



# SOWI Agency Program Guide

**Special  
Olympics  
Wisconsin**



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# A Letter from our CEO

On behalf of the Program Committee of the United States Leadership Council (USLC), I am pleased to provide our Special Olympics **North America Local Agency Guide**. This guide is a resource for Local Agency leadership, providing the necessary information and tools to manage the Special Olympics program in each local community.

Local Agency leadership is critical to the successful organization of Special Olympics programs at the grassroots level. This is the foundation of our worldwide movement and the starting point for each athlete's participation.

This guide includes:

- **Part 1:** A Quick Start Guide to Developing a Local Agency
- **Part 2:** Growing & Sustaining a Local Agency
- **Part 3:** Resources

The North America Local Agency Guide can serve as a tool to engage new Local Agency leadership, providing the Local Agency Manager with information and tools necessary to build a foundation for the Local Agency. Parts 2 and 3 provide the next level of resources to grow the Local Agency by offering new and expanded opportunities.

Special Olympics Wisconsin is here to offer additional guidance and support as you work tirelessly to engage athletes in local sports training and competition opportunities.

*Thank you for your commitment to our athletes and the Special Olympics movement.*

**Kathleen J. Roach, MPH, MBA**  
**President & CEO**  
**Special Olympics Wisconsin**







# Acknowledgements

Special Olympics would like to thank the North America Local Agency Guide Committee and the Agency Management Committee of Special Olympics Wisconsin for all of their work in creating a framework, which Accredited Program staff can customize for their Local Agency Managers, Coaches, Volunteers and Family members. This guide will support and enhance the direct services that athletes, families, coaches, competition management personnel, and other volunteers will receive.

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# Introduction

## **What is a Local Agency and what purpose does it serve?**

The Local Agency is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a larger Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Agency engages with the public to provide sports training, competition opportunities, and related activities. Through sports, Special Olympics creates inclusive communities where all people respect one another and work together for the greater good. A Local Agency may originate out of existing independent Special Olympics clubs, public or specialized schools, colleges or universities, independent living facilities, Parks and Recreation Departments, adult service providers, professional sports clubs, geographic communities, counties, or other training groups that include registered Special Olympics athletes.

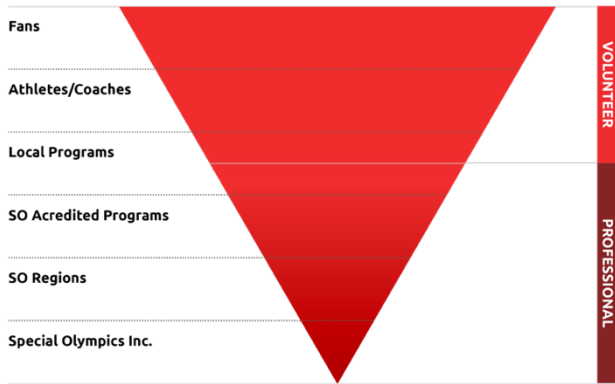
Each Local Agency offers official Special Olympics sports training and competition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities). Through sports, Special Olympics also creates ongoing opportunities for physical activity and socialization, fostering greater athlete involvement and satisfaction – which are critical to Special Olympics’ growth.

While everyone in the Special Olympics global movement plays a vital role, the importance of the Local Agency level of the organization cannot be emphasized enough. It is at the grassroots level of the movement that most people engage with Special Olympics. This grassroots level is where fans cheer on their family, friends, and neighbors who compete, and it is where communities of inclusion are built.

Special Olympics Local Agencies’ “inverted pyramid” (shown on next page) approach acknowledges Local Agencies as leaders and champions. With so many leaders at the grassroots level, the North America Local Agency Guide is an important tool. The Local Agency provides an empowering experience for Special Olympics athletes, Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> partners, families, volunteers, supporters, and fans. The Local Agency makes the first impression about this movement.

The conduct of the Local Agency can either enhance or hurt the Special Olympics brand. When someone calls to learn more, sign up, donate, or volunteer, did they receive a call back in a timely manner? At local Games, did the venue convey that these are authentic sports teams and is the competition taken seriously? Were athletes competing in uniforms, or were they wearing inappropriate competition apparel? All of these things help shape the perception of Special Olympics and Local Agencies.

Take pride in your Local Agency by building a team of leaders who share the Special Olympics vision of excellence. This guide is intended to help empower and educate volunteers and staff – critical local leaders – so that quality Local Agencies can be developed in all communities.



## Who is this guide for?

The North America Local Agency Guide has been created by Accredited Programs to be used as a tool for training Local Agency Managers and their Management Teams. Whether training a new coordinator or a long-time team member, this customizable guide provides the necessary information to be successful.

The first step is to identify a Local Agency Coordinator who will lead and oversee essential programming, including building a Management Team of volunteers who will help manage crucial areas. In order to provide support to Local Agency Managers, the Accredited Special Olympics Program serves as the parent program, providing individual Local Agencies with relevant and appropriate guidance, information, resources, policies, and procedures.

In essence, this guide will serve as the framework for each Local Agency, which can then be tailored based on the needs, structure, and policies of individual Local Agencies. This guide has 3 sections covering crucial information for the success of your Local Agency:

- **Part 1:** A Quick Start Guide to Developing a Local Agency
- **Part 2:** Growing & Sustaining a Local Agency
- **Part 3:** Resources

## What does a Local Agency Coordinator need to know?

The Local Agency Coordinator is **never alone**. By building a **MANAGEMENT TEAM** of volunteers all of the following tasks can be shared and made more manageable:

- Athlete recruitment, registration, and tracking of medical forms
- Unified Sports® partner recruitment, registration, and tracking
- Coach recruitment, education, and tracking
  - Education includes ensuring that coaches are properly trained and certified
- Volunteer recruitment, tracking, and processing Class A Volunteer forms
  - This includes General Orientation and Protective Behaviors with the additional mandatory Concussion Training for coaches
- Competition, training, and Athlete Leadership
- Branding (including use of logo)

- Communications with athletes, families, Unified Sports® partners, care providers, volunteers, and general public
- Health and safety; risk management
- Fundraising, including compliance at all levels
- Finance, including compliance at all levels

In addition to the functions listed above, **the Local Agency Coordinator** is expected to **engage** key volunteers to assist with the following:

- Compliance with all Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) and Accredited Program policies, rules, and practices
- Ensure that only athletes with valid medical forms and volunteers with valid Class A forms are allowed to participate and be in direct contact with the athletes
- Athlete training, including ensuring that there are enough trained coaches
- Safe, secure, and appropriate training facilities
- Ensure that proper procedures are followed for insurance and signing contracts
- Develop partnerships to effectively run the program
- Ensure athletes have access to proper sports equipment
- Registration and arranging participation in higher-level competitions
  - (This includes establishing that there are chaperones, transportation arrangement, and lodging available)
- Transportation to competitions
- Lodging at competitions

## Glossary of Terms

- **Accreditation:** Method of assuring that every Program meets the essential core requirements of the Special Olympics mission, as well as certain management and financial requirements. Accreditation grants the Program the legal right to use the Special Olympics name, logo, and other trademarks within its jurisdiction to conduct Special Olympics sports and related activities, and to raise funds under the Special Olympics name.
- **Area or Sub-Program Games:** Preliminary competitions that take place before Accredited Program events. These serve as additional competitive opportunities for athletes, as well as provide information that is used to ensure that athletes have an opportunity to compete at an appropriate level according to their ability.
- **Athlete:** A person who is identified as having an intellectual disability who is at least 8 years of age and registers to participate in accordance with the SOI General Rules. This individual trains in an Official Sport or Recognized Sport for a minimum of eight weeks or longer during the calendar year and competes in local, state, or Program Special Olympics competitions, or participates in a Motor Activities Training Program. Children between the ages of 2 and 7 can participate in the Young Athletes™ Program.

- **Athlete Input Council:** A committee comprised of athletes whose purpose is to facilitate discussion among athletes and pass along their suggestions to improve the program.
- **Athlete Medical Form:** This form must be completed before participation in Special Olympics. This form collects health information about the athlete including a medical exam verifying the athlete is cleared for participation. It is due every three years.
- **Athlete Registration Form:** This form asks for contact information and other demographic data.
- **Athlete Release Form:** Each athlete is required to submit a consent form to participate in Special Olympics.
- **Class A Volunteer:** Any person who volunteers for a Special Olympics Accredited Program as a coach, chaperone, driver, overnight host, Unified Sports® partner, or otherwise in a manner that results in regular close contact with Special Olympics athletes. Class A Volunteers also include those who may assume administrative or financial duties such as Committee Members, Event Directors, or Board Members.
- **Class B Volunteer:** Any person who volunteers at a single event; One-day, or walk-on volunteers who do not have direct responsibility or close ongoing contact with athletes.
- **Coach:** Individual charged with training athletes in a specific sport.
- **Division:** The competitive grouping of up to eight athletes in a particular sport based on age, gender, and ability level.
- **Global Messenger:** Athlete ambassadors who foster awareness and advocacy for the Special Olympics movement. Athletes must complete a training program in communications, speech writing, and presentations along with their local speech coach.
- **Healthy Athletes®:** The Healthy Athletes® program is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities.
- **Local Agency:** The Local Agency is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Agency engages with the public to provide training and competition opportunities while creating inclusive communities. Training and competition are provided for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports® partners. The Local Agency is at the grassroots level of the Special Olympics movement.
- **Medical:** See “Athlete Medical Form”
- **SOI General Rules:** The Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) General Rules provide the rules and guidelines for all activities and bind participants (including Local Coordinators) to the Special Olympics purpose, mission, and goals.
  - View Special Olympics General Rules:  
[resources.specialolympics.org/RegionsPages/content.aspx?id=38097](https://resources.specialolympics.org/RegionsPages/content.aspx?id=38097)
- **Staging:** The area where athletes convene as they prepare to compete. This is used to ensure that athletes are placed into the correct competitive divisions.

- **Sub-Program:** One of multiple geographical divisions of an Accredited Program (sometimes called an Area, Region, District, Section, etc.) The sub-Program is comprised of local teams within a geographical area.
- **Sub-Program Director:** The sub-Program Director is responsible for the coordination of all aspects of Special Olympics within a predetermined geographical area of the Accredited Program.
- **Time Trials:** An event run at the same location as the competition for establishing scores to division athletes for final competition.
- **Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>:** An inclusive sports program that combines approximately equal numbers of teammates with and without intellectual disabilities on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability-matching of athletes and Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> partners are specifically defined on a sport-by-sport basis.
- **Unified Champion Schools:** Unified Champion Schools create social inclusion in schools by building on Special Olympics' values, principles, practices, and experiences.
- **Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> partner:** A person without an intellectual disability who trains in a Special Olympics sport and who competes at least once in a Special Olympics Game or competition at any level during the calendar year.

## Acronyms

- **AIC:** Athlete Input Council
- **AMC:** Agency Management Committee
- **BOD:** Board of Directors
- **DD:** Developmental Disability
- **GMS:** Games Management Software
- **GMT:** Games Management Team
- **GOC:** Games Organizing Committee
- **HOD:** Head of Delegation
- **ID:** Intellectual Disability
- **LETR<sup>®</sup>:** Law Enforcement Torch Run<sup>®</sup>
- **NGB:** National Governing Body
- **PDD:** Pervasive Developmental Disability
- **POC:** Principles of Coaching
- **SMT:** Sports Management Team
- **SSIP:** Sports Skills Instructional Program
- **SOI:** Special Olympics, Inc.
- **SONA:** Special Olympics North America
- **SONG:** Special Olympics National Games
- **SRAC:** Sports Rules Advisory Committee
- **YAC:** Youth Activation Council
- **YA:** Young Athletes<sup>™</sup>

## General Information

### Mission & Vision

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*The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.*

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The **vision** of Special Olympics is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected, and given the chance to become productive citizens.

One of the main ways Special Olympics is fostering inclusion through sports is the expansion of Unified Sports® Programming, which brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team to promote inclusion. First pioneered in the 1980s, Unified Sports® was inspired by a simple principle: **Training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.**

### Special Olympics Philosophy

Special Olympics is founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can – with proper instruction and encouragement – learn, enjoy, and benefit from participation in individual and team sports. Special Olympics believes that consistent training is essential to the development of sports skills, and that competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress, and providing incentives for personal growth.

Special Olympics has demonstrated that, through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities can benefit physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Additionally, families are strengthened and the community at large – both through participation and observation – comes to better understand people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect, and acceptance.

### Goal

The **ultimate goal** of Special Olympics is to provide individuals with intellectual disabilities of all ages the opportunity to participate as productive and respected members of society at large. This occurs by offering ongoing opportunities for these individuals to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition. This is done while also increasing the public's awareness of their capabilities and needs, creating welcome communities of inclusion around the world. To learn more about Special Olympics Wisconsin, visit <http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org>.

### Constituents

A constituent is a member of the community who believes and supports the mission of the organization. Constituents are an integral part of Special Olympics and make up the fabric of programming and services provided at all levels.

## **Athletes**

Individuals of all ages and ability levels are welcome to participate in Special Olympics. There are a variety of programs for children and adults. To be eligible to participate as a Special Olympics athlete, the individual must be identified as having an intellectual disability. Individuals are eligible for training and competition at age 8, and there is no upper age limit. Each athlete must have a current medical form signed by a medical professional and a release form on file in order to participate in practices or competitions. Additional forms required may vary across Accredited Programs. Children ages 2-7 are eligible to participate in the Young Athletes™ program, which introduces young children to sports activities through curriculum-guided play.

