



NATIONAL  
INCLUSION  
PROJECT

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## Mission

The mission of the National Inclusion Project (NIP) is to bridge the gap that exists between young people with disabilities and the world around them. NIP is proud to partner with community organizations that are seeking to programmatically open doors for children with and without disabilities to learn, live, and play together. Through training, consulting, the Standards for Inclusive Recreation Programs, and Accreditation, NIP meets organizations where they are to help them implement quality inclusive programs that impact children and families in their communities.

Since 2003, NIP has worked towards a society where conventional thinking shifts away from limitations to potential, from exclusion to inclusion, and from a longing to be included to a sense of belonging.

## Standards

Completed in 2018, the Standards for Inclusive Recreation Programs, along with their accompanying criteria and documentation guidelines, were co-developed by NIP and the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston in partnership with the National Inclusion Project (NIP). The standards have been designed, from their inception, to serve multiple purposes. First and foremost, the standards are intended to be educational, providing programs with an operational definition of social inclusion and a picture of inclusive recreation in terms of best practices. Similarly, the standards are meant to guide programs that already include participants with disabilities in enhancing their understanding of social inclusion and identifying practices that will improve and expand their inclusive programming at all organizational levels. Finally, the standards serve as the basis of NIP's Accreditation program, which will recognize, promote, and accredit successful inclusive recreation programs.

## Accreditation

As the inclusion movement continues to grow in the field of recreation, it is clear that the definition of "inclusion" varies among practitioners and across recreation programs. While some programs focus solely on physical inclusion, others have reached the level of functional inclusion, and a small group of programs have achieved full social inclusion. Programs also differ in their experience with inclusion. Some programs are just beginning to include individuals with disabilities, while others are accomplished in providing intentional and comprehensive inclusive programming. To address the variation in how inclusion is being implemented in the field, the NIP has established a rigorous accreditation process to evaluate programs based on the Standards for Inclusive Recreation Programs. The process was piloted with 9 summer camps in 2019.

## Other Programs/Awareness

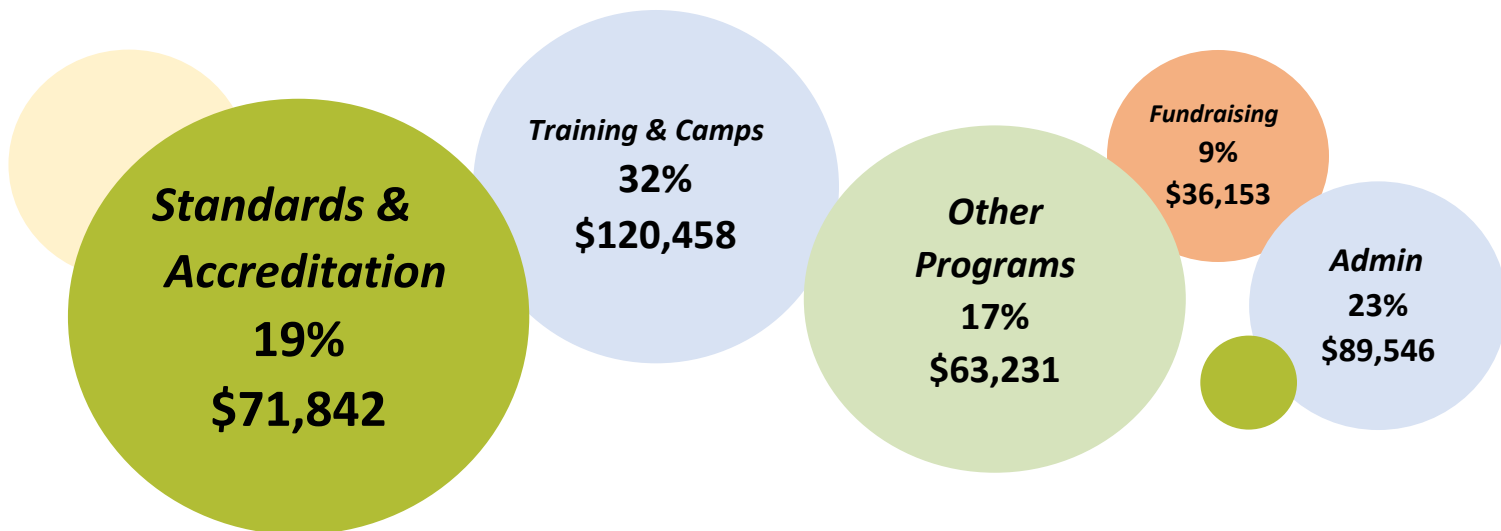
The annual Founders' Gala (not held in 2020) is the organizations largest event to raise awareness for inclusion and all that it has to offer for children across the country. A 'State of the Project' address reviews organization achievements, celebrates successes and highlights goals. Volunteers and longtime supporters of NIP are recognized as we honor their leadership, commitment and passion to ensure that no one sits on the sidelines.

The annual Power of Play Conference provides a framework and resources for program providers, educators, families, and specialists to implement successful inclusion. Utilizing leading practitioners, educators, and experts in the field of inclusion this is growing into a must attend conference for those who seek to start inclusive social programs and those seeking to improve skills.



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The generosity and unwavering commitment of our donors and sponsors is why the National Inclusion Project is able to serve so many communities across the country. In that 94% of our 2020 income was provided through individual donations, maintaining and growing our base of supporters is critical to sustain spending levels and expand inclusive opportunities for children. One program at a time, we are enabling children of all abilities to be involved and to belong.

**The National Inclusion Project is thankful for the support of its donors and volunteers. Your contributions and overall support make what we do possible.**



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## NO CHILD SHOULD SIT ON THE SIDELINES.