

ATHLETE FUNDING

DIRECT ATHLETE SUPPORT FUNDING CRITERIA FOR JULY 1, 2024, THROUGH MARCH 31, 2025:

Direct Athlete Support (DAS) is financial support for elite athletes in the form of monthly stipends to specifically assist athletes in reaching the podium at the next Olympic Games. The funding requires international success, an approved training plan with set goals, performance reviews, team event(s) or training participation, and a commitment to the training level required to reach the 2026 Winter Olympic Games podium as determined by US Speedskating (USS).

The following criteria was produced through a collaborative process between USS, USS Athlete Representatives, and the USOPC (United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee) Sport Performance team. Within DAS three factors determine the type or level of athlete support:

1. Results at the 2023-2024 World Championships.
2. Results or rankings from ISU sanctioned events as described in funding tiers.
3. Potential NTP Invitation/participation.

Identified tiers are predominantly determined by an athlete meeting the primary criteria results at the 2023-2024 World Championships; however, an athlete can satisfy certain secondary criteria based on performances from the 2022-2023 World Championships and/or ISU sanctioned events in the 2023-2024 season. Secondary criteria are in place to protect athletes that were unable to achieve primary criteria. Secondary criteria allow them an alternate method to qualify for DAS. Additionally, in cases of clearly documented injuries, USS may use its discretion to apply injury consideration funding.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY FOR ATHLETE DAS SUPPORT:

- Athlete must be eligible and intend to compete for Team USA at the 2026 Olympic Games.
- Athlete must qualify for the funding criteria as outlined below in Tiers 1-3, as an Emerging Elite athlete, or through injury consideration.
- Athletes identified as a DAS recipient must submit their annual performance plan to the Program Director and High Performance Director for approval by June 1, 2024. The plan will receive approval based on the rationale behind how the athlete will achieve their goals for the 2024-2025 season, and how the annual plan contributes to achieving the athlete's goals in 2026. If an athlete earns DAS through a team event, their 2024-2025 training plan must include a commitment to train for that team event. If their plan does not include the team event, then the athlete's DAS amount will be revisited and be based on their best individual distance or Mass Start result(s).
- Athletes identified as Emerging Elite must accept their full-time National Team Program (NTP) or be in an approved training program as per the Program Director and High Performance Director.
- DAS recipient athletes must participate in quarterly meetings with the High Performance staff (such as Program Director, NTP Head Coach and High Performance Director) to review their season goals and progress towards achievement of set goals. These meetings will aid USS in reporting on the progress of the athlete's pathway towards success in 2026.
- Athlete must sign and abide by US Speedskating's Code of Conduct and be a member of US Speedskating in good standing by July 1st of each season.

DEFINITION OF FUNDING TIERS 1-3, EMERGING ELITE, AND INJURY FUNDING CONSIDERATION

LONG TRACK

'Event' refers to one of either the Individual Distances, the Mass Start or the Team Pursuit.

'Individual Distances' refers to one of the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m (women), 5000m & the 10000m (men).

Mass Start – For DAS results, placement will be judged strictly on a finish time ranking in the Final and will not be based on any intermediate points earned or final placement.

Team Pursuit - For the purposes of these criteria, a "Team Member" in reference to an athlete's involvement with the Long Track Team Pursuit, is defined as an athlete who actively competes on the ice, in the event that the result is achieved. A substitute/reserve for the team pursuit will not be considered a team member of the team as it pertains to this document. Note for World Cup standings an athlete must have been a team member in at least two of the World Cup events that earned the overall World Cup Standings.

Long Track Time Chart - Shall be used to determine whether an athlete may meet one of the secondary criteria sub-points DAS based on the proximity of their performances in 2023-2024 relative to the finishing times at the 2023-2024 season's World Single Distance Championships (WSD). The Chart included below will be populated after the WSD. Only finishing times at 2023-2024 ISU will be considered for achieving Time Chart criteria.

ISU Events – Events that are considered ISU events are the ISU World Cups, ISU Junior World Cups, Junior World Championships, 4 C's Championships and World Single Distance Championships.

TIER 1 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA– LONG TRACK

Primary criteria- Athletes achieve Tier 1 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 WSD.

- Individual distance - Podium (Top 3) finish.
- Mass Start – Podium (Top 3) finish on finish time.
- Team Pursuit - Member of a Podium (Top 3) Team.