## **Participants**

Special Olympics participants are those individuals with an intellectual disability who train in a Special Olympics sport but have not competed in Special Olympics Games or competition at any level.

## **Unified Sports® Partners**

Unified Sports® partners are individuals without an intellectual disability who participate in Special Olympics Unified Sports®.

## **Families – Parents & Siblings**

Each Special Olympics Accredited Program supports family members in a variety of ways. Families are encouraged to participate at every level. They are an essential component of Special Olympics and are valued contributors. Special Olympics provides opportunities where siblings with and without intellectual disabilities can enjoy the same activities together. All family members of Special Olympics athletes are encouraged to participate in Special Olympics as volunteers, coaches, and Unified Sports® partners.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization, and continue to serve as the primary source of support for athletes. Volunteer opportunities include serving as a coach, Unified Sports® partner, sports official, chaperone, committee member, fundraising volunteer, and more! Local Agencies and services could not be provided without the support and commitment provided to the athletes by volunteers.

## **Sports**

Training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports takes place at all levels of the Program. Special Olympics' primary goal is to provide year-round training and competition opportunities, which are directed by qualified coaches. Individuals and teams compete in divisions according to age, gender, and ability. Each Local Agency determines the sports and seasons of training and competition. Prior to each sport-specific season, volunteer coaches are trained and certified at clinics conducted by Special Olympics professionals and other sports experts. Officials and event committee members also receive training.

## **Support Structure**

### **Special Olympics, Inc.**

Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) is responsible for the overall leadership and management of all Special Olympics Programs, while providing technical assistance to each of the seven Special Olympics regions across the globe



which supports 5.6 million athletes and Unified Sports® partners in 172 countries. With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and over 111,000 competitions throughout the year. Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport every day around the world. Through programming in sports, health, education, and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by addressing the global injustice, isolation, intolerance, and inactivity they face.

Through a Protocol of Agreement signed on February 15, 1988, the International Olympic Committee (the IOC) officially recognized SOI and agreed to cooperate with SOI as a representative of the interests of athletes with intellectual disabilities. The IOC's formal recognition of SOI carries with it a solemn duty and responsibility, which must be discharged by SOI and all of its Accredited Programs, to conduct Special Olympics training and competition in accordance with the highest ideals of the international Olympic movement, to guard and protect the use of the term "Special Olympics," and to protect the word "Olympics" from unauthorized use or exploitation. The IOC's Protocol of Agreement with SOI prohibits SOI, Programs, and GOCs from using the five ring Olympic logo, the Olympic anthem, or the Olympics motto. Each Accredited Program agrees to fulfill these responsibilities by accepting accreditation from SOI, as provided in its Accreditation License and Article 6 of the General Rules.

### **Special Olympics North America**

Special Olympics North America (SONA) is one region of SOI, and is responsible for helping implement the policies and initiatives of SOI. SONA must also support and guide each of the Accredited Programs within North America (Canada, the United States, and the Caribbean).

### **Special Olympics Wisconsin, Inc.**

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] charitable organization incorporated in the state of Wisconsin to provide sports training and athletic competition for persons with intellectual rules established by Special Olympics, Inc. in the delivery of services in Wisconsin. It is known as a Program of Special Olympics. The Special Olympics Wisconsin Board of Directors provides policy and long-range planning decisions. The Board of Directors employs a staff of people to implement the day-to-day operations.

### **Region**

Regional programs are geographic regions of the state which are established to provide support, assistance, and competitive opportunities to local Agencies. Wisconsin is currently divided into seven Regions to serve the athletes, coaches, families and volunteers of our various communities. Each Region is staffed by full-time employees and has an active management team of volunteers that provides assistance with the Regional operations.



**Local Agency**

The Local Agency is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Agency engages with the public to provide training and competition opportunities, while creating inclusive communities. Training and competition are provided for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports® partners. The Local Agency is at the grassroots level of the Special Olympics movement.

**Donor/Sponsor**

It is through donors’ and sponsors’ financial support of the Special Olympics mission that athletes are able to train and compete free of charge across the globe.

## Agency Management

A successful Local Agency Coordinator will ensure the sustainability of the Local Agency by creating a Management Team of volunteers to provide leadership, administration, and oversight.

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***Although each Local Agency varies in size and culture, a team structure supports opportunities for athletes, families, and additional volunteers as the Program grows.***

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Recruiting the Best Management Team Members

### Who do you recruit as Management Team members?

- Professionals with experience in key functional areas such as finance, public relations, fundraising, sports, etc.
- Current coaches and volunteers
- Parents and other family members
- Community sports programs, civic groups, and fraternal organizations
- Military and police organizations
- Unified Sports® partners
- Athletes
- Teachers, professionals, and paraprofessionals in school settings – from elementary through high school, as well as colleges and universities
- Professionals and young professionals in partnering agencies (chamber of commerce) and businesses

### Dividing Responsibilities Amongst Management Team Members

#### What areas will the Management Team focus on?

- Leadership
  - Works with and leads the Management Team
  - Delegates to a committee if/when appropriate questions
  - Oversees finances and fundraising activities
- Sports
  - Works with and supports coaches to implement registration, training, and competition
  - Secures facilities and equipment
  - Communicates with athletes to ensure that they have valid medicals
- Volunteers
  - Recruits, trains, and assigns volunteers while ensuring that Class A criteria have been met (more on Class A Volunteers in Section 3: Functions)
  - Oversees communications with volunteers
  - Monitors social media

## Local Agency Managers Shape the Management Team

### How is the Management Team shaped?

- Assess experience, expertise, and skills of volunteers and partners engaged in the program
- Clearly define the Management Team member roles; all are engaged in meaningful work
- Educate the Management Team about Special Olympics and train them for the role they will play
- Meet regularly with the Management Team to plan ongoing activities and guide Local Agency growth and development
- Ensure that the team creates a plan for succession as members rotate off

*If there are only two leaders on the Management Team, the structure might follow the diagram as pictured below:*



As individual Local Agencies grow and expand, the Management Team may add one or more of the following roles and responsibilities based on need so that direct and responsive services are provided:

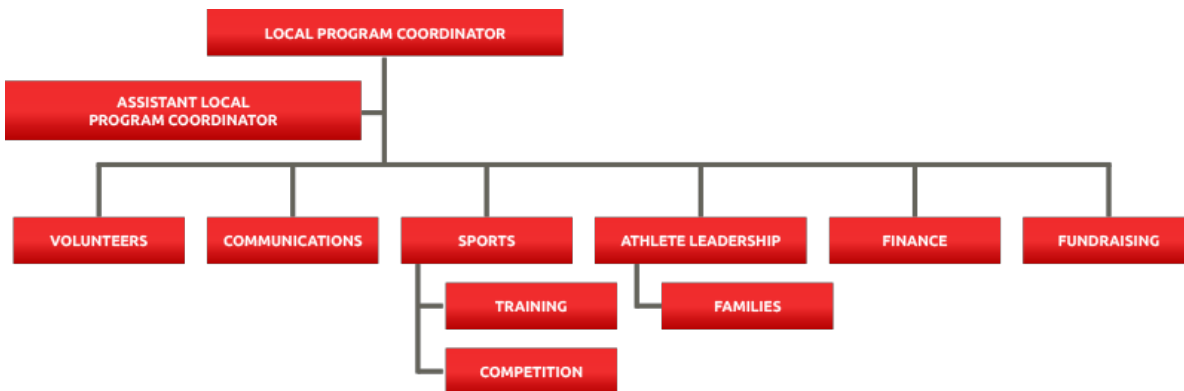
- **Sports:** Coordinate sport-specific training and competition for any available sport offered and recruit qualified coaches
- **Facilities/Equipment:** Secure practice facilities and equipment
- **Medical:** Manage medicals, registration forms, release forms, and communicate with athletes and coaches to ensure that all athletes have valid medicals to participate
- **Volunteers:** Recruit and manage volunteer inquiries and ensure that Class A and B criteria are met. Assist with communication regarding General Orientation, Protective Behaviors, and Concussion Training
- **Communications:** Provide both internal and external communications and marketing of the Local Agency
- **Financial Review & Reporting:** Ensure the Local Agency is fiscally responsible
- **Fundraising:** Oversee plans to raise funds necessary to support the Local Agency
- **Athlete Leadership:** Oversee athlete leadership training and involvement
- **Young Athletes™ & Families:** Welcome and mentor new families and young athletes
- **Outreach:** Recruit new athletes and community partners
- **Health & Wellness:** Implement Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®

- **Unified Sports®:** Assist in the development of training and competition opportunities of teammates with and without intellectual disabilities
- **Unified Champion Schools – School Liaison/Transition:** Help to recruit schools. Provide support as schools continue to grow. Maintain close communication with school teams to help athletes and Unified Sports® partners transition to the Local Agency (from the school).

*Below is an example of an expanding structure as the Local Agency grows:*



*Below is an example of a more fully developed Local Agency:*



## Planning & Meetings

Planning ensures that the Local Agency stays on track, evolves, and adjusts to change. The Local Agency’s plan should be aligned with the Accredited Program and the Global Strategic Plan. Local Agency Committees need to meet on a regular basis. Effective meetings and planning will help to establish and maintain a successful Local Agency.

### Short-Term Planning

Short-term planning involves immediate plans, typically for the upcoming season. *Considerations include:*

- Financial
- Coaches and volunteer
- Facilities
- Complete and current registration

### Medium-Term Planning

Medium-term planning may look at the coming year.

*Considerations include:*

- Competitive opportunities
- Training opportunities for coaches and athletes
  - **TIP:** Create a calendar of events and important dates, such as approaching deadlines
- Financial needs, including expenses and revenue
- Marketing and communications
- Other activities or opportunities that may be available to stakeholders

### Long-Term Planning

Long-term planning is essential for the sustainability of the Local Agency. Long-term planning typically involves a three to five-year cycle, and considers what the team envisions for the Local Agency will look like in five years (both programmatically and financially). This plan should be compatible with the direction of your affiliated Accredited Program.

*In order to establish a successful long-term plan, the following steps should be followed:*

- Ensure that long-term goals are compatible with the direction of the Accredited Program.
- Review and assess Special Olympics Program Quality Standards for ideas and examples that can be adopted to improve the Local Agency.
- Solicit ideas and feedback of all stakeholders in the Local Agency. This includes athletes, coaches, families, volunteers, donors, and partner agencies.

Develop a plan based on this information and **share!**

### Local Agency Meetings

Local Agency Management Teams should meet on a regular basis. The Local Agency Coordinator creates an agenda that allows for area reports and discussion. Guiding points to running an effective meeting include:

- Set the agenda and distribute it to Management Team members prior to the meeting.
- Start (and end) the meeting on time.
- Set the ground rules for the meeting. Share the objective of the meeting and the projected outcomes with the Management Team.
- Include reports from Management Team members.
- End with an action plan.

## Sample Agenda for a Local Agency Management Team Meeting

- Mission Moment – Ask a member of the Management Team to share an experience that supports the mission of Special Olympics.
- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
- Management Team Member Reports:
  - Local Agency Coordinator
  - Sports & Competition
  - Volunteers
  - Communications
  - Athlete Leadership
  - Finance
  - Fundraising
  - Other Reports
- Current Sports Season
  - Training
  - Competitions
- New Business
- Action Plan
- Adjournment

Here are additional resources for how to run an effective meeting:

- <https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/RunningMeetings.htm>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/business/how-to-run-an-effective-meeting?mcubz=1>
- <https://www.thebalance.com/effective-meetings-produce-results-before-the-meeting-1918729>

For additional templates of meetings and guidance on how to run an effective meeting search Effective Meetings in your browser.

## Recruitment & Training

### Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of Special Olympics. The thoughtful recruitment, coordination, and retention of volunteers is critical. This process includes a number of important tasks, such as recruiting, matching skills to roles, arranging appropriate training for volunteers, and acknowledging their contributions. Important skill sets for a volunteer Local Agency Manager include good organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills. The objective is to recruit, train, organize, recognize, and retain volunteers.

