

# ACT-SO Fact Sheet

## **WHAT IS ACT-SO?**

ACT-SO is a yearlong youth achievement enrichment program designed to recruit, stimulate, improve and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among high school students of African descent. The ACT-SO program centers on the dedication and commitment of community volunteers and business leaders to serve as mentors and coaches to promote academic and artistic excellence. There are 27 categories of competition in the sciences, humanities, performing arts, visual arts and business.

## **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.

Each ACT-SO program conducts a local competition. 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.