Should an athlete not achieve Tier 1 through the primary criteria, they can achieve Tier 1 status through any two (2) of the following secondary criteria sub-points in the same event below (see 'event' definition above).

- Individual Distance:
 - Two (2) Podium (Top 3) finishes at 2023-2024 World Cup events in the same distance.
 - Top 5 finish at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Podium (Top 3) finish at the 2022-2023 WSD.
 - A recognized ISU World Record skated in 2023-2024.
 - Achieve a Tier 1 time of the time chart in a 2023-2024 individual ISU event.

- Mass start:
 - Two (2) Podium (Top 3) finishes at 2023-2024 ISU World Cup events.
 - Top 5 finish on finish time at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Podium (Top 3) finish at the 2022-2023 WSD.
- Team Pursuit:
 - Two (2) Podium (Top 3) finishes at 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Top 4 finish at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Top 3 finish at the 2022-2023 WSD.
 - Member of a recognized World Record time skated in 2023-2024.
 - Member of a 2023-2024 team with a finishing time within Tier 1 of the Time Chart in an ISU sanctioned event.

TIER 2 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA– LONG TRACK

Primary criteria - Athletes achieve Tier 2 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 WSD:

- Individual Distance - Top 8 finish.
- Mass Start - Top 8 finish on finish time.
- Team Pursuit - Member of a Top 4 finishing team.

Should an athlete not achieve Tier 2 through the primary criteria, they can achieve Tier 2 status through any two (2) of the following secondary criteria sub-points in the same event below (see 'event' definition above):

- Individual Distance:
 - Two (2) Top 8 finishes 2023-2024 World Cup events in the same distance.
 - Top 8 finish at the 2022-2023 WSD.
 - Top 10 finish at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Achieve a Tier 2 time of the time chart in a 2023-2024 individual ISU sanctioned event.
- Mass start:
 - Two (2) Top 8 finishes on finish time at 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Top 10 finish on finish time at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Top 8 finish on finish time at the 2022-2023 WSD.
- Team Pursuit:
 - Two (2) Top 4 finishes at 2023-2024 ISU World Cup events.
 - Top 5 finish at the 2023-2024 WSD.
 - Top 4 finish at the 2022-2023 WSD.
 - Member of a 2023-2024 team with a finishing time within Tier 2 of the Time Chart in an ISU event.

TIER 3 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA – LONG TRACK

Primary criteria Athletes achieve Tier 3 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 WSD:

- Individual Distance
 - Top 16 in the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m (women), or 5000m (men).
 - Top 12 in the 5000m (women) or 10000 (men) -Top 12 Qualifier to the WSD.
- Mass Start - Top 10 finish on finish time.
- Team Pursuit - Member of a Top 6 finishing team within 103% of the winning time at the event.

SHORT TRACK

'Event' refers to either one of the Individual Distances or a Team Relay (Gender specific or Mixed team).

Individual Distances refers to one of the 500m, 1000m & 1500m events.

For a Relay event, a team member is an athlete who helps achieve the result by competing in the semi-final or the final of a relay event that the result was achieved.

Specific to the overall classification in the World Cup Rankings in a Gender Relay Team or Mixed Team Relay, an athlete must have:

- Been a team member in three Gender Relay events at the ISU World Cups.
- Been a team member in three Mixed Team Relay events at the ISU World Cups.

TIER 1 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA – SHORT TRACK

Primary Criteria - Athletes achieve Tier 1 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 World Championships:

- Individual Distance - Podium (Top 3) finish.
- Relay (Gender or Mixed Team) - Member of podium (Top 3) team.

Should an athlete not achieve Tier 1 through the primary criteria, they can achieve Tier 1 status through any two (2) of the following secondary criteria sub-points within individual distances or Relay events (both criteria need to be met in either Individual distance or Relay events)

- Individual Distance:
 - Top 5 finish at the 2023-2024 World Championships.
 - Podium (Top 3) finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships.
 - Set a recognized World Record at an ISU sanctioned event during the 2023-2024 season.
 - Top 5 finish in the 2023-2024 ISU Overall World Classification (Crystal Globe).
 - Top 3 in the 2023-2024 World Cup Classification in an individual distance.
 - Two (2) Podium (Top 3) finishes at 2023-2024 World Cup events.
- Relay:
 - Team Member of a Top 4 finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships in a Gender Relay Team or Mixed Team Relay.
 - Team Member that is Top 3 in the 2023-2024 World Cup Classification in a Gender Relay Team or Mixed Team Relay.
 - Team Member of a gold medal-winning Gender Relay Team at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Team Member of a gold medal-winning Mixed Team Relay at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Set a recognized World Record at an ISU sanctioned event during the 2023-2024 season as a member of the Relay Team.