### *Action Steps for Volunteer Management*

- Obtain a list of roles, qualifications, and time needed for volunteers regarding specific activities
- Maintain position descriptions for volunteers and include training duties
- Appoint a volunteer committee to assist with recruiting and training

- Follow up with referrals from the Accredited Program or local volunteer agencies in a timely manner
- Hold interviews as necessary for potential volunteers to determine interests and skills
- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator and Management Team to assign volunteers to appropriate positions
- Arrange in-service training for volunteers as necessary
- Provide a way for volunteers to offer feedback about their experience
- Ensure that volunteers are properly supervised at events
- Ensure that all volunteers complete the appropriate volunteer registration forms
- Create and maintain a current volunteer database
- Ensure that thank you letters, appreciation notes, or activities are provided to thank volunteers
- Update appropriate web pages with volunteer needs

### ***Volunteer Expectations***

- Complete the required volunteer registrations forms and trainings
- Fulfill the responsibilities of your assignment
- Set a good example for the athletes
- Model good sportsmanship and behavior
- Be continually vigilant and aware of the safety of the athletes
- Be loyal to your commitment to your Special Olympics Accredited Program
- Grow, learn, and challenge yourself through your involvement with Special Olympics

### ***Increasing Volunteers***

There are a number of steps Local Agency Managers and committee members should take in order to increase the number of volunteers. Below are some tips to increase volunteer efforts:

- Determine needs and skills required
- Establish programs based on athlete numbers and opportunities athletes would like
- Advertise volunteer needs for local events through social media
- Advertise coach needs as sports develop

### ***Where are potential targets for volunteers?***

- College volunteer centers
- Sports organizations
- Sports leagues
- Community volunteer centers
- Sponsor volunteers
- High schools
- Families of Young Athletes™
- Service groups



*How do I target these groups? How do I recruit them?*

- Ensure that all recruitment efforts have a clear message and follow-up plan.
- Consider the following questions:
  - What is the time commitment?
  - What skills are required?
  - How does the volunteer follow-up if interested?
- Partner with sponsors to offer high-level volunteer roles for day events, such as venue managers
- Research local businesses that may offer employee volunteer hours and donate to charities based on hours served by employees
- Develop volunteer appreciation acknowledgements to maintain the volunteer base
- Invite volunteers to serve on Management Teams and utilize their talents to grow your Local Agency

## **Coaches**

Having a well-trained team of coaches is critical to the success of Special Olympics and Local Agencies, as well as ensuring the happiness and success of athletes and Unified Targeting Coaches

*There are a number of targeting sources for Special Olympics coaches:*

- Sports organizations
- Sports leagues
- Colleges and universities – including their athletic departments, sororities and fraternities, academic departments, and/or residential halls
- Service groups
- Local officials' associations
- Adaptive Physical Education and Physical Education teachers
- Special Education and General Education teachers
- Former coaches at elementary, middle school/junior high, and high school levels
- College students in Special Education programs
- Partnerships with colleges, youth sports organizations, and professional clubs

### ***Special Olympics North America Coach Education System Overview***

North America staff are continually evolving and enhancing our coach education system to meet the needs of volunteer coaches and the athletes they coach. The Coach Education System identifies basic minimum requirements for all coaches and recommendations for continuing education. The intent is to assist Special Olympics Programs in designing and providing quality sports training for Special Olympics coaches and ultimately the athletes.

\*Please note that each Program may have different requirements and language (i.e. Assistant Coach vs. Sports Volunteer) with respect to coach certification.

## **Coaching Guides**

Coaching Guides are sport-specific training manuals designed to aid coaches, teachers and family members in training individuals with intellectual disabilities. Each guide provides an overview of the sport, equipment, facilities, long-term goals, short-term objectives, task analysis, teaching suggestions and more. *Coaching Guides* are available on the Special Olympics, Inc. website at [SpecialOlympics.org](http://SpecialOlympics.org).

## **CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Certification**

The required certification process requires all coaches to complete the SOWI on-line General Coaches' Certification (available at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org) ). Coaches will be required to complete the general certification every three years. General certifications expire on December 31 of the third calendar year from the date the certification was completed.

### **State Games Certification Requirement**

Advancement to State-level competition requires certified coaches to be registered as part of an advancing delegation and in attendance at the State Games. Each team advancing to State is required to have a certified coach (i.e. for two basketball teams advancing to State, two certified individuals are required). Likewise, each individual sport that advances to State-level competition is also required to have a certified coach. Coaches may only serve as the certified coach for one sport at the same State tournament. Certification must be completed on-line and must be completed no later than the Thursday following the State Games registration deadline in order to attend that State Games event. Teams or groups of individuals who do not have a certified coach who can be in attendance at the Games will not be allowed to advance to the State level. Teams or individuals found to be without the certified coach in attendance at the Games will be ejected.

### **Sport-Specific Certification**

Sport-specific certification will continue to be offered, but will no longer act as the requirement to advance to the state games. Sport-specific certification will be required for all coaches wishing to attend National or World Competitions (USA Games, National Invitational Tournaments, etc.). To become certified, a coach must be a registered Class A volunteer, complete the SOWI General Coaches Certification, and attend a Certified Training School. Coach certifications expire on December 31 of the third calendar year from the date of the sport-specific coaches training that was attended. In order to maintain a current sport-specific certification, a coach must complete the General Coaches Certification or retake the sport-specific certified training school prior to the December 31 expiration date.

### **Minimum age to act as a coach for SOWI is 16**

Class A Volunteers who are 16 or 17 years old and wish to coach at each practice and competition must be under the supervision of a SOWI registered Class A volunteer who is 18 years or older (the Class A volunteer need not be a certified coach). In order to act as the certified coach at State Games Tournament, a minor coach must complete the general coaching certification. Minor coaches may not act as a chaperone. Athletes must be chaperoned by a registered Class A volunteer who is 16 or older under the 1:4 chaperone to athlete ratio.

### **Certified Training Schools**

All SOWI Certified Training Schools (CTS) include SOWI information, risk management, safety, Code of Conduct, policies, etc., as well as a sport-specific component. There will be a certain number of CTS opportunities in every Region for coaches to attend. When possible, CTS opportunities will be advertised on the calendar on the SOWI website and additionally, a CTS flyer will be sent to Agency managers to advertise to their volunteers. Agency managers are able to schedule a CTS opportunity for their Agency and/or community by directly contacting the Director of Training. The process for an Agency manager to schedule a CTS is as follows:

- 1) Contact the Director of Training
- 2) Determine the date, time and location and number of anticipated participants
- 3) The Director of Training will work directly with the clinicians to make arrangements for paperwork and training materials for the CTS. When possible, SOWI will advertise the CTS on the SOWI website and it will be open for all coaches to attend.

### **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Training and Certification**

#### **Q. What do I need to do to maintain my general coaching certification?**

**A.** The general coaching certification must be completed every three years. Criteria for involvement

#### **Q. Can I complete a continuing education course or certified training school to maintain my general coaching certification?**

**A.** No. The general coaching certification can only be renewed by retaking the course every three years.

#### **Q. For my sport-specific certification, do I have to attend a sport-specific training school for EVERY sport I am certified in?**

**A.** You do not need a sport-specific certification in every sport in order to coach, however in order to be able to coach at the national or world level, you need the specific sport certification that you are coaching in.

#### **Q. If I obtain a new sport certification, will it automatically re-certify my other sport-specific certifications?**

**A.** Yes, as long as they have not expired already.

#### **Q. For my sport-specific certification, if I attend a seminar, conference, or in-service for my job, will that count as the educational course?**

**A.** No.

#### **Q. If my sports certifications do expire, how do I get certified again?**

**A.** You will need to retake the online General Coaches Certification.

#### **Q. Will I be notified if my certification is about to expire?**

**A.** All coaches will receive two emails informing them of upcoming expirations. They will receive the first emails in June for a six-month notice and a second email in November for a one-month notice. Additionally, Agency managers will still be able to track coach expirations on the website as well as on their volunteer rosters they receive.

**Q. If I am a USA or World Games coach will I be exempt for recertification?**

**A.** There will be allowances and/or exceptions pertaining to recertification requirements for USA and World Games coaches that will be at the discretion of the Program Services Department.

**Q. Can I use someone from my community to conduct a training school?**

**A.** Yes, you may still use a clinician who is from your community; however, in order to do so, you must coordinate the training school through your regional Athletic Director and the Director of Training.

**Q. Will the Regional offices still be scheduling training schools?**

**A.** Yes, the Regional offices will continue to schedule training schools.

***Retaining Coaches***

Retaining coaches is critical. Coaches build trust and relationships with athletes, Unified Sports® partners, volunteers, and families. There are a number of ways to retain coaches and build a stronger Special Olympics community.

- Provide an initial meeting to review coaching role.
- Provide ongoing training opportunities.
- Empower the coach to be the leader of their team.
- Ensure effective communication prior to and throughout the season. Offer the opportunity to debrief after the season in preparation for the next year.
- Provide recognition at every level of coach certification.
- Establish your own Coach of the Year Award; submit entry to Special Olympics North America Coach of the Year Program.
- Identify coach needs through an Input Council and various communication pathways.
- Incentivize continued education (advancement to higher competition) to include, but not limited to, being selected to coach at a National, Regional, or World Games.
- Invite coaches to participate in other events throughout the year.

**Athlete Growth**

Special Olympics Local Agencies are always growing. It's important to reach as many athletes as possible to help maintain growth. Below are a number of tips to assist with outreach to new and current athletes.

***Create Links to Local Groups & Agencies Serving Individuals with Disabilities***

- Partner with Parks and Recreation Departments for opportunities to include individuals with intellectual disabilities in their current Programs. Connect links between Special Olympics and Parks and Recreation websites for more information on how to get involved.
- Connect with all agencies and community services – such as group homes – to bring in older athletes or maintain current athlete base as they age out of school.

***Advertise Locally & Utilize Social Media***

- Create website and social media accounts. Some social media platforms to consider are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Advertise upcoming events and include information such as how to join, how to volunteer, and how to donate.

- Local Agencies can use relevant hashtags in their social media posts.
- Abide by any program established policies.

### ***Target Local Schools***

- Introduce the Unified Champion Schools program, which is a comprehensive model implemented in the U.S. that combines Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement to create school and community climates of acceptance and inclusion. This can begin as early as kindergarten with Young Athletes™, and continue throughout elementary, middle, and high school with Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> and/or related sports and leadership opportunities.
- Work with local independent school districts, Special Education Directors, or Athletic Directors. Partner with them to add Special Olympics opportunities to the school day or as a part of after-school programs with a focus on the middle schools.
- Speak at parent meetings and/or teacher professional development days
- Provide Special Olympics and Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> information to students and their families through newsletters and brochures.

### ***Target Young Athletes™***

- Partner with local groups that involve people with intellectual disabilities, such as The Arc and the Down Syndrome Society. Present information about the Young Athletes™ program at their meetings, in their newsletters, etc.
- Target inclusive preschools and share information as to how they can incorporate the program during the day, and encourage teachers to become coaches. Showcase athlete talents at a Young Athletes™ festival.
- Offer a Young Athletes™ Festival at Local Games and invite the public. To attract new families, incorporate Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup> opportunities that begin with a Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup> screening.

### ***Engage Local College Recreation Departments with Special Olympics College***

Special Olympics College (SO College) Clubs function as an official club on campus. SO College Clubs connect college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities through sport to build friendships and help lead the social justice movement of Special Olympics.

- Special Olympics College Club programs are made up of three core elements: Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>, Youth Leadership, and opportunities for Full Campus Engagement.
- [http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What\\_We\\_Do/Special\\_Olympics\\_College\\_Clubs.aspxFundraising](http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Special_Olympics_College_Clubs.aspxFundraising)

## **How to Grow & Sustain Your Local Agency**

### **Planning for Growth**

As a Local Agency grows, it will have to evolve in order to serve athletes in a quality manner. The goal of all programs is that growth be tied to athlete demand and interest. As more athletes join a Local Agency, more

sport opportunities will need to be added, practice facilities will need to be larger, the budget will have to increase, and the coach and volunteer base will need to grow. For this reason, it is better to plan for growth when launching a Local Agency in order to best accommodate the Local Agency's needs as they are discovered.

### **Enhancing Existing Sports**

Consider adding additional training opportunities and sports performance standards to the Local Agency to encourage increased performance. Expand the Local Agency from just one skill-focused training session per week by adding a second training session focused on fitness and conditioning. Focusing on health to enhance the existing sports programs will assist your athletes in their health and well-being. It is a global initiative of Special Olympics for all athletes to participate in 2 high quality sports opportunities per week such as practice, walking clubs, SoFit, nutritional classes, etc.

### **Adding Unified Sports® Options to Already Existing Sports**

By partnering with schools, churches, or other community organizations, the Local Agency can grow by giving volunteers the option of becoming Unified Sports® partners to train and compete alongside Special Olympics athletes.

### **Adding New Sports**

In order to better gauge the popularity of the sports offered by your Local Agency and the Accredited Program, regularly surveying the athletes, coaches, Management Teams, and families is encouraged to obtain the best information and feedback.

In order to make effective decisions in adding a new sport or Program, the following need to be taken into consideration:

#### *Interest*

- Determine community interest by hosting a sports demonstration night for local athletes, Unified Sports® partners, and coaches. Introduce basic sports skills and determine the community's interest for adding a program or sport
- Brochures within schools, community boards, group homes, and other areas that serve individuals with intellectual disabilities are helpful for increasing awareness and determining interest

#### *Facilities*

- Partner with local recreation centers, high schools, and sports organizations in order to obtain access to facilities used for training and competition

#### *Coaches*

- Host a volunteer orientation for all new volunteers and introduce coaching opportunities
- Recruit and strategically place coaches where they will best fit

#### *Other Volunteers*

- Host or participate in volunteer fairs and trainings within targeted communities to create interest for the Local Agency's needs
- Create a volunteer job description for each available position in order to provide specific requirements and job functions for volunteers

### *Budget*

- When determining the Local Agency's needs, be sure that the budget provides information about how much revenue the Local Agency will need to sustain and/or grow. A copy of a budget is located on the SOWI website under Agency Management.
- Collaboration with your Accredited Program will help determine the Local Agency's budget and ensure that the Program is staying within the parameters of the organization

## **Determining What Opportunities to Offer**

The following opportunities may be added based on your Local Agency's capacity and specific needs, along with endorsement from the Accredited Program.

