



2024 SFIA EXCELERATOR Program

Eligibility, Application Process and Form

As of March 18, 2024

SFIA EXCELERATOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SFIA and its members are committed to diversity, inclusion, and belonging. While there has been progress in advancing traditionally underrepresented talent among the leadership ranks of our industry, there is more to be done. SFIA is committed to promoting professional development in our industry. To that end, we're focusing on high-performing, early-career professionals and the next generation of leaders.

SFIA's **EXCELERATOR** Program started in 2023 and represents SFIA's (and the industry's) commitment to accelerating the careers of exceptional early-career professionals from diverse communities in the sports industry and empowering them to become the next generation of leaders.

It is a six-month cohort program officially launching this May. It will feature a robust and impactful curriculum drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the industry's best leaders. Those who participate in the experience can expect to build and expand their network within and outside the sports and fitness industry, grow their professional toolkit, and gain visibility into the opportunities available across the industry.

The 2024 cohort class ("**ASSOCIATES**") size will be limited (between 10 – 12 individuals) and an intentionally selected group from **EXCELERATOR** sponsors and SFIA membership. SFIA's People & Culture committee will continuously review and monitor the program and report to SFIA (staff, board, and members) on developments throughout the year.

Year II **EXCELERATOR** sponsors include Adidas, Brooks Sports, BSN, Clarks, Franklin Sports, National Football League, National Hockey League, New Balance, Rawlings, and Riddell Sports.

Application Process

- The 2024 program cohort will be resourced through **EXCELERATOR** sponsors and SFIA membership
- There are two pathways to apply for the 2024 **EXCELERATOR** program cohort:
 1. **If you are an employee (with eight years or less of work experience) of an EXCELERATOR sponsor (listed above):**
 - A designated senior-level executive (vice president-level or above) will lead an organization-specific internal application process
 - Interested applicants should contact their HR department to learn more about their process
 - All **EXCELERATOR** sponsors have the option to select one (1) candidate in the program
 - All internal processes with a completed application form must be submitted to Glenn Horine (ghorine@sfia.org) by April 5, 2024
 2. **If you are an employee (with eight years or less of work experience) at an SFIA member organization that is not an EXCELERATOR sponsor:**
 - Please complete and submit the application form to Glenn Horine



(ghorine@sfia.org) by April 5, 2024

- SFIA may offer up to two (2) ASSOCIATE "scholarships" to qualified candidates at organizations who are not a sponsor of the EXCLERATOR program.
- The 2024 application process will be open between March 18 – April 5, 2024

ASSOCIATE Eligibility

- Any employee with fewer than eight (8) total years of cumulative work experience and currently working at an SFIA member organization and recommended by a senior-level executive (vice president level or higher) from their organization
- Demonstrated personal and team leadership skills and a sustained level of high employee performance at SFIA member organization
- Indicated interest in professional development for purposes of career growth
- Expressed passion for building a long-term career within the sports & fitness industry

Governance

- The SFIA **EXCELERATOR** Program will be administered and coordinated by SFIA with oversight from the People & Culture Committee, SFIA COO Glenn Horine, and an outside facilitator

EXCELERATOR Selection Process

2024 Program

- Application Announcement
 1. SFIA will announce the application process for the 2024 **EXCELERATOR** Program the week of March 18, 2024, through its digital channels – website, newsletter, email blast, etc.,
- Application Deadline
 1. **EXCELERATOR** sponsors are to submit one (1) **ASSOCIATE** application form by April 5
 2. Qualified applicants from SFIA membership, whose organizations are not sponsors of the **EXCELERATOR** program must submit the application form by April 5
 3. SFIA to follow up with **ASSOCIATE** candidates the week of April 15
- Review of Applications:
 1. The People & Culture committee, SFIA COO Glenn Horine, and an outside facilitator will review all applications and the opportunity to award potential **ASSOCIATE** scholarships
 2. Candidates will be notified by Glenn Horine and/or the program facilitator the week of April 15
 3. **ASSOCIATES** selected will be required to attend two events that “bookend” the **EXCELERATOR** experience on May 28 - 30 in NYC and TBD location and dates in November 2024
- Selection Criteria
 1. SFIA **ASSOCIATES** will be selected based on the following:
 - Employment experience at the current member organization
 - Strength of the nominator’s recommendation
 - The interest level in developing a leadership role within the sports and fitness industry
 - Presenting an inclusive cohort with representation from all communities, including a preference for those identified with underrepresented communities



- Programming
 1. **ASSOCIATE** programming will include:
 - Professional Development Workshops
 - SFIA Industry Events
 - Lunch ‘N Learn Series with Industry Executives
 - Career Counseling Sessions
 - Mentorship Program
 - Monthly Check-in with SFIA Leadership and the Program Facilitator
 2. The People & Culture Committee will review the schedule of events and all related programming

Benefits For SFIA Associates:

- There are several benefits for an SFIA **ASSOCIATE** participating in the **EXCELERATOR** program, including but not limited to the following:
 1. Participation at SFIA’s industry events and the opportunity to meet industry leaders from professional sports leagues, national governing bodies, SFIA members, and guests at the Super Regionals
 2. Engaging a wide variety of industry leaders and engaging in thought leadership, networking, professional development, and mentorship (1:1 and small group) opportunities
 3. Understanding what SFIA does on behalf of the industry and its membership in the areas of research, public policy, thought leadership, and member engagement
 4. Networking with alums of the **EXCELERATOR** program
 5. Recognition as an emerging leader through participation in SFIA’s **EXCELERATOR** Program

