



Speed Skating Ontario Athlete Support Program 2025-2026

The Speed Skating Ontario (SSO) Athlete Support Program provides support through the Ontario Development Hubs Program and the Ontario High Performance Sport Initiative to athletes who live and train in Ontario and direct financial support to Ontario's top athletes who may be training at National Training Centres and their affiliate programs outside of Ontario.

Purpose

The SSO Athlete Support Program supports athletes pursuing selection to Speed Skating Canada's National Teams and NextGen Development Teams. Based on an athlete's demonstrated potential and commitment to high performance sport, this support allows Ontario athletes to continue to pursue athletic excellence and represent Ontario at the highest levels of national and international competition.

Objectives

- Support athletes in their development as they progress towards the National Teams and NextGen Development Teams.
- Facilitate access to appropriate daily training environments and competitions to pursue high performance sport.
- Provide financial support to offset the cost of training and competition.

ONTARIO HIGH PERFORMANCE AND HUB PROGRAMS

Information about the [Ontario High Performance Program](#) and the [Ontario Hubs Program](#) and their connection to the Ontario High Performance Sport Initiative (OHPSI) can be found on the SSO website.

ATHLETE FUNDING

Period of Eligibility

The criteria set out in this document defines the eligibility and selection criteria for the 2025-2026 season.

Athlete Funding Eligibility

To be eligible for financial support from SSO, athletes must meet all the following requirements:

- a. Be a member in good standing with Speed Skating Ontario and Speed Skating Canada for the current year and the full year prior to funding. Our membership year is September 1 to August 31.
- b. Have a National Athlete membership with SSO and race at national competitions.
- c. Be a permanent resident or citizen of Canada;
- d. Be a permanent resident of Ontario; athletes who have left the province temporarily to attend school or pursue training in another province/territory remain eligible for support;
- e. Sign the SSO Athlete Agreement;
- f. Compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario, wearing the appropriate Ontario suit (preferred), or suit of the regional training centre at which they train;
- g. The athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program or other funding organizations such as RBC Athlete.
- h. An athlete that receives Sport Canada funding (AAP Funding) is ineligible for the SSO Athlete Support Program;

Athletes Residing Outside of Ontario

Athletes who are temporarily living outside of the province of Ontario, but within Canada, to attend school or a regional training centre can remain eligible for athlete funding if they:

- Are registered with SSO as a National Athlete;
- Continue to represent Ontario at national and international competitions;
- Do not receive any funding from another province or territory, the Government of Canada or another country or other funding organizations such as RBC Athlete.

Athletes funded through the Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program (AAP):

Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted funding through Sport Canada's AAP within the Government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026) are not eligible for SSO's Athlete Support Program. Athletes receiving AAP funding or "carding" through Sport Canada will automatically be eligible for Ontario funding through the Ministry of Sport, provided they continue to represent Ontario and meet the Ministry's eligibility requirements.

Funding

The amount of available funding is determined each year by the Speed Skating Ontario Board of Directors. The amount of funding provided to each athlete in a specific year is determined by the number of qualifying skaters and the budget available.

The Speed Skating Ontario Board of Directors has approved up to \$36,000.00 in direct funding to athletes for the 2025-2026 funding cycle.

Short Track

Athletes eligible for short track funding will be selected using the Canadian Short Track Ranking Lists (Senior and Junior) established by Speed Skating Canada (SSC), under the direction of the High-Performance Committees (HPC), which will be released after the conclusion of Short Track Canada Cup Junior Final. We expect the national ranking lists will be available in early May 2026.

Freedom from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest is maintained by adhering to the results of the national ranking lists produced and prepared by SSC.

Funding will be awarded in two funding levels (Level One and Level Two). **Funding amounts for each Level is determined by the number of qualifying skaters and the budget available.**

Skaters ranked in the top 24 of the Canadian Short Track Senior Ranking List (April 2026) will be awarded Level One funding.

Skaters ranked in positions 25 or lower on the Canadian Short Track Senior Ranking List (May 2026) will be awarded Level Two funding.

Up to the top two (2) skaters on each of the female and male Canadian Short Track Junior Ranking List (May 2026) will be awarded Level Two funding. Junior skater(s) already captured in the Short Track Senior Ranking List will not be replaced by other Junior skater(s) from the Short Track Junior Ranking List.

A skater on both the Senior and Junior Short Track Ranking List will be considered only once, with the Senior list being considered before the Junior list.

Long Track

Athletes eligible for long track funding will be selected using the Canadian Long Track Ranking List established by Speed Skating Canada (SSC), under the direction of the High-Performance Committees (HPC), which will be released after the conclusion of Long Track Canada Cup Final. We expect the national ranking list will be available in April 2025.

Freedom from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest is maintained by adhering to the results of the national ranking list produced and prepared by SSC.

Funding will be awarded in two funding levels (Level One and Level Two). **Funding amounts for each Level is determined by the number of qualifying skaters and the budget available.**

Skaters that achieve two (2) top 24 rankings in an individual distance or in the Mass Start event will be awarded Level One funding.

Skaters that achieve at least one (1) top 45 ranking in a single distance or in the Mass Start event will be awarded Level Two funding.

Rationale for Selection Criteria

The SSO Athlete Support Program selection criteria are based on the year-end Speed Skating Canada Ranking Lists for the following reasons.

The use of the year-end SSC Ranking List:

- Provides more qualifying opportunities for funding than selecting from one event alone.
- Increases the opportunity for national racing development.
- Mitigates the risk/impact of having results from a single competition lower than an athlete's potential.
- Mitigates the risk/impact of having injury or health issues around a single event.
- Implements a system that enables more inclusive participation by reducing the need to apply for bye requests.

- Captures only athletes' best performances and allows athletes to drop their results with the lowest ranking or points earned. This allows the end of the season list to account for all scenarios.

Athlete Funding Requirements

All skaters must sign an Athlete Agreement which outlines the expectations and requirements of athletes who receive funding from Speed Skating Ontario. Agreements will be emailed to athletes directly.