### **Young Athletes™**

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, caregivers and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children. Children of all abilities take part, and they all benefit.

Everyone benefits in these areas from Young Athletes:

- **Motor Skills:** Children with intellectual disabilities (ID) who took part in an eight-week Young Athletes curriculum saw seven month's development in motor skills for children who did not participate.
- **Social, emotional, and learning skills:** Parents and teachers of children who took part in the Young Athletes curriculum said the children learned skills that they will use in pre-primary school. The children were more enthusiastic, confident, and played better with others.
- **Expectations:** Family members say that Young Athletes raised their hopes for their child's future.
- **Sport Readiness:** Young Athletes helps all children to develop important movement and sport skills. These skills get them ready to take part in sports and recreational activities when they are older.
- **Acceptance:** Inclusive play has a benefit for children without ID as well. It helps them to better understand and accept others.

This program is designed to address two specific levels of play. Level 1 includes physical activities focused on developing fundamental motor tracking and eye-hand coordination. Level 2 concentrates on the application of these physical activities through a sports skills activity program and developing skills consistent with Special Olympics sports play. The activities consist of foundational skills, walking and running, balance and jumping, trapping and catching, throwing, striking, kicking and advanced skills.

Young Athletes is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is ran one of three different settings – schools, communities, and homes. This initiative is modeled after the traditional Special Olympics program. Sites are required to practice Young Athletes a minimum of eight sessions and it is recommended that these sessions are conducted over eight consecutive weeks. Through practicing the various skills, Young Athletes are able to build on their strengths each week. After completing at least eight sessions, Young Athletes participate in a Culminating Event, much like a Regional or State Games. Here, athletes demonstrate the skills they’ve learned or improved upon over the weeks and participate in an awards ceremony in which all Young Athletes are acknowledged. It is our hope that by having a similar model to our traditional program, those that continue to participate in Special Olympics will have an easy transition to a local Agency or Unified Champion School when they turn 8 years old.

Young Athletes includes several resources to guide family members, educators and other professionals as they conduct the program with their children, brothers, sisters, cousins, grandchildren, students or patients. Sites are able to sustain a Young Athletes program by providing a Site Coordinator (much like an Agency manager), facility, volunteers, and children between the ages of 2 and 7 receive a kit, curriculum, ribbons, t-shirts, and more to conduct that program successfully at no cost. Additionally, families with a child diagnosed with an intellectual disability or delay and are unable to attend one of our current Young Athletes sites are eligible for a family kit at no cost to use at home. For more information visit [www.SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org](http://www.SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org) or [www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)

### **Unified Champion Schools**

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools incorporate Special Olympics sports and related activities while enhancing the youth experience and empowering youth to become agents of change in their communities. This program is a catalyst for promoting inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities in a variety of activities.

**The three components of a Unified Champion School are:**

- Inclusive Sports Opportunities (Unified Sports®)
- Inclusive Youth Leadership and Advocacy
- Whole School Engagement

**Unified Champion Schools Resources:**

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Community\\_Building/Youth\\_and\\_School\\_Activation/Unified\\_Champion\\_Schools\\_Resources\\_All.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Community_Building/Youth_and_School_Activation/Unified_Champion_Schools_Resources_All.aspx)

### **Athlete Leadership**

Athlete Leadership programs provide Special Olympics athletes the opportunity to become advocates for Special Olympics. Athletes are provided with training and the subsequent opportunities to speak publicly, meet with sponsors or donors, and hold leadership positions within the organization.



Through the Leadership program athletes are provided with the opportunity to coach, officiate, and hold positions on Input Councils, Committees, and Boards. These opportunities are the means of developing athletes' abilities beyond those of being a competitor.

### **Athlete Leadership Resources:**

<http://resources.specialolympics.org/athlete-leadership/>

### **Goal of Special Olympics**

The ultimate goal of Special Olympics is to help persons with intellectual disabilities participate as productive and respected members of society at large, by offering them a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition, and by increasing the public's awareness of their capabilities and needs.

### **Value Statement – Athlete Leadership**

Special Olympics empowers athletes to be contributing and respected members of Special Olympics and society. We support athlete-leaders on and off the playing field.

### **Purpose of Athlete Leadership**

The purpose of Athlete Leadership is empowering athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.

### **Definition of Athlete Leadership**

Through organized training and practical experiences it helps prepare athletes to undertake meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the Special Olympics organization, both on and off the playing field.

### **Basic Concepts of Athlete Leadership**

- 1) Athlete leadership is fundamental to Special Olympics being an athlete-centered organization.
- 2) Every Special Olympics athlete has leadership abilities that can contribute to the movement.
- 3) Athlete leadership starts with an athlete making an informed choice of leadership role(s).
- 4) Athlete leadership has a powerful effect on athletes' self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 5) Athletes require education in leadership skills before being placed in positions of responsibility.
- 6) Athlete Leadership include classes that guide athletes toward a variety of roles, including: board/committee membership, games management, public speaking, coaching, officiating, and youth leadership.
- 7) After attending classes, athletes need both immediate and real opportunities to practice newly-learned leadership skills.
- 8) Most athletes benefit from the support of a committed athlete-centered mentor whose role evolves as the athlete leader becomes more capable in their leadership role.
- 9) Special Olympics staff, volunteers and families must be educated to ensure they value and support the involvement of athletes in meaningful roles.
- 10) Skills learned enrich athletes' abilities to become more involved and respected in the community.

### **Opportunities**

- Athletes on the Program's Board of Directors

- Athlete Congress or Input Councils
- Athletes as coaches and officials
- Athletes as donors
- Athletes employed by Special Olympics
- Athletes as newsletter/ website contributors
- Athletes as Global Messengers (speakers bureau)
- Athletes on local, Regional, or State committees and management teams
- Athletes as mentors to other athletes
- Athletes as fundraisers

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

As athletes assume new leadership roles within Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI), there is a need for education and training for everyone involved.

Currently, SOWI is providing the following trainings on a regular basis:

- 1) Introduction to Athlete Leadership
- 2) Global Messenger Workshop (beginner, refresher or graduate) – public speaking and interviewing skills
- 3) Athlete Governance or Leadership Training Workshop – general leadership skills such as how to express opinions, listen to other’s ideas, and work together to solve problems
- 4) Athletes as Coaches Training – general coaching skills and sports-specific training
- 5) Athlete Health Leader – education and nutrition
- 6) Advocacy and Government Relations
- 7) Other workshops such as Assisting with Fundraising, Working with the Media, Reading Financial Reports and Technology, and general Life Skills are offered periodically as needed

## AT THE AGENCY LEVEL

Agencies have been creative in their implementation of Athlete Leadership. Involvement ranges from simply enlisting veteran athletes as peer mentors to a more formal approach of developing structured Athlete Councils, and many things in between. SOWI supports each Agency’s right to choose the level of involvement, but encourages all Agencies to be more intentional about offering leadership roles to athletes within their Agency.

As we continue to grow through Athlete Leadership, it has become clear that this type of program bottlenecks with staff or key volunteers because it is viewed as more work. On the contrary, we have found if expectations are clear, athletes are a huge resource to the program, and can relieve workloads from staff and key volunteers. In order to do this, athletes must be given clear expectations and be held accountable.

## ATHLETE INPUT COUNCILS

SOWI has Athlete Input Councils (AIC) at the State Office, Regional and local levels. The statewide council has representatives from each Region and meets periodically to discuss statewide topics such as leadership training, athlete health, inclusion and other objective from the current strategic plan. Regional and local councils operate in much the same way, but address Regional or local Agency issues.

*“The Mission of the SOWI Athlete Input Council is to work together to respect and support SOWI athletes, coaches, family, friends, volunteers, Agency managers, Staff, and Board members by gathering information, ideas and opinions of SOWI athletes and sharing that information with SOWI by putting it in writing so that we all understand and communicating to all involved in SOWI.”*

**To learn more about current AIC members and topics visit the Athlete Leadership page on the SOWI website.**

### **ATHLETE VOLUNTEERS**

Athlete Leadership trains athletes to serve in meaningful leadership roles in addition to that of competitor. As a result, SOWI now has dozens of athletes who also serve as volunteers for our program. However, there are differences in how SOWI processes their information and manages their service compared to other volunteers.

1. Athletes are registered in the SOWI Games Management System (GMS) and all volunteers are registered in the Blackbaud database system
2. Of all the Athlete Leadership athlete volunteers, only athlete-coaches and athletes who serve on Regional and State committees will be screened because of their direct contact with athletes and because they are in a position of authority and trust of other athletes. Athlete coaches cannot serve as chaperones at State competitions
3. Athlete volunteers cannot drive on behalf of SOWI.

At this time, athletes who are also Class A Volunteers are not eligible for Years of Service (YOS) awards. Typically, athletes are already receiving recognition from SOWI through their sports involvement and specific athlete service awards. In addition, there are many athletes who also volunteer their service for SOWI and aren't officially registered as Class A volunteers. We maintain this YOS policy to be fair to all athletes and to ensure we continue to recognize our non-athlete volunteers. The athletes are the heart of our organization and the volunteers make it beat.

### **SARGENT SHRIVER SPECIAL OLYMPICS GLOBAL MESSENGERS PROGRAM**

#### **Training**

Global Messengers are trained at workshops conducted by Special Olympics staff and experts in public speaking. The workshop requires each athlete to give a presentation, after which he/she is critiqued by peers and trainers.

#### **Goals**

Each Global Messenger is asked to give presentations throughout the year to recruit new athletes and volunteers or assist in fundraising, while telling the Special Olympics story.

#### **Results**

Special Olympics Wisconsin has conducted numerous workshops attended by athletes from all over the state. Since then, each Global Messenger has made a significant contribution to public awareness of Special Olympics in their communities and statewide.

Global Messengers have:

- Shared their message at Opening and Closing Ceremonies of State competitions
- Spoken at Special Olympics Wisconsin Leadership Conferences, Law Enforcement Torch Run® conferences and Special Olympics International conferences
- Given presentations to numerous corporations and civic organizations
- Appeared on Special Olympics posters and in public service announcements or media interviews
- Given presentations to college and university classes

## **ATHLETES AS COACHES (AAC) PROGRAM**

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) welcomes and encourages athletes to assume leadership positions such as athlete-coach. To be successful, athletes wishing to coach in the SOWI system should first and foremost communicate their wishes to their Agency Manager. This provides an opportunity to determine the best plan for the Agency and athlete, as well as a time to discuss the criteria for involvement (below) and understand important SOWI policies such as the Policy Regarding Volunteers and Staff Dating Athletes, found in the *Volunteer Policy* section of this handbook.

### **Criteria for Involvement**

- 1) Athletes wishing to coach in the SOWI system must be registered and screened as a participant in the AAC program. This is done by completing a *Class A Volunteer Registration Form* which includes taking the online Protective Behaviors training and completing the on-line General Coaches Certification (Athlete coaches must be 16 years old or older.)
- 2) Athletes must have a mentor in the AAC process, and have the ability to meet the requirements of being a coach (attendance at practices and competitions, etc.). Agency managers may assist the athlete, but the athlete will be responsible for finding a mentor as well as transportation to and from practices and/or trainings as part of this program.
- 3) The athlete, with the help of their mentor, must adhere to all current coaching certification policies.
- 4) In addition, athletes must complete a one-time ACC face-to-face workshop (a 4-hour training offered periodically throughout the state).

### **State Games/Tournament Registration Policy**

Athletes, including athlete-coaches, are not eligible to act as chaperones or to drive on behalf of SOWI. In order for an athlete-coach to be registered as a coach for a State Games/tournament they must meet all of the criteria for involvement in the AAC program. Because an athlete-coach cannot serve as a chaperone, they must be certified in order to attend State Games.

Teams with an athlete-coach will be allowed extra quota slots to accommodate athlete-coaches. The State Games/tournament ratio of athlete-coaches to competing athletes shall be as follows: Team sports (excluding bocce, team or doubles bowling, and relay teams) – one athlete-coach per team; Individual sports (including bocce, team or doubles bowling and relay teams) – one athlete-coach for every 12 athletes. Even though extra quote is allowed for an athlete-coach to attend state competitions, the specific rules of a sport are still intact. For example, in team basketball, three coaches are allowed on the bench. The athlete-coach serves as one of the three,

An athlete-coach may serve as the only certified coach for a team. However, if an athlete is the only coach, please contact SOWI staff to assess if any accommodations are necessary. No athlete-coach will be allowed to register in a coach's role with any of the Unified Sports® offered by SOWI.

To preserve the integrity of the AAC position, SOWI does not allow athletes to participate and coach within the same sports season (i.e. an athlete will not be allowed to attend State competition as a coach if you have competed in that sports season as an athlete). Athlete coaches who no longer participate as an "athlete" do

not have to renew their *Athlete Participation and Release Forms*, but must keep their Class A volunteer registrations current. If the AAC maintains a current Athlete Participation form, they can attend all Healthy Athletes screenings.

### **Advanced Competition Opportunities**

SOWI encourages registered athlete coaches to consider applying for coach positions at USA and World Games when applicable. Please contact the VP of Sports and Health Programs for more information.

### **Youth Activation**

Youth Activation Committees are an inclusive group of school-aged leaders, both with and without intellectual disabilities. The committee encourages its members to support the Accredited Program and develop their leadership skills through event participation, volunteer opportunities, and fundraising.

