swimming's corporate partners.*

*National Junior Team athletes, regardless of competition category, shall receive, at minimum, the following benefits: an apparel gift, race video support at high-level domestic meets, and an invitation to an annual National Junior Team camp.*

*Athletes shall receive, at minimum and regardless of competition category, the following benefits as a member of a team representing the U.S. in international competition: apparel, technical gear, and equipment sufficient to clothe and outfit athletes for the duration of the competition, and race analysis and video support for the duration of the competition.*

#### *E. Competition Benefits*

*The USOPC distributes USA Swimming-provided Operation Gold qualification funds to athletes who qualify for, and compete in, the Operation Gold meet of the year. The funds are offered equally to both competition categories but may differ between athletes who qualified in individual events and athletes who qualified to swim only in relays. Additional funding is given to athletes who medal in an Operation Gold meet. USA Swimming may elect to provide additional payments to athletes in the form of performance-based funds. USA Swimming may also offer prize money in individual Olympic events at national level competitions that are not utilized as selection meets for international teams. These funds are offered equally, regardless of competition category.*

*Additionally, USA Swimming distributes prize money provided by World Aquatics for World Aquatics-hosted events. Dependent upon approval by the USOPC and USA Swimming in the funding schedule, some of these funds may be distributed as Operation Gold funds. Any funds not included in the funding schedule will be distributed as prize money, which are subject to NCAA and/or High School Federation regulation. All of these funds are offered equally, regardless of competition category.*

### **Section 3: Medical Care**

*USA Swimming offers the following types of medical care: (a) health insurance, (b) mental health care, and (c) event-based care.*

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*A. Health Insurance*

All National Team athletes are eligible to enroll in Elite Athlete Health Insurance (“EAHI”) from the USOPC. Eligibility criteria can be found on the USA Swimming website and insurance is offered equally to athletes, regardless of competition categories. Athletes representing the U.S. in certain international competitions may receive access to EAHI. USA Swimming applies the eligibility criteria for EAHI equally to athletes in both competition categories. For any internationally competing athlete who does not qualify for EAHI, USA Swimming staff will purchase health insurance for the athlete for the duration of the competition. National Junior Team athletes are not eligible for EAHI, unless they otherwise qualify through selection to certain international competitions.

*B. Mental Health Care*

All Covered Athletes have access to mental health services provided by USA Swimming and National Team athletes may utilize the Athlete Assist program for financial assistance to apply towards external mental health practitioners.

*C. Event-Based Care*

For each international competition, USA Swimming’s Director, Sports Medicine selects the medical staff. These staff members are assigned such that all athletes, regardless of competition category, have equal access to the same number of medical professionals throughout the duration of the competition.

**Section 4: Travel Arrangements & Reimbursement**

USA Swimming provides travel assistance in the following categories: (a) team and competition travel, (b) U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center (“OPTC”) access, and (c) expense reimbursement. Additional information can be found in the Travel Policy: [https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/governance-lsc-website/rules\\_policies/operating-policy-manual.pdf](https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/governance/governance-lsc-website/rules_policies/operating-policy-manual.pdf).

*A. Team & Competition Assistance*

All National Team athletes, regardless of competition category, are eligible to receive a travel assistance stipend to national-level domestic competitions at which they are competing, as long as they swim in at least two days of the competition. If National Team and National Junior Team athletes are traveling for Team-related activities, USA Swimming provides a stipend to cover any incidental items. All athletes on a trip shall receive the same stipend, with variations occurring only based on length of travel days. USA Swimming purchases air travel and lodging for all international competitions. All athletes on a given team, regardless of competition category, stay in the same or similar locations.

*B. U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center*

All National Team athletes, regardless of competition category, may apply for reimbursement of up to \$500 for air travel per trip for one trip in a non-Olympic year and two trips in an Olympic year to train individually with their coach or with their club at the OPTC. The USOPC pays for lodging costs for athletes who are selected to the National Team for trips to train individually, with their club, or at a National Team camp at the OPTC. The USOPC also pays for lodging costs for National Junior Team athletes at National Junior Team Camp(s) hosted at the OPTC. If the USOPC does not pay all of the above listed costs, USA Swimming will cover any outstanding lodging costs.

FINAL

*C. Expense Reimbursement*

*All of the above, out-of-pocket expenses are subject to reimbursement, as outlined by the Travel Policy. Additionally, all Covered Athletes may also submit the following expenses related to international competition and/or National Team or National Junior Team travel for reimbursement by USA Swimming:*

- a. Airline baggage fees;*
- b. Rideshares, taxis, or other ground transportation;*
- c. Travel visa fees; and*
- d. Other expenses related to travel, at the discretion of USA Swimming staff.*