ASSOCIATE Reimbursement & Costs Covered

- SFIA aims to cover all costs for the **ASSOCIATES** related to programming and on-site hospitality
 1. “Opening” and “closing” night dinners in New York City and TBD market
 2. Professional workshop facilitation and hospitality
 3. Career Counseling
 4. Facilitation of mentorship program and Lunch ‘N Learn series
 5. Registration fees for SFIA Super Regionals and other SFIA events, including webinars throughout the year
- If needed and so requested, SFIA can reimburse **ASSOCIATE** travel expenses (e.g., airfare, hotel, etc.) associated with attending the in-person **EXCELERATOR** professional development sessions in May and November



2024 SFIA EXCELERATOR **ASSOCIATE** Program Application*

Full name: _____ Date: _____

SFIA Member Company: _____ Title: _____

2024 EXCELERATOR Sponsor (please check one): Yes ___ No ___ No, but interested ___

Company Address: _____ City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____

Phone (Work):(____) _____ Email (Work): _____ @_____

Ethnic information (please check one):

African American/Black ___ American Indian/Alaskan Native ___ Asian/Pacific Islander ___
Latino/Hispanic ___ White ___ Other _____ (please specify)

Gender (please check one): Male ___ Female ___ Non-Binary ___ Other ___ (please specify)

Please share your pronouns (check one): He/Him _____ She/Her _____ They/Them _____ Ze/Hir

Not Listed _____ (please specify)

Do you have **accessibility needs** you would like SFIA to be aware of? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, and so inclined to provide further information, please describe those requirements briefly -

Work Experience:

LinkedIn URL _____

Please attach a current resume and/or bio (100 words or less).

Applicant Questions:

1. What have you enjoyed the most about working in the sports industry?
2. What one sports or fitness industry development has intrigued you the most this past year and why?
3. What work experience and results at your current employer (SFIA member) best highlight your performance capabilities?
4. What opportunity should the Sports & Fitness Industry Association lead/pursue in the next year that can make a difference in our country's overall health and fitness?
5. What about the potential of being an SFIA Associate intrigues you most?

***Applications must be submitted to Glenn Horine (ghorine@sfia.org) by April 5. Please review the application process for the appropriate sponsor or non-sponsor submission.**



2024 SFIA EXCELERATOR FAQs

What is an SFIA **ASSOCIATE**?

An SFIA **ASSOCIATE** is an early-career employee of a Sports & Fitness Industry Association member organization seeking access to and opportunities for professional development within the sports industry.

Who's eligible to be an SFIA **ASSOCIATE**?

An early-career employee (less than eight years of aggregate career employment) recommended by a senior-level executive (vice president level or above) from an SFIA member organization who completes the **EXCELERATOR** application by the stated deadline.

How are SFIA **ASSOCIATES** selected?

EXCELERATOR sponsors can place a qualified employee into the **EXCELERATOR** program with a completed application form that includes appropriate recommendations and background information. Qualified applicants from an **EXCELERATOR**-sponsored organization should review the application process internally with a representative from their Human Resources/People & Culture department knowledgeable about the **EXCELERATOR** program and application process.

A qualified candidate from an SFIA member (non-sponsor) interested in a potential “scholarship” opening will need to submit the required application form, appropriate recommendations, and background information. SFIA’s People & Culture Committee will meet to review eligible candidates and make a timely decision on possible **ASSOCIATE** scholarship opportunities. The committee will convene immediately after the submissions are due to make selections.

What is the desired outcome of the SFIA **EXCELERATOR** program?

The **EXCELERATOR** program will unite the sports and fitness industry and present a much-needed “all are welcome” message from SFIA members. It will make a meaningful difference in the professional development of early-career employees through access to SFIA member events, thought leadership from SFIA member executives, and coordinated SFIA networking and mentorship activities.

What is the duration of the SFIA **EXCELERATOR** program?

The 2024 **EXCELERATOR** program is a six-month program schedule that will begin in late April with initial discovery meetings for each **ASSOCIATE** in the group. The program will launch on May 28 with a welcome dinner and run through mid-November. It will include i) professional development sessions with senior industry leaders, ii) cohort virtual networking events, iii) career counseling, and iv) a mentorship program pairing **ASSOCIATES** with SFIA executives in non-competitive industry sectors.

How large is the SFIA **ASSOCIATE** class?

SFIA will intentionally keep the **ASSOCIATE** cohort small, with an anticipated group of 10-12 individuals. The annual cohort size may increase in the coming years based on support from SFIA membership.

Who is administering the program?

The management of the SFIA **EXCELERATOR** program will be overseen by the People & Culture committee.

How can SFIA members support the SFIA **EXCELERATOR** program?

Membership can support the SFIA **EXCELERATOR** program in a variety of areas, including i) Candidate nomination, ii) Sponsorship, iii) Mentoring, iv) Networking, and v) Professional Development Curriculum.