Youth Activation primarily focuses on promoting social inclusion by educating, motivating, and activating youth to become agents of change in their communities and advocate for the respect, inclusion, and acceptance of all people, regardless of abilities. Youth Activation can take many different forms depending on the culture of your Local Agency.

### **Youth Activation Information:**

[http://www.specialolympics.org/Common/Special\\_Olympics\\_A\\_to\\_Z.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/Sections/What\\_We\\_Do/Project\\_Unify/Youth\\_and\\_Schools.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/Common/Special_Olympics_A_to_Z.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/Sections/What_We_Do/Project_Unify/Youth_and_Schools.aspx)

### **Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup>**

The Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup> program is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities.

Healthy Athletes<sup>®</sup> is a program that can be implemented within any Special Olympics program. By promoting a healthy lifestyle with fitness and overall wellness components, you can ensure that your Local Agency is equipped to make healthy choices beyond the sport and competition realm.

### **Healthy Athletes Resources:**

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Healthy\\_Athletes/Healthy\\_Athletes\\_Resources.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Healthy_Athletes/Healthy_Athletes_Resources.aspx)



## Athlete Policies

### Eligibility Statement

See also General Rules, Article 2: Special Olympics Athletes:

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General\\_Rules/Article\\_02.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General_Rules/Article_02.aspx)

### General Statement

Special Olympics training and competition is open to every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least 8 years of age and who registers to participate in Special Olympics as required by the General Rules.

### Age Requirement

Individuals are eligible for training and competition at age 8, and there is no upper age limit for participation. Children ages 2 to 7 are eligible to participate in the Special Olympics Young Athletes™ program.

A Local Agency may permit children who are at least 6-years-old to participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programs, or in specific and age-appropriate cultural or social activities offered during a Special Olympics event. Such children may be recognized for their participation in such training or other non-competitive activities through certificates of participation, or through other types of recognition not associated with participation in Special Olympics competition. No child may participate in a Special Olympics competition (or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition) prior to their 8th birthday.

### Identifying a Person with an Intellectual Disability

*A person is considered to have an intellectual disability for purposes of determining their eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies one of the following requirements:*

- The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability as determined by their localities
- The person has an intellectual delay as determined by standardized measures, such as intelligent quotient (or IQ) testing, or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community as being a reliable measurement of the existence of an intellectual delay
- The person has a closely related intellectual disability, meaning that the person has functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and adaptive skills (such as in recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care)
- Persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. However, these individuals may volunteer for Special Olympics or consider becoming a Unified Sports® partner.

### Working with Agency/Provider Staff & Volunteers

Older athletes who participate in Special Olympics may live in group homes; small residential facilities in the general community, that ideally have six or fewer occupants, who are watched over by trained caregivers 24 hours per day. Turnover of group homes staff members is quite high for a variety of reasons, and you may find

challenges communicating with staff due to turnover and other circumstances. Local Agencies need to establish the most effective means for communicating with group home staff, articulating expectations and needs for their support. Consider involving them in the Local Agency as coaches, volunteers, and Unified Sports® partners. Local Agencies provide valuable sports training and competition opportunities for group home residents and it will be necessary to establish a relationship with the group home and agency provider staff.

# Volunteer Policies

## Submitting Volunteer Registration

### **VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION AND SCREENING INFORMATION**

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) would not exist today without the time, energy, and commitment and caring of our 11,649 volunteers. SOWI relies on volunteers at all levels of the movement to ensure that every athlete is offered a safe and quality sports training and competition experience. Although SOWI cannot guarantee the safety of all participants in all circumstances, we recognize our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure a safe environment for all. As a result, after considerable research and planning, Special Olympics, Inc. has developed and implemented a volunteer screening policy which is mandatory for all U.S. Programs. The policy is based on, and in compliance with, Special Olympics, Inc.'s volunteer screening policy.

In order to be considered for participation as a volunteer for SOWI, all volunteers must register as either Class A or Class B volunteers, according to their level of involvement listed below. Volunteering, like employment, with SOWI, is an “**at will**” relationship.

### **CLASS A VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION AND SCREENING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Class A Volunteer Classifications**

- Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes
- Volunteers in a position of authority or supervision with athletes
- Volunteers in a position of trust with athletes
- Volunteers who have an above-average level of authority or involvement with SOWI
- Volunteers who handle cash or other assets of SOWI in amounts equal to or greater than \$15,000
- Volunteers who have access to personal information of Special Olympics athletes, volunteers, and donors

Class A volunteers, adults and minors, include, but are not limited to, the following roles with SOWI:

- Agency managers and co-managers
- Coaches, including ALPs Athletes as Coaches
- Chaperones
- Unified Partners
- ALPs Mentors
- Drivers of athletes (as requested on behalf of SOWI)
- Those who have administrative and/or fiscal authority who act on behalf of SOWI
- Committee Members—State and Regional level, including ALPs
- Fundraising event committee members
- Management Team Members (Games/Region/Agency)
- Board Members
- Staff

#### **Class A Volunteer Eligibility**

- 1) Adult Volunteer Eligibility
  - a) Individuals must be age 18 and over



- b) Individuals must complete Protective Behaviors training
  - c) Individuals have submitted an adult *Class A Volunteer Registration Form* and have been screened and approved by SOWI
  - d) Adult volunteers may drive on behalf of SOWI provided they are not restricted based on the results of the background screening
  - e) Adult volunteers may handle cash or other assets of SOWI in amounts equal or greater than \$15,000 provided they are not restricted based on the results of the background screening
- 2) Minor Volunteer Eligibility
- a) Individuals 8 - 17 years of age are eligible to volunteer for certain SOWI positions
  - b) Individuals have submitted a minor *Class A Volunteer Registration Form* and have been screened and approved by SOWI
  - c) All minors will be automatically restricted from driving on behalf of SOWI
  - d) Minors will not be restricted from financial duties because the screening method used would not be able to determine whether or not a minor has a criminal record in regards to financial issues. Each Agency or SOWI event would need to make a decision whether or not to use minors for financial duties.
  - e) Chaperones at State competitions or overnight events must be 16 years of age or older
  - f) The age eligibility requirements listed below indicate the least restrictive requirements mandated by SOWI. Individual Agencies or SOWI sponsored events can adjust these to be more restrictive to reflect the needs of the Agency or event.
    - Ages 14 – 17
      - No parent or guardian need accompany the minor, but supervision by adult Class A volunteers must be present
    - Ages 8 – 13
      - Must be accompanied by parent or guardian to closely supervise the minor at the practice or event
    - No one under age 8 is eligible to be a Class A volunteer

### **Class A Volunteer Registration Overview**

To be considered for participation as a Class A volunteer, prospective volunteers must submit a signed, completed and truthful SOWI *Class A Volunteer Registration Form*. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the registration form or termination from the program.

The decision of SOWI with regards to any volunteer’s registration form and their suitability for volunteering rests with the sole and absolute discretion of SOWI. In exercising that discretion, SOWI shall be guided by its mission statement and the Volunteer Policy and Procedures.

Management of the Class A volunteer registration and background screening is performed by the Director of Volunteer and Government Relations at the State office. Registration forms are available from a Regional office, the State office or online at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org) under the volunteer tab. The samples included in this section of the handbook cannot be used for duplication. Original forms are required (no photocopies).

### **Class A Volunteer Registration Process**

- 1) All volunteers must be registered, screened and granted official volunteer status by SOWI prior to their involvement. Once screened and accepted, Class A volunteers will be re-screened every three years. Re-registration is not required for subsequent screening, but volunteers are required to complete the online Protective Behaviors training every three years and update SOWI on any information on the form that has changed.

- 2) For new volunteer applicants, the *Adult or Minor Class A Volunteer Registration Form* is to be filled out completely and an original SOWI form must be used. Copies or faxes will not be accepted. For the Adult form all areas printed in red are required. For the Minor form all fields are required. Any *Class A Registration Form* without the required information will be returned to the prospective volunteer. No copies or tracking is done on returned or incomplete forms. New applicants must complete the online Protective Behaviors training at the time of submitting the *Class A Volunteer Registration Form* (note: forms will only be held for 90 days without confirmation of Protective Behaviors completion). Volunteers must use the exact same full name and current address and e-mail address when completing the Protective Behaviors training as they do when completing the *Class A Volunteer Registration Form* so that records can be matched.
- 3) Volunteer registration forms will be processed within approximately two weeks of arrival and the volunteer applicant will be notified of their volunteer status via a letter from SOWI.
  - a) Volunteer applicants who are approved for full involvement will receive an approval letter and a registration card.
  - b) Volunteer applicants who meet the criteria for limited involvement (approved but with restrictions) will receive an approval letter with one or more of the following restriction codes listed on their registration card:
    1. No transporting athletes or volunteers (this automatically appears for minors and athlete volunteers)
    2. No financial duties
    3. No direct contact with athletes
    4. No chaperoning (this automatically appears for athlete volunteers and volunteers under the age of 16)
  - c) Volunteer applicants whose criminal background check discloses one of the disqualifier offenses will be sent a letter of denial. The Agency manager will be sent a letter informing them of the volunteer applicant's denial status. Refer to the Class A Volunteer Background Screening section for more information.
- 4) When registered minor volunteers reach the age of 18, SOWI will notify the volunteer by sending them an *Adult Class A Registration Form* that needs to be completed. They will be required to re-register by completing this form and mailing it into the State office within 30 days and by completing the Protective Behaviors online training.
- 5) When registered minor volunteers reach the age of 18, SOWI will notify the volunteer that an Adult Class A registration form needs to be completed along with completion of the Protective Behaviors on-line training within 30 days.
- 6) Screen procedure for potential volunteers that have recently moved to the United States. A background will still be completed if there is a social security number which the program will confirm prior to allowing the individual to volunteer. Additional requirements if a social number is not available for check:
  - At least three references
  - Class A form submitted along with the completion of the "four questions" relative to criminal offenses.

- A personal interview with the potential volunteer conducted by the program representative
- Copy of their Green Card as a form of identification
- Completion of the “Protective Behavior “.

### **Class A Volunteer Registration at Competitions**

- 1) Regional, District, and Sectional Competitions
  - a) Agencies are advised to have all of the coach/chaperone delegates at the Regional, District, and Sectional competitions be registered Class A volunteers. While this is not a required standard for Agencies, this is recommended as it is in the best interest for the safety of all athletes and volunteers.
- 2) State Level Competitions
  - a) All coach/chaperone delegates within an Agency for a State level competition must be a registered Class A volunteer in order for the Agency to compete in that competition. Agencies listing non-class A registered coach/chaperone delegates will have their registration materials denied and will not be allowed to compete (no un-named chaperones can be listed on the event registration). At the event, the head of delegation must go to Tournament Central and have their photo ID checked or they must be visually identified by a SOWI staff member or a designated key volunteer.
  - b) It is the responsibility of the Agency’s head delegate to ensure compliance that all present Agency volunteers at the Games/tournament are Class A.
  - c) The Agency head of delegation will need to submit a *Class A Event Verification Form* provided by the State Office when they register at Tournament Central certifying that all coaches and chaperones attending the State competition are Class A registered and that he/she has viewed photo ID’s or visually verified each coach and chaperone. If a registered Class A volunteer is unable to attend an event, the substitute must currently (by the registration deadline) be a Class A volunteer. No substitutions will be allowed for chaperones who have yet to become a Class A Volunteer. Please see the *Training* section of this handbook for the procedures regarding substituting a certified coach.

### **Class A Volunteer Privacy Policy**

SOWI realizes that our current and prospective volunteers are concerned with the possibility of identity theft. As part of SOWI’s volunteer screening policy, we strive to keep all sensitive information obtained from the volunteer registration process confidential and secure.

The following guidelines are followed to ensure that prospective and registered volunteers’ confidential information is secure:

- In the volunteer database, the social security number field can only be viewed by a limited number of paid staff members.
- *Class A Volunteer Registration Forms* are kept in a locked file cabinet.
- Information entered to do a background check, including social security number, is entered via SOWI’s approved vendor’s secure website. A limited number of SOWI staff have authorization to perform these background screenings.
- Social security number or birth date information will not appear on any report used either internally or sent to an Agency manager.

## **Class A Volunteer Background Screening**

Background screening is conducted as part of the Class A volunteer registration process for new volunteers and on an ongoing basis for currently registered Class A volunteers. The screening process differs depending on whether the prospective or current volunteer is an adult (age 18 or over) or a minor (age 8 to 17).