TIER 2 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA– SHORT TRACK

Primary criteria - Athletes achieve Tier 2 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 World Championships:

- Individual Distance – Top 8 finish.
- Relay (Gender or Mixed Team) - Member of Top 4 finishing team.

Should an athlete not achieve Tier 2 through the primary criteria, they can achieve Tier 2 status through any two (2) of the following secondary criteria sub-points within individual distances or Relay events (both criteria need to be met in either Individual distance or relay events)

- Individual Distance:
 - Top 12 finish at the 2023-2024 World Championships.
 - Top 8 finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships.
 - Top 6 in the 2023-2024 World Cup Classification in a distance.
 - Two (2) Top 5 finishes at 2023-2024 World Cup events.
- Relay:
 - Team Member of a Top 5 finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships in a Gender Relay Team or Mixed Team Relay.
 - Team Member of a Top 4 Gender Relay team or Mixed Team relay in the 2023-2024 World Cup Classification.
 - Team Member of a Top 3 Gender Relay team at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Team Member of a Top 3 Mixed Team Relay at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.

TIER 3 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA– SHORT TRACK

Primary criteria - Athletes achieve Tier 3 status through one (1) of the following criteria at the 2023-2024 World Championships:

- Individual Distance - Top 16 finish.
- Relay (Gender or Mixed Team) - Member of Top 6 finishing team.

Should an athlete not achieve tier 3 through the primary criteria, they can achieve Tier 3 status through any two (2) of the following secondary criteria sub-points within individual distances or Relay events (both criteria need to be met in either Individual distance or relay events)

- Individual Distance:
 - Top 20 finish at the 2023-2024 World Championships.
 - Top 16 finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships.
 - Top 16 in the 2023-2024 World Cup Classification in an individual distance.
 - Two (2) Top 10 finishes at 2023-2024 World Cup events.
- Relay:
 - Team Member of a Top 6 finish at the 2022-2023 World Championships in a Gender Relay Team or Mixed Team Relay.
 - Team Member of a Top 6 Gender Relay team or Mixed Team relay in the 2023-2024 World Cup Overall Classification.
 - Team Member of a Gender or Mixed Team Relay that achieves a time standard of 103% of the 2023-2024 world best time.
 - Team Member of a Top 5 Gender Relay team at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.
 - Team Member of a Top 5 Mixed Team Relay at two (2) 2023-2024 World Cup events.

- Team Member of a Top 8 Gender Relay team at 2023-2024 World Championships.
- Team Member of a Top 8 Mixed Team Relay at 2023-2024 World Championships.

EMERGING ELITE FUNDING

There will be funding consideration for emerging athletes that accept their full-time NTP invite and relocate to Salt Lake City, Utah to train with the NTP or train in an approved program as per the Program Director and High Performance Director. These athletes typically:

- Must be qualified and invited to train with the NTP for the 2024-2025 season and accept their full-time invitation to train in SLC.
- Traditionally be one of the following:
 - ISU Junior aged athletes that had Junior World success and/or are beginning a pathway with an elite performance trajectory. Trajectory will be evaluated by the Short Track level system or the Long Track USOPC Funnel system.
 - ISU Neo-Senior athletes that are identified as having an elite trajectory through objective data in the Short Track level system or the Long Track USOPC Funnel system.
 - Transition athletes that have shown through objective data that show positive trajectory with international progression. This is evaluated by the Short Track level system or the Long Track USOPC Funnel system.

Emerging elite athletes may be added to the Athlete Stipend program during the season as determined by USS HP staff and the USOPC.

