

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** NASDA Exhibitors, Clubs, Judges, and Community Members

**From:** Liz Carter, NASDA Administration

**Date:** November 26, 2025

**Subject:** 2026 Enhancements to the NASDA Junior Handler Program

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As we approach NASDA's **10th Anniversary**, we are proud to announce a series of significant enhancements to the **Junior Handler Program** for the **2026 Regional and Invitational Championships**. These updates reflect NASDA's continued commitment to investing in the next generation of dog sport enthusiasts—youth whose passion, dedication, and sportsmanship represent the future of our organization.

### **Expanded Support for Junior Handlers**

Beginning in 2026, NASDA's goal is to provide **low- or no-cost entry fees** for all Junior Handlers competing at both the Regional and Invitational events. Juniors will compete and advance within their **own dedicated Junior Handler division**, ensuring an environment designed to support confidence, skill-building, and success.

### **New Podium Placements and Overall Champions**

To further celebrate youth achievement, NASDA will introduce **Gold, Silver, and Bronze podium placements** for Junior Handlers in the following sports:

- Lost Item Recovery
- Shed Dog
- Trailing & Locating
- Urban Locating

In addition, both the Regional and Invitational will recognize overall excellence through the awarding of **Gold, Silver, and Bronze Junior Handler Champions**, determined by the greatest number of points earned across the largest number of sports.

### **Scholarship Expansion**

Junior Handler Regional and National Champions will continue to receive scholarships, with expanded funding and support planned for 2026 and beyond.

### **Fundraising Efforts for 2026–2027**

NASDA is also launching a series of fundraising efforts dedicated exclusively to supporting Junior Handlers.

Funds raised will help:

- Offset or eliminate Junior entry fees
- Support awards and podium placements
- Provide additional scholarships
- Expand education and participation opportunities

Donations are not tax deductible and will be combined with other NASDA fundraisers that directly benefit the Junior Handler Program. Any remaining balance from the 2026 season will be carried forward to support the 2027 Junior Handler Program.

### **Our Commitment**

Youth participation strengthens our community, preserves the working-dog heritage we value, and builds confident, capable handlers who will shape the future of NASDA. As we enter this milestone anniversary year, we look forward to celebrating not only a decade of NASDA, but also the young handlers who will carry our sport into the next decade.