- 1) Class A Adult Volunteer Screening
  - a) Criminal Background Record Check
    - Special Olympics Incorporated Volunteer Screening Policy requires SOWI to perform criminal background checks on all new and currently registered adult Class A volunteers. SOWI is required to use an Special Olympics, Inc. approved national vendor who uses a national database that includes the sex offender registry for each state in which the sex offender registry is available.
  - b) Motor Vehicle Record Check
    - If the prospective volunteer enters “yes” to either of the questions regarding their driving record on the *Adult Class A Volunteer Registration Form*, or if SOWI receives information through the background check process that the applicant may have motor vehicle-related convictions, then SOWI will conduct a motor vehicle record check for prospective adult volunteers. Likewise, if during the periodic criminal background record checks for currently registered volunteers, SOWI receives information of motor vehicle-related convictions, SOWI will conduct a motor vehicle record check.
  - c) Photo ID Check
    - The prospective volunteer must either send in a photo copy of a picture identification (drivers license or state issued ID, passport, military ID or student ID) with their *Adult Class A Volunteer Registration Form* or they must have an Agency manager or SOWI staff view their photo ID and sign off on the form.
- 2) Class A Minor Volunteer Screening
  - a) Background Record Check
  - b) Motor Vehicle Record Check
    - A motor vehicle check is not performed for a minor since SOWI does not allow minors to drive on behalf of SOWI.
  - c) Photo ID Check
    - For minors, photo ID checks are required only to the extent they are available. If available, the prospective volunteer must either send in a photo copy of a picture identification (drivers license or state issued ID, passport, or student ID) with their *Minor Class A Volunteer Registration Form* or they must have an Agency manager or SOWI staff view their photo ID and sign off on the form.

## **Results of Criminal Background Record Check**

### Automatic Disqualifiers – Criminal

If the criminal background record check discloses a conviction for any of the offenses listed below, the prospective or current volunteer will be automatically disqualified from participation as a volunteer for SOWI in any capacity and shall not have any right of appeal:

- Child abuse
- Sexual abuse of a minor/adult
- Causing a child’s death
- Neglect of a child/individual for whom the potential volunteer had/has responsibility
- Kidnapping

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Felony assault
- Arson
- Criminal sexual conduct
- Identity theft
- All five questions on the screening information must be answered truthfully or it will be an automatic disqualification

#### Potential Disqualifiers – Criminal

If the criminal background record check discloses a conviction for any of the offenses listed below, SOWI may deny the prospective or current volunteer from participation as a volunteer for SOWI in any capacity. **The volunteer does have a right to appeal in writing to the SOWI appeals committee.**

- Adverse judgment for damages, settlement or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse
- Theft of funds
- Fraud
- Larceny or other financial crime
- Prostitution-related crime
- Controlled substance crime
- Being a subject of any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse that restricts contact with another individual

#### Automatic Disqualifiers – Driving (for offenses occurring within a specific time frame)

If the criminal background record check or motor vehicle record check discloses a conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, driving while intoxicated, driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs or comparable offenses within the seven years immediately preceding the record check, the prospective or current volunteer shall automatically be disqualified from driving on behalf of SOWI and shall have no rights of appeal until **seven years** has passed since the last conviction (as listed above) has appeared on their record. In addition, If the criminal background record check or motor vehicle record check discloses convictions for three or more moving violations within the three years immediately preceding the record check, or if the volunteer has a probationary license, the prospective or current volunteer shall automatically be disqualified from driving on behalf of SOWI and shall have no rights of appeal until a time when they have less than three moving violation convictions in three years appearing on their record.

At such a time, it will be the responsibility of the volunteer to initiate a request to have the restriction removed. The request must be sent to the State office in writing. At the time of receipt, SOWI will perform a new motor vehicle record check to ensure that the restriction can be lifted. The volunteer will receive a letter with the status of the restriction, and if the restriction has been removed, a new SOWI volunteer card.

## **Volunteer Denial Appeals Process**

Prospective volunteers denied involvement with SOWI will be notified via a letter of denial. SOWI will attempt to expedite notification as quickly as possible; however, the review process can be lengthy. A separate letter will be sent to the Agency manager informing them of the applicant's status. Reason for denial will not be listed on either letter. Should the applicant wish to verify or contest the information on which the denial decision was made, they may contact SOWI for further information.

If a prospective volunteer was denied participation based on a criminal offense which is categorized as an Automatic Disqualifier, there can be no appeal. If a prospective volunteer was denied participation based on a criminal offense which is categorized as a Potential Disqualifier then the applicant must submit the appeal in writing with the following information:

- Description of the offense and circumstances surrounding it;
- Sentence delivered and served, if any;
- Statement about why the prospective volunteer should be allowed to be a volunteer for SOWI; and
- Name, address and telephone number of two character references who are not related to the prospective volunteer and how the references know them.

The application review committee will render a decision and notify the prospective volunteer in writing within 30 days of receiving the appeal request.

## **Class B Volunteer Registration Overview**

Class B volunteers will be managed at the level in the organization with which they participate. Examples include:

- Volunteers who have only limited contact with athletes
- Volunteers who have contact with athletes accompanied by registered Class A volunteers

Class B volunteers, adults and minors include, but are not limited to, the following roles with SOWI:

- Day of Event volunteers
- Healthy Athletes® volunteers
- Volunteers who drive on behalf of SOWI, but do not transport athletes

## **Class B Volunteer Eligibility**

- 1) Class B Adult Volunteers Eligibility
  - a) Individuals must be age 18 or over
  - b) Individuals have provided the registration information required by the Class B adult volunteer registration policy
- 2) Class B Minor Volunteers Eligibility
  - a) Individuals age 8-17 years of age are eligible to volunteer for SOWI for certain positions
  - b) Individuals have provided the registration information required by the Class B minor volunteer registration policy

- c) The age eligibility requirements listed below indicate the least restrictive mandated by SOWI. Individual Agencies or SOWI sponsored events can adjust the requirements to be more restrictive to reflect the needs of the Agency or event.
- Ages 14-17
    - No parent or guardian need accompany the minor, but supervision by adult Class A volunteers or staff must be present
  - Ages 8 - 13
    - Youth groups must be accompanied by adult supervision with a minimum of one adult chaperone for every four volunteers.
    - Individual minor must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who will be closely supervising the minor at the event.
  - No one under age 8 is eligible to be a Class B volunteer

### **Athlete Volunteer Roster**

Athlete Leadership (AL) train athletes to serve in meaningful leadership roles in addition to that of competitor. As a result, SOWI now has dozens of athletes who also serve as volunteers for our program. However, there are differences in how SOWI processes their information and manages their service compared to other volunteers.

- 1) Athletes are registered in the SOWI Games Management System (GMS) and all volunteers are registered in the Blackbaud database system.
- 2) Of all the ALPs athlete volunteers, only athlete coaches and athletes who serve on Regional and State committees will be screened because of their direct contact with athletes and because they are in a position of authority and trust of other athletes. Athlete coaches cannot serve as chaperones at State competitions.
- 3) Athlete volunteers cannot drive on behalf of SOWI.

## **POLICY REGARDING VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF DATING ATHLETES**

### **Introduction**

Among the Special Olympics movement's highest priorities is the well-being of, and respect for the dignity of, Special Olympics athletes\*. The purpose of this document is to make clear Special Olympics, Inc.'s policy on volunteers\* and staff dating Special Olympics athletes and to protect all participants in the Special Olympics movement, including athletes, coaches and staff, as well as Special Olympics organizations around the world.

Every Special Olympics, Inc. Program must take all reasonable steps to ensure that athletes\* participating in Special Olympics do so in an environment that is free from abuse, intimidation, fear, pressure or coercion from any person in a position of authority, including Special Olympics staff, coaches and other volunteers. At the same time, Special Olympics respects the right of every Special Olympics athlete to be treated with dignity and to have the same rights as every other human being.

## **Policy**

Special Olympics prohibits any Special Olympics staff member or volunteer (excluding spouses of athletes and athletes who are Class B volunteers) from dating or having a sexual relationship with any Special Olympics athlete. In the event that a Special Olympics organization learns of any dating or sexual relationship, the organization immediately shall require either: i) that the staff member or volunteer end his or her association with Special Olympics; or ii) that the association between the staff member or volunteer and Special Olympics will be terminated.

In the case of a Special Olympics athlete who is also a staff member or volunteer, the Chief Executive Officer of the organization where the athlete competes must evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the competing athlete. If it is determined that there is such a relationship, then apply the above policy in the same manner as the policy is applied to non-athlete staff or volunteers.

Each Special Olympics State office Program should determine whether it is required by its national or local laws to report certain relationships between Special Olympics staff or volunteers and Special Olympics athletes to the appropriate authorities under any “mandatory reporting” or other requirements in place for that Program’s jurisdiction, and comply with those requirements.

Special Olympics respects the right of athletes to have the full range of human relationships available to other human beings. This policy shall not be interpreted as a limitation on the rights of athletes, but only as a restriction on Special Olympics staff and volunteers.

## **Implementation**

All Special Olympics organizations (e.g. Special Olympics, Inc., State office Programs, and GOCs) shall implement the policy.

\*The terms “Special Olympics athlete” and “athlete” refer to persons with intellectual disabilities. The term “volunteer” includes Unified Partners.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why does Special Olympics need an athlete dating policy?**

Many, if not most, U.S. Special Olympics Programs prohibit dating between athletes and volunteers or staff. In 2002, Special Olympics and a U.S. Program were sued by an athlete’s family alleging, among other things, that the Program had been negligent in allowing an athlete and a coach to date. During the course of discovery, it became clear that, while most U.S. Programs did not allow volunteers or staff to date athletes, there was a need to formalize that practice as a uniform policy for all U.S. Programs.



**2. Who reviewed the athlete dating policy before it was finalized?**

Special Olympics, Inc.'s senior executive management team, all athletes with e-mail addresses who attended an Athlete Congress or Global Messenger Training in April 2003, all Regional Managing Directors, Special Olympics, Inc. Board members who are intellectual disabilities experts, and the Executive Directors of AAMR and The ARC.

**3. Do any other organizations have similar policies limiting dating by people with intellectual disabilities or others?**

Yes, policies like ours are common. The ARC and AAMR each have a policy statement that provides individuals with intellectual disabilities the right to "Protection from sexual harassment as well as from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and sexual relationships with paid staff." Many organizations, such as youth sports organizations, high schools, colleges, and universities, prohibit relationships between persons in positions of authority (e.g. teachers, professors and coaches) and participants such as young athletes or students. Since Special Olympics is a volunteer-driven movement, our policy covers volunteers as well as staff.

**4. If an athlete is dating a volunteer or staff person who does not have an intellectual disability, does the athlete have to stop participating in Special Olympics?**

No. The policy requires that the volunteer or staff person dating the athlete must either stop dating the athlete or end his or her association with Special Olympics. The athlete remains in good standing with Special Olympics.

**5. Can an athlete who is also a volunteer or staff person date an athlete who is not a volunteer or staff person?**

Yes, under certain circumstances. Although Special Olympics normally treats an athlete acting in a non-athlete capacity the same as it would treat any other person acting in that capacity, the policy on dating makes an exception. If an athlete acting in a non-athlete capacity wants to date a participating athlete, the Program's CEO (or comparable position) must evaluate the relationship and determine whether an authority relationship exists between the athlete in the volunteer/staff position and the other athlete. If there is no authority relationship, the volunteer/staff athlete may date the other athlete.

**6. What if the CEO determines that there is an authority relationship between the athlete in a volunteer or staff person position and the Special Olympics athlete?**

The volunteer/staff athlete would have to stop dating the other athlete or cease serving as a volunteer or staff member in an authority relationship, either by a change in function or by ceasing to be a volunteer or staff member.

**7. Can an athlete who is a "day-of" volunteer (also called Class B volunteer) date a participating athlete?**

Yes, an athlete who is a day-of volunteer may date a Special Olympics athlete. The policy does not apply to athletes who are Class B volunteers because it is thought that no authority relationship exists between a person who only volunteers for the day-of an event and a participating athlete.

**8. Can an athlete who is a staff person or is a volunteer married to another athlete continue to volunteer or work for Special Olympics?**

Yes. The policy makes an exception for athletes who are married.

**9. Can a Unified Partner date an athlete?**

No. Under the policy a Unified Partner is treated the same as any other volunteer or staff person who is not a person with an intellectual disability.

# Sports

## Sports Training & Practice

Requirements concerning Special Olympics training may be found in Article 1, Section 3.05:

<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf>

## Minimum Standards

The minimum standards for athletes desiring to compete in Special Olympics are based on Special Olympics Inc. Sports Rules. All athletes must be trained in the sport before competing. Part of this training may include nutrition education and physical conditioning. Eight consecutive weeks are mandatory. However, for Regional or World Games, training is recommended twice a week for ten weeks. All athletes must have opportunities to compete during that time.

## Levels of Competition

Athletes of all ability levels have an opportunity to advance to the next higher-level competition provided the sport and event are offered at the next level, from sub-Program Games to World Games.



## Criteria for Advancement

The criteria for advancement can be found on page 18 of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules:

<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf>

Special Olympics staff, with assistance from the Games Organizing Committees, may establish quotas for the number of athletes and teams participating in Games.

The Accredited Program identifies the number of athletes or teams eligible for advancement within the sport/event based on participation in competition at the lower level. If the number of eligible athletes or teams does not exceed the quota, all athletes and teams may advance.

*If the number of eligible athletes or teams does exceed the quota, athletes or teams that advance shall be selected as follows:*

- Priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
- If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, select athletes or teams will advance by random draw.
- If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all first-place finishers shall advance.
- The remaining quota shall be filled by random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
- This process is repeated – adding each place of finish as necessary – until the quota is filled.

These procedures apply to both individual and team sports, including Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>. The rules and processes to select athletes to the next higher level of competition should be shared with all athletes, families, and volunteers.

## **Other Sport Opportunities**

### **Special Olympics Young Athletes™**

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Young\\_Athletes/Young\\_Athletes\\_Toolkit.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Young_Athletes/Young_Athletes_Toolkit.aspx)

Young Athletes™ is a unique sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities between the ages of 2 through 7. The focus is on fun activities that are important to mental and physical development. Children learn how to play with others and develop skills important to learning.

