

2025/2026 USABS Direct Athlete Support (DAS) Policy

This policy sets Direct Athlete Support (DAS) and Elite Athlete Health Insurance (EAHI) for the July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 period. Tier criteria and Stipend levels will be reset each year through mutual agreement by USABS and the USOPC. Updates from 2024/25 policy are highlighted in yellow.

The USABS has established this equivalent and nondiscriminatory criteria for athletes of equivalent disciplines and levels of competition to qualify for DAS regardless of gender.

DAS is granted to athletes with proven success in Olympic Games, World Championships, or who have potential to medal in these events. DAS will only be provided to athletes with the intention of helping offset training and competition expenses as they train for the upcoming Olympic Games. The policy outlined below looks to meet that intention with a basis on both past performance (Olympic Games/World Championship and World Cup results) as well as current status within the Bobsled/Skeleton Athlete Progression Pathway.

Athletes may be eligible to receive EAHI and/or a base stipend if they:

- Are a USABS member in good standing.
- Have signed and are abiding by the USABS Code of Conduct.
- Intend to compete for the USABS for the full Olympic quadrennial through the 2025/2026 season.

Additional expectations are included in the USABS Athlete Handbook.

EAHI

USABS has established this equivalent and nondiscriminatory criteria for male and female athletes to qualify for USOPC-funded EAHI.

EAHI will be awarded to athletes that qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend starting July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Athletes that do not qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend that were awarded EAHI up to July 1, 2025 will continue to be eligible until the naming of the 2025/2026 National team/Development Team. Athletes that qualify for Tier 3 stipend at the naming of the National Team/Development Team will be awarded EAHI through June 30, 2026.

Athletes who qualify for Tier 3 stipend at a later date during the 2025/2026 season will not be awarded EAHI until the next registration window **but will be considered EAHI-eligible for other USOPC support.**

Base Stipend

Athletes who qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 (described below) based on the results of 2024/2025 World Cup or World Championships competitions will receive the corresponding funding listed from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

Athletes who were on Tier 1 or Tier 2 for the 2024/2025 season but failed to qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 for the 2025/2026 season will qualify for Tier 3 starting July 1, 2025 (with the step-down additional stipend) until the naming of the National Team/Development Team.

All Athletes who ended the 2024/2025 season as qualified for Tier 3 (described in the 2024/2025 DAS Policy) will receive the Tier 3 funding listed below from July, 1 2025 until the naming of the 2025/2026 National Team/Development Team. Tier 3 status will then be reviewed at the naming of the National Team/Development Team. Athletes who then qualify for Tier 3 at the naming of the National

Team/Development Team will receive their stipend from then through June 30, 2026 or until they fail to meet the Tier 3 criteria.

The National Team and Development Team is defined by the [Skeleton Athlete Progression Pathway \(SAPP\)](#) or the [Bobsled Athlete Progression Pathway \(BAPP\)](#). World Cup, Europe Cup, and North America Cup status do not explicitly define National Team or Development Team status. While the 2025/2026 Selection Races are held primarily to determine World Cup, Europe Cup, and North America Cup racing quotas, according to the SAPP/BAPP, the pre-season competition and sliding is an opportunity for assessment for progression in the SAPP/BAPP.

If, at any time during the season, an athlete is promoted to the National Team or Development phase 2 level through the SAPP/BAPP, that athlete will begin receiving a Tier 3 stipend the following month.

The amount received is dependent on qualification to the tiers described below. Athletes will only receive the highest level of support for which they qualify.

* If, prior to the first World Cup race of the season, the Director of Sport Performance and the skeleton/bobsled Head Coach determine that a full 8-race World Cup season is not in the best interest of USABS for optimal results at World Championships/Olympics, or if a season does not include all eight World Cup races for a fully-funded athlete (defined according to the SAPP/BAPP), an appropriate number of World Cup races will be determined to define a full World Cup season and the corresponding 40%.