INJURY/ILLNESS CONSIDERATION FUNDING

Injury/Illness Funding is reserved for athletes prevented from qualifying through the Primary Criteria for Tiers 1-3 due to a documented injury/illness or mental health issue. Upon review of performances from the 2022-2023 & the 2023-2024 seasons, athletes in position to qualify for Tier 1-3 2024-2025 funding will be considered for the appropriate funding level (determined by USS) if the injury, illness or mental health issue clearly prevented them from competing and qualifying for DAS via the Primary Criteria. To be eligible for this type of funding, athletes are required to submit an Injury/Illness Consideration Petition Form to USS by March 22, 2024. The Injury/Illness Consideration Petition form will be evaluated, and the athlete's funding will be determined as follows:

- USS Approved Physician and/or Licensed Mental Health Provider will review the petition form and verify there was an injury/illness/mental health issue that prevented the athlete from competing.
 - During the review period, USS Approved Physician and/or Licensed Mental Health Provider may consult with other providers including:
 - Psychiatrist
 - Non-treating Licensed Mental Health Provider(s)
 - Athletic Trainer
 - Registered Dietitian
- Following the verification of the health issue outlined in the Injury/Illness Consideration Petition Form, the following will determine the athlete's funding:
 - Review of the athlete's current performance level, along with primary and/or secondary criteria previously achieved.

- Injury/Illness Consideration Funding amount will be determined by USS High Performance Director and the Program Director based on previously qualified funding and/or recent performance level.
- A return to competition/training plan developed and agreed upon by the athlete and medical team. Injury/Illness funding cases are not guaranteed for the full season.
- DAS will be dependent on a monthly evaluation of the athlete’s execution of the agreed upon plan.

CONDITIONS OF FUNDING:

To encourage advancement and to receive continued support throughout the quad, athletes will need to demonstrate progression through the Tier system.

- An athlete may only receive DAS funding at the highest Tier they qualify for.
- An athlete may receive Tier 1 or 2 DAS indefinitely upon annual qualification of criteria.
- An athlete may only be carried as an individual or by means of a team member in Tier 3 for a maximum of four (4) years. After 4 years they must show a positive trajectory which is evaluated by the Short Track level system or the Long Track USOPC Funnel system.
- An athlete who achieves Tier 1 or 2 status through a Team Event is awarded Tier 1 or 2 status accordingly. If the following season they do not achieve Tier 1 or 2, they revert to their highest individual standing. Thus, qualification to Tier 1 or 2 through a team event does not impact their qualification as an individual.
- For Emerging Elite funding:
 - Athletes may be eligible up to their last year neo-senior or a maximum of 4 -years pending they remain showing a positive trajectory.
 - Talent cross-over, or mature athletes that join the sport post ISU Junior age may be eligible for a maximum of 4-years pending they are showing a positive trajectory.

TABLE OF ATHLETE STIPEND BASE SUPPORT:

Level	Distribution	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 (proposed)
Tier 1	9 months	\$2610/m = \$22,815/a	tbc
Tier 2	9 months	\$1650/m = \$14,400/a	tbc
Tier 3	9 months	\$1030/m = \$9,000/a	tbc
Emerging Elite	9 months	\$500/m = \$4500/a	tbc
Injury Funding	9 months	varies	tbc

While the intent is to maintain the funding levels in the above table, the actual funding amount per level is subject to USOPC/USS annual support funding approval which should be confirmed by June 30th each year.

A portion of DAS funding for Tier 1-3 athletes is for the purpose of a living stipend to assist with expenses for an athlete residing in Salt Lake City and training full-time within an approved NTP program. The amount of \$300 per month is identified within the DAS funding and may be withheld from an athlete’s monthly funding if they are not in Salt Lake City or training within a program approved by the USS High Performance and relevant Program Director. To receive this \$300 portion within their DAS funding, they must provide a training plan to the USS Program Director that shows a plan to progress towards success in 2026.

DISTRIBUTION TO ATHLETE:

DAS is combined into a single monthly payment paid over a nine-month period from July 1st through March 1st of the season upon annual qualification. Payments should be received by the athlete on the 5th of every month.

If at any time, athletes are not perceived to be committed to a training environment conducive of reaching the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, the athlete will be notified by USS HP staff and a meeting will be scheduled to discuss training accountabilities, identify performance benchmarks, and establish a reasonable timeline to ensure the athlete remains on track for achieving success at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games. Should the agreed upon benchmarks not be met, within the agreed upon time frame, the athlete will be notified, and Athlete Stipend support may be stopped by USS staff in consultation with the USOPC Winter Sports Team.