*The benefits of the Young Athletes™ program are numerous and include (but are not limited to):*

- Motor skill development
- Physical fitness
- Social, emotional, and learning skills
- Higher family expectations for the future
- Sports readiness
- Social inclusion and acceptance

## **Risk Management: Health & Safety**

Safety in Special Olympics activities is vital to providing a positive atmosphere for our athletes and volunteers. Prudent and proactive risk management practices help ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. It is crucial that you become familiar with your Accredited Program's Crisis and Emergency Plan, and know who to contact in the event of an emergency.

### **Sports Training & Competition**

Ensure the safety of athletes, Unified Sports<sup>®</sup> partners, coaches, volunteers, and those cheering on the athletes by promoting safety during sports training and competition.

### ***During Practice Sessions and at Competitions***

- Walk through the facility before each training session or competition.
- Always have a basic first aid kit available at every practice and competition.
- Always have athletes' medicals available at practices and competition. Be sure to protect the privacy of this information and note where these forms go at the end of the season.
- Establish a simple protocol in case of an accident or other incident. Provide all coaches with the most up-to-date and accurate emergency contact information for athletes, Unified Sports® partners, and volunteers.
- Create a simple crisis communication plan for your Local Agency that includes who to contact, and in what order. Always notify the appropriate staff contact at your Accredited Program of this plan.
- Ensure that there is at least a 4:1 ratio of athletes to coach in order to provide proper supervision (3:1 ratio for Winter Sports).
- Be sure to establish that a coach can contact the Local Agency Coordinator in case of an incident.
- Provide the coaches with the number and location of the nearest emergency services.

### **Incident Reporting**

An Incident Report Form should be completed following all injuries or incidents. Other incidents may include property damage, abuse, theft, or incidents requiring law enforcement. This helps document injuries and incidents, which in some cases may speed up the activation of applicable insurances.

The Incident Report Form is a factual account and should be free of speculation or hearsay. It is best to leave the determination of potential liability to the claims professionals.

Following an injury or incident, forms should be promptly sent to the Sr. Director of Field Services at the SOWI State Office and to American Specialty Insurance). Please fill out this form whenever there is a circumstance which causes an injury to a person (participant or spectator) or property, even if you feel the accident or incident may not lead to an actual claim.

### **In the Event of a Serious Injury**

Refer to Crisis Communication in the Communication and Public Relations section of this handbook for the Crisis Team Phone Tree immediately in the event of a serious injury. Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Brief overview of the nature of the incident
2. Where the activity took place when the incident occurred
3. The phone number of persons SOWI can call to gather further details
4. If applicable, name of hospital where injured person was taken

Even if all information is not available, **do not delay** contacting SOWI. In any injury situation, it is vital that SOWI be contacted, as soon as possible.

### **General Liability**

The Special Olympics General Liability policy protects insured Special Olympics organizations, athletes, and registered volunteers from third-party claims of bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury due to alleged negligence arising from the conduct by Special Olympics during a Special Olympics activity. The general liability policy has been endorsed to provide coverage for losses resulting from damage to property in the care, custody, or control of Special Olympics.

### **Automobile Liability**

This policy provides protection to Special Olympics for liability claims arising as a direct result of the use of a non-owned or hired automobile. For coverage to be effective, the vehicle must be used for Special Olympics business with the permission of Special Olympics and driven by an employee or a registered volunteer of Special Olympics.

**NOTE:** If the injury is serious or results in death, please contact American Specialty immediately at (800) 566-7941 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and the Accredited Program's crisis communications contact and/or CEO.

\*Please note that exclusions and additional terms apply to coverages. Please consult with your Accredited Program for more information.

## **Branding**

Special Olympics has extensive branding guidelines, including sub-Program guidelines, that are available online: <http://resources.specialolympics.org/brand/>

## **Uniforms**

The following information is useful when ordering uniforms.

### **Commercial Messages on Athlete Uniforms and Competition Numbers**

In order to avoid commercial exploitation of persons with intellectual disabilities – per the Special Olympics, Inc. General Rules – no uniforms, bibs, or other signs bearing competition numbers worn by Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports® partners during any competition or during any opening or closing ceremonies of any Games may be emblazoned with commercial names or commercial messages. The only commercial markings that may be displayed on athletes' uniforms during Games, competitions, and opening and closing ceremonies are the normal commercial marking of the manufacturer.

In terms of Special Olympics uniforms, “normal commercial markings” are limited to the following:

- On larger clothing items – such as shirts, jackets, pants, jerseys, and sweatshirts – one logo or commercial name per clothing item is permitted if that name or display does not exceed an area of 6 square inches or about 39 square centimeters (such as a display measuring 2” x 3” of 5.08 cm X 7.62 cm):



- Please note that, in addition to commercial messages, each sport may have specific guidelines to the size and location of numbers and team names as indicated by each National Governing Body.
- On small clothing items – such as caps, socks, hats, gloves, and belts – one logo or commercial name per clothing item is permitted if that name or display does not exceed an area of 3 square inches in 19.35 square centimeters.
- On athletic shoes, no logos or commercial names are permitted except for the brand name and logo that are included in the manufacturer of athletic shoes that are sold to the general public.
- Please check the logo guidelines prior to ordering uniforms. If in doubt, contact the Special Olympics office; they will review artwork for compliance.

## Special Olympics sub-Program Visual Identity Guidelines

### Proper representation of a sub-Program

**B Team Representation**  
Examples of how to properly represent a team through their team lock-up mark.

T-shirts for sub-Programs  
Team logo on the front - team and sub-Program representation on the back.

Optional t-shirts for sub-Programs  
Additional designs can propose the name of the sub-Program on the length of the shirt with the Accredited Program logo on the top left hand side.

SpecialOlympics.org    Special Olympics Sub-Program Visual Identity Guidelines / December 2012

## Branding for Team Uniforms and T-Shirts

### Athlete Program Level Branding – No Sponsorship

Athlete t-shirts and/or uniforms should not carry any sponsorship branding. They can, however, be branded with the Special Olympics logo.

### Lockup for sub-Programs, Clubs, or Teams

When creating shirts for sub-Programs, clubs, or teams, a lockup can be used that gives primacy to the actual team name. This acknowledges the importance of local teams within Special Olympics, Inc. and facilitates the creation of distinct team identities for games within a program.

Above and below are examples of the Special Olympics brand in action with examples of lockups for sub-Programs, clubs, or teams.

**Brand in action** **T-shirts**  
Lock-up for sub-programs, clubs or teams

**1** When creating shirts for sub-programs, clubs or teams, a lock-up can be used that gives primacy to the actual team name. This acknowledges the importance of local teams within Special Olympics and facilitates the creation of distinct team identities for games within a program.

**1** The name of the team has primacy on the shirt ensuring team or club recognition between competing teams. The choice of typeface and design of this element is at the discretion of the program.

**2** The name of the Accredited Program to which the sub-program, team or club is affiliated is set in all capitals Ubuntu Bold as illustrated here.

**3** The Special Olympics symbol is centred beneath the program name.

**4** The color, typestyle or motif created for each team reflects the local identity of the club or team while clearly identifying the club or team as being within the Special Olympics Accredited Program.

Sub-program / Team / Club  
Local expression

1 CLUB/TEAM NAME

2 SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM NAME

3

Program  
Standardized

MERCER COUNTY  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
NEW JERSEY

AREA 24  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
NEW JERSEY

LEINSTER  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
IRELAND

CITY OF YORK  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
GREAT BRITAIN

ALSTON COUGARS  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
VIRGINIA

### Branding for Volunteer Apparel

In addition to banners and signs, logos on volunteer t-shirts are an appropriate and approved way to recognize local sponsors, and could be placed on sleeves and/or the back of the shirt. Highlight the official brand on the front of the shirt.



## Sports: Training & Competition

As a Local Agency Coordinator, it is important to understand the basics of sports training and competition. There are factors involved in getting athletes ready for competition and then taking them to competition.

*Please note that prior to the beginning of training and attending competition, the following elements should be in place:*

- Registration of the Local Agency with the Accredited Program
- Selection of sport(s) for competition
- Athlete medical forms and release forms completed and submitted
- Volunteer/coach recruitment and Class A Volunteer certification completed
- Head coach and assistant coaches trained and certified

### Sports

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) offers year-round training and competition in a wide variety of sports, both team and individual. The *Athlete Medical Form*, *Athlete Registration Form*, and the *Athlete Release Form* serve as an athlete's registration for Special Olympics and must be completed and approved before an athlete may participate in any Special Olympics training program. Once registered, an athlete must train for at least eight training sessions prior to a Regional or District competition. SOWI recommends that for optimal results, an athlete should train for one hour at least three times per week for eight to 10 weeks for each sport prior to Regional/District competition.

SOWI follows the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules*, which are based on International Sports Federation and National Governing body rules. Rules can be found on the Special Olympics, Inc. website at [SpecialOlympics.org](http://SpecialOlympics.org). Because Special Olympics is a sports program for individuals with intellectual disabilities, people sometimes question the "fairness" of sports rules enforcement. But as veteran coaches will tell you, knowing and playing by the rules is one of the greatest benefits Special Olympics offers its athletes. Why?

1. Impaired does not mean incapable. Special Olympics athletes are capable of learning and competing within sports rules. Challenging athletes in this manner adds to the pride and sense of accomplishment they experience.
2. It is unfair to athletes who are properly trained and who are following the rules to compete against others who are not.
3. Many Special Olympics athletes eventually move into other sports programs (school, parks and recreation, community leagues, etc.). They will be better prepared for that transition if learning and competing by rules is one of the skills they take with them from Special Olympics.

Special Olympics offers something for everyone. In addition to the available Official Sports, Special Olympics offers Recognized Sports and the ability to get involved in locally popular sports.

Fact Sheets for each sport are available at

<http://resources.specialolympics.org/RegionsPages/content.aspx?id=35044>.

### **Official sports**

Special Olympics Wisconsin provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in 18 Olympic-type sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities 8 years of age or older. Athletes train in their sport, compete at an area level and may progress to the state level of competition.

<http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/sports-offered/>

### **Fall Sports Tournament Season**

Bowling, Flag Football, Volleyball, Unified Bowling

### **Winter Sports**

Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snow Boarding, Snow Shoeing

### **Indoor Sports Tournament Season**

Gymnastics, Basketball Skills, Team Basketball

### **Summer Games Season**

Athletics, Powerlifting, Soccer, Swimming

### **Outdoor Sports Tournament Season**

Bocce, Golf, Unified Golf, Tee-ball, Softball, Tennis

### **Recognized Sports**

Sailing, Unified 3v3, Indoor Triathlon

### **Locally Popular Sports**

There is also an opportunity for athletes to engage in locally popular sports. SOWI may offer sports that are locally popular, although not currently considered Official or Recognized Sports.

### **Sports Rules**

All rules are in the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules book, located on the SOI website at

<http://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-rules/>.

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has developed these rules based upon International Federation and National Governing Body Rules for each sport.

All rules pertaining to SOWI competition can be found under : <http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/get-involved/agency-management/competition-guide/>

All information regarding Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) referencing, rules, training, calendars of events, deadlines, medical forms, etc. can be found on the SOWI website: <http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org>

## Unified Sports

Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that includes Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and Unified Sports® partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities). Through shared sport training and competition, Unified Sports® promotes inclusion for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

Coaches are required to take the Coaching Unified Sports® Course, which is available free of charge online at <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000/coaching-unified-sports>.

### ***Unified Sports® Models/Styles of Play***

Unified Sports® is identified in Article 1 of the Sports Rules as three inclusive models – Competitive, Player Development, and Recreational. Each of these models reflects a certain style of play and teammate composition, but what all three have in common is that they are inclusive. Coaches should consult with their local Special Olympics Programs regarding what Unified models are offered and at which events. It is also important to know that some Programs may use different terms in naming the three models or styles of play.

#### ***Unified Sports® Competitive Style***

- All athletes and partners must have sport-specific skills and tactics to complete without modification of rules.
- Teams in this model may be eligible for advancement to Regional and World Games.
- Athletes and Unified Sports® partners in team sports must be of similar age and ability.
- Athletes and Unified Sports® partners in sports, such as golf, may have a greater variance in age and ability.

#### ***Unified Sports® Player Development Style***

- Athletes and Unified Sports® partners are not required to be of similar abilities, but must be of similar ages.
- Teammates of greater abilities serve as mentors to assist teammates of lower abilities in developing sport-specific skills and tactics.
- In certain sports, such as bocce, more age variation is allowed.
- Competition is available at this level.

#### ***Unified Sports® Recreation Style***

- Consists of inclusive recreational sports opportunities for athletes and Unified Sports® partners, or other organizations as introductory one-day events, exhibitions, or demonstrations.
- There is no prescribed training, competition, and/or team composition requirements.
- Opportunities may take place in partnership with schools, sports clubs, and/or community programs.
- Physical education class activities and intramural sports may also fall into this category.