Regardless of the number of Mixed Team World Cup events during the 2024/25 season, the same number of top-3 (Tier 1) or top-6 (Tier 2) results as individual results are needed to count toward Tier 1 or Tier 2 qualification. That is, greater than 40% of the total number of World Cup individual events are required.

If a bobsled pilot achieves a Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend by World Cup results and not by World Championships/Olympic results, and no push athlete meets the 40% minimum number of top-3 or top-6 finishes to meet the Tier 1 or Tier 2 criteria, the push athlete that raced with the pilot earning the most IBSF World Cup points (according to the IBSF World Cup Ranking List) will also earn the same Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend. If a 4-man pilot achieves a Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend by World Cup results and not by World Championships/Olympic results, then 3 push athletes that competed with the pilot during the season that earned the most IBSF World Cup points will earn the same Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend as the pilot.

Additional Stipend

1. Athletes who received a Tier 1 or Tier 2 stipend during the 2024/2025 season but have dropped to a lower tier for the 2025/26 season will receive an additional 50% of their new stipend (i.e., Tier 2 will be \$1854/month and Tier 3 will be \$1081.50/month).^{**}
2. Athletes that have been **named to the World Cup Team** continuously for more than four consecutive years (**5+ years**) will be eligible to receive an additional \$250/month (i.e., Tier 1 will be \$2567.50/month, Tier 2 will be \$1486/month, Tier 3 will be \$971/month).^{**}

^{**}Note that, of the two possible additional stipends from above, an athlete can only receive one additional stipend.

3. Athletes receiving Tier 3 stipend or no DAS that were a part of at least two (2) top three ranked pushes/starts in the same discipline at the **2026 Olympics** will receive an additional \$250/month for March – June, 2026.

Tier Level	Distribution Period	Criteria
Tier 1: \$2,375.50 / month	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medalist (top 3) at the 2025 World Championships in an Olympic event, or Achieved top-3 finishes in at least 40% of the World Cup races* in one discipline in an Olympic event from the previous (2024/2025) season.*
Tier 2: \$1,236 / month	July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved a top 6 finish at 2025 World Championships in an Olympic event, or Achieved top-6 finishes in at least 40% of the World Cup races* in one discipline in an Olympic event from the previous (2024/2025) season.*
Tier 3: \$721 / month	July 1, 2025 – Naming of National Team/Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finished the 2024/2025 season earning Tier 3 stipend, or 2024/2025 Tier 1 or Tier 2 Athlete that did not qualify for Tier 1 or Tier 2 for the 2025/2026 season, or Achieved 2 x top-6 World Cup finishes in one discipline in an Olympic event from the previous (2024/2025) season.
	Naming of National Team/Development Team – Naming of Olympic Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2025/2026 Athlete in National Team phase (SAPP/BAPP). (NT push athletes must be selected for and competing in World Cup races), or 2025/2026 Athlete in Development Phase 2 (SAPP/BAPP). (DP2 push athletes must be selected for and competing in World Cup races)
	Naming of Olympic Team – June 30, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2026 Olympians and Ap Athletes

Maternity Leave

An athlete that becomes pregnant while receiving a stipend and/or EAH that intends to return to compete is able to receive support through the USOPC Athlete Pregnancy Support and Resources policy. Time missed from competing due to maternity leave will not be considered when awarding Additional Stipends 1 and 2.

Medical Hardship

An athlete, having already been named to a stipend tier, that is currently receiving a stipend who must forego a team selection competition (Selection Races or Push Championships) or IBSF competitions for at least a month due to an injury sustained while training or competing will continue to receive their current stipend and current EAH benefits through June 30, 2026. The athlete must complete a Medical Waiver form signed by the USABS Chief Medical Officer indicating that the injury and subsequent rehabilitation prohibits the athlete from competing. The athlete must provide updates with anticipated timeline for return to the Director of Sport Performance, Chief Medical Officer, and/or head coach when requested.