

Fact-Sheet

WHAT IS ACT-SO?

ACT-SO is an acronym for Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics. ACT-SO is a yearlong enrichment program designed to recruit, stimulate, improve and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among African-American high school students. The ACT-SO program centers around the dedication and commitment of community volunteers and business leaders; to serve as mentors and coaches to promote academic and artistic excellence among African-American students. There are 25 categories of competition in the sciences, humanities, performing and visual arts.

WHO SPONSORS ACT-SO?

ACT-SO is sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. ACT-SO receives support from schools, community, organizations, churches, foundations, private corporations and individuals.

WHO FOUNDED ACT-SO?

Vernon Jarrett, a renowned author and journalist, initiated the idea of a program that would promote and reward academic achievers the same way sports heroes are honored. The first national ACT-SO competition was held in 1978 in Portland Oregon.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

High school students of African descent, who are citizens of the United States, enrolled in grades 9-12 and are amateurs in the categories of competition are able to participate.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN ACT-SO?

The ACT-SO program is intended to be a learning experience, first and foremost. The focus of a viable and effective local ACT-SO program is on enrichment and mentorship. Students work with ACT-SO mentors who help them develop projects throughout the year. Local ACT-SO programs also provide ACT-SO students with enrichment opportunities, such as workshops, tutorials, and field trips.

The benefits ACT-SO students receive from the enrichment and mentorship components include substantial assistance toward the development of their ACT-SO projects and valuable tools to assist them throughout their education.

The local competition serves to showcase the hard work students have put in all year long. Students receive medals and prizes provided by the local and regional sponsors and contributors. ACT-SO Students who receive gold medals on the local level then compete at the National Competition where they receive scholarships and other rewards provided by national sponsors.

ACT-SO TIMELINE

Local Program

- September: Local Programs kick off their ACT-SO program.
- September through March/April: Local programs conduct mentoring and local enrichment programs.
- March/April: Programs host their local ACT-SO competitions

National Competition

- March/April through July: Students continue their mentorship and enrichment programs to prepare for the National ACT-SO Competition.
- July: The National Competition

WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF COMPETITION?

SCIENCES	HUMANITIES	PERFORMING ARTS
Architecture	Music Composition	Dance
Biology	Original Essay	Dramatics
Chemistry	Play Writing	Music Instrumental/Classical
Computer Science	Poetry	Music Instrumental/Contemporary
Mathematics		Music Vocal/Classical
Physics/Electronics		Music Vocal/Contemporary
Physics/Energy		Oratory
Physics/General		
VISUAL ARTS	BUSINESS	
Drawing	Entrepreneurship	
Painting		
Photography		
Sculpture		
Filmmaking/Video		

* Students may compete in up to three (3) categories.

WHEN DOES THE ACT-SO PROGRAM BEGIN?

ACT-SO is a year-long enrichment program that begins with mentoring, coaching and teaching. Local competitions usually take place between March and May. Contestants who win gold medals on the local level qualify to attend the National ACT-SO competition, which takes place in early July at the Annual NAACP Convention.