## Families

Families (parents and siblings) are a vital component of the Special Olympics movement. At the local level, there are three types of family involvement commonly observed:

- **Non-Participatory:** At this level, the family's sole involvement is to make sure their family member/athlete regularly attends practices and is suitably prepared to attend and participate in competition.
- **Supportive:** These are family members who attend practices and competition, but do not undertake any additional roles.
- **Active Participants:** These families take on leadership roles. This includes serving as coaches, organizing fundraisers, acting as chaperones or committee members, serving as Local Agency Managers, and more.

*The Local Agency should create a position on the Management Team for a Family Representative with specific goals of providing opportunities for family involvement. The Family Representative should:*

- Contact families through communication and outreach.
- Create a welcome letter for new athletes, which includes a family welcome letter with a list of volunteer opportunities and activities.
- Host a new family orientation session.
- Invite families to an annual picnic highlighting the sports season.
- Offer family hospitality at all events with a sign-in to capture contact information.
- Invite families to an annual or quarterly meeting with other families to get their feedback.
- Create a family newsletter.
- And the number one thing you could do for families is ask them to help and get involved.

### **A Ray of Hope, a Bright Future Ahead**

When parents learn that their newborn or expected child has an intellectual disability, they are often faced with a crisis of conscience. In an instant, the joy and anticipation that these parents were experiencing turns into anxious questioning: What does the future hold for my child? What can we do? How can we cope?

Then they tell us how Special Olympics delivered a ray of hope.

Through year-round sports training and competition, Special Olympics builds self-esteem, fosters courage and teaches valuable lessons about striving, winning, losing and trying again. A recent Yale University study found that athletes participating in Special Olympics benefit from:

- Improved friendships and family relations
- Improved physical fitness and sports skills
- Enhanced self-confidence and social competency
- Greater readiness for employment
- Better preparation for independent living
- Increased ability to make personal decisions

Through SOWI, over 10,000 athletes and their families are discovering that a bright future lies ahead.

Families can find a network of people with similar concerns, questions and life experiences. They can help find medical expertise and community resources and they find a place of acceptance, respect and belonging.

### **Family Health Forums**

Families around Wisconsin can come together at Family Health Forums to discuss topics that interest them (i.e. Health care, healthy relationships, home training, nutrition, etc.). The goal of these forums is to bring families together to learn, share, and become a strong network of support for each other. If you are interested in bringing a Family Health Forum to your community, contact The Director of Health Programs.

### **Family Resources**

Family members of a person with intellectual disabilities often feel confused and alone. Getting involved with Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) gives families a support network providing them acceptance, resources, hope and a chance to become advocates – making them a valued voice in our movement. Families can choose their level of involvement in the Special Olympics program. Some families provide not only encouragement and love, but may coach, offer transportation, assist with fund-raising, officiate, chaperone, and train other volunteers within their local agency.

**Family Resources:** <http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/community/friends-and-family/>

### **What Can You Do To Help?**

Families and friends of Special Olympics athletes are encouraged to play an active role in their community Special Olympics program, to share in the training of the athletes, and to assist in the public education efforts needed to create greater understanding of the emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. You can be a:

- Fan in the Stands
- Driver
- Home Trainer
- Fundraiser
- Spokesperson
- Family Committee Member

One or all—it is your choice! A brochure and *Family Handbook* in English and Spanish can be found on the Family and Friends page of the SOWI website. These are great resources for new families as they help answer many general questions about Special Olympics

# Health Programs

## Healthy Athletes

### How it works

SOWI offers free screenings for athletes attending various State competitions in Special Smiles®, Healthy Hearing, Lion's Club International Opening Eyes®, Fun Fitness, Fit Feet, Health Promotion and MedFest®. To be eligible to participate in these programs, athletes or their guardians sign *The Athlete Release form*. The athlete must also have a current *Athlete Medical Form* on file at the State office. Athletes do not have to be participating at the Games in order to take advantage of Healthy Athletes. Any athlete with a current medical on file at the State office can participate.

The providers (physicians, physician assistant, nurse practitioners, dentists, dental hygienists, optometrists, opticians, physical therapists, audiologists, podiatrists, dieticians, registered nurses and more) see the athletes in an environment familiar to them and perform exams in a setting among the athlete's peers. The potentially nerve-racking experience of seeing a doctor is well received by the majority of athletes in this setting.

### Added Benefits

While athletes are certainly the focus of this program, medical professionals and students are given an opportunity to teach each other techniques for screening members of this population. Many of the volunteers have been deeply impacted by their experience.

### Healthy Athletes Disciplines Offered

Fit Feet: Fit Feet was developed in collaboration with the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine to evaluate and screen foot and ankle deformities of athletes and to provide education in proper footwear and care of the feet and toenails.

FUNfitness: Physical therapy professionals provide screening and education on flexibility, functional strength, and balance and advise athletes on good fitness programs for risk prevention and for optimal function in sports training and competition.

Health Promotion: Professionals educate athletes about nutrition and exercise, as well as bone health, smoking cessation and sun safety using interactive activities and motivational information to encourage behavior change. Blood pressure and bone mineral density screenings are also available at Health Promotions.

Healthy Hearing: Audiologists assess athlete hearing and provide external ear canal inspection, evoked otoacoustic emissions screening, tympanometry and pure tone screening for those with identified need. Referrals may include further testing of middle ear problems or management of hearing loss or hearing aids, molded ear plugs or earwax removal.

Lions Club International Opening Eyes: Opening Eyes brings eye care professionals in to offer vision health tests and possible refraction, prescription eyeglasses, prescription protective sports eyewear, and referral for follow-up care.

Special Smiles: Dental professionals provide screenings, health education and prevention services, and refer athletes for follow-up care. Fitted mouth guards and fluoride varnish are offered to athletes. Funding for Special Smiles is provided by Delta Dental of Wisconsin, Inc.

MedFest: Conducts standard sports physicals required for participation in Special Olympics events. This physical permits new athletes to register and assures continued eligibility of existing athletes.

For more information on Healthy Athletes, visit [SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org](http://SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org), or contact the Director of Health Programs.

## **Fitness**

### **SOfit**

The SOfit Program is a unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. SOfit offers participants a holistic, personalized look at wellness and the human spirit. Together, athletes and unified partners are empowered to challenge and change the way they look at diet, daily exercise and lifestyle choices.

SOfit is an eight week program that treats wellness as a Special Olympics sport. Teams meet once a week to learn about health and wellness topics and participate in physical activity. The educational topics are based on four identified pillars of wellness: Social, Emotional, Physical and Nutritional.

SOfit is highly adaptable to the teams, environment, and resources available. Participants are asked to set a goal for themselves in the beginning of the program and work toward it over the weeks. Teams are encouraged to choose their lessons and fitness activities based on the goals of their group.

Not all SOfit participants need, or want, to work on the same aspects of wellness. The program was designed with this in mind, and allows teams (and individuals) flexibility in their educational lessons and physical activities, so each meeting can be tailored to the specific team.

Teams are asked to track metrics based on their participants goals (ie: blood pressure, social engagement, weight, or healthy habits) and submit them to their local SO program.

For more information on SOfit, contact the Director of Training.

### **Fit5**

Fit5 is a fitness resource that provides tips and information for athletes, parents, coaches, partners and other supporters to lead a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, nutrition, and hydration. It is based on the three simple goals of exercising 5 days per week, eating 5 total fruits and vegetables per day, and drinking 5 water bottles of water per day.

Along with Fit5 are Fitness Cards that offer exercises to challenge all abilities. The Fitness Cards exercises can be done at practice, at the gym, or even at home.

For more information on Fit5 and Fitness Cards, visit [www.SpecialOlympics.org](http://www.SpecialOlympics.org).

## **Performance Stations**

Performance Stations are events held near the field of play at tournaments that prepare athletes to compete to their personal best and make the connection between fitness and athletic performance.

The performance station will educate and activate members of the movement in competition readiness and the tenets of fitness: nutrition, hydration and physical activity. Giveaways will be given to all participants, which may include: water bottles, healthy snacks, and/or exercise tip sheets. In addition, coaches will receive a giveaway as well, which may include an exercise guide called Fit5 to use for future practices and trainings.

Special Olympics Wisconsin athletes, coaches, and caretakers are welcome to join the fun! Given the importance of fitness and social support, everyone connected to the athlete can participate in the station to improve their performance, fitness and ability to be active and healthy.

With improved fitness, everyone can improve their performance in both sport and health, leading to a better quality of life.



## Insurance

This provides a summary of the Special Olympics Corporate Insurance Program (SOCIP). SOCIP is the customized Special Olympics insurance program that provides certain common coverage's for all U.S. Programs and Special Olympics, Inc. in accordance with General Rules section 8.09. Detailed terms and conditions of coverage are contained in each respective policy, which can be obtained through American Specialty Insurance & Risk Service, Inc. ("American Specialty").

### Named Insureds

- Special Olympics, Inc.
- All Special Olympics Accredited U.S. Programs

All policies are issued on a calendar-year basis. Unless otherwise stated, the Named Insureds are the same for all policies shown.

For the purpose of this document, "Registered Volunteer" and "Registered Class A Volunteer" are both defined as a volunteer who is registered in accordance with the Special Olympics *General Rules* or other Special Olympics policies in effect during the policy period.

### **Commercial General Liability**

#### Description of Coverage

The general liability coverage protects Special Olympics organizations, athletes and registered volunteers from third-party claims of bodily injury, property damage and personal and advertising injury due to alleged negligence arising from the conduct by Special Olympics during a Special Olympics activity. Under the policy, the insurer has a "duty to defend" until such time as legal liability has been established, and therefore, defense costs associated with the aforementioned general liability claims are paid regardless of legal liability.

In addition, the general liability policy has been endorsed to provide coverage for losses resulting from damage to property in the care, custody or control of Special Olympics, excluding watercraft, aircraft, autos and Special Olympics-owned property. The loss must occur during a Special Olympics conducted/sponsored event and Special Olympics must be found legally liable for the loss. The limit of liability is \$100,000 subject to a \$2,500 deductible per claim for such property losses.

Insurer: Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company

**Additional Insureds:** Entities with an insurable interest will be named as an Additional Insured, but only with respect to liability resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of Special Olympics, as requested and approved by American Specialty Insurance Services, Inc. on behalf of Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company. **Note:** Only American Specialty may issue certificates of insurance on behalf of Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company – no authority is granted to any other entity.

General Liability Coverage & Limits:

• Each Occurrence	\$1,000,000
• General Aggregate (other than products and completed operations)	\$5,000,000
• Sexual Abuse and Molestation-per occurrence	\$1,000,000
(Included in policy limits, but subject to a \$100,000 self-insured retention)	\$2,000,000 agg.
• Products-Complete Operations	\$1,000,000
• Participant Legal Liability	Included
• Personal and Advertising Injury	\$1,000,000
• Damage to Premises Rented to You	\$1,000,000
• Medical Payments	Excluded

The following red flag fundraising activities are **EXCLUDED** from the SOCIP GL policy and may only be deemed eligible for coverage if certain underwriting requirements are met **and** the activity is approved by the Insurer prior to the event. Please contact Rene Waterson immediately if you are aware of a fundraising activity involving any of the following activities:

- Golf ball drops
- Firearms
- Rodeos
- Political rallies
- Obstacle Runs (including obstacles, paint, foam or other non-traditional challenge features)
- Animals
- Fundraising activities lasting more than seven consecutive days
- Fundraising events with greater than 5,000 people at any one time (other than a Polar Plunge®)
- Aircraft (other than airplane pulls)
- Events involving alcohol
- Over The Edge events

The following exclusions and requirements apply with respect to all Special Olympics events, fundraising or otherwise. Please contact Rene Waterson if any of your activities involve the following:

- Hot Air Balloons
- Skydiving
- Fireworks
- Aircraft
- Rock Climbing Walls
- Construction Activities
- Mechanical Amusement Rides
- Watercraft (longer than 75 feet)
- Events involving alcohol
- Inflatables

## **Non-Owned & Hired Automobile Liability (NOHA)**

### Description of Coverage

This policy provides protection to Special Olympics for liability claims arising as a direct result of the use of a non-owned or hired automobile. For coverage to be effective, the vehicle must be used for Special Olympics business with the permission of Special Olympics and driven by an employee, athlete or a registered volunteer of Special Olympics.

Restriction: Non-owned and hired auto liability coverage applies excess of any other validated collectible insurance.

Note: Excess coverage is provided to registered Class A volunteers of Special Olympics who are using their personal vehicles on behalf of and with the permission of Special Olympics, and have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance with at least the state minimum requirements.

Additionally, employees of Special Olympics are insured while using their own vehicles for Special Olympics business.

Insurer: Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company

### Covered Autos

- Hired Autos – Special Olympics autos that are leased, hired, rented (e.g. rental vehicles), or borrowed for less than one month by your Program, which are used in your business.
  - Non-Owned Autos – Special Olympics' autos that are not leased, hired, rented or borrowed that are used in your business (e.g. autos owned by employees or by volunteers).

### Coverage & Limits

- Any one accident \$1,000,000

Note: **No coverage is provided for losses caused by an uninsured/underinsured motorist to non-owned vehicles**; however, uninsured/underinsured motorists' coverage is afforded for vehicles that are commercially rented by an insured. The uninsured/underinsured motorist limit is \$55,000 (combined single limit) or increased to meet the statutory limits required by a particular state.

## **Hired Auto Physical Damage**

### Description of Coverage

Coverage is provided for physical damage claims arising as a direct result of the use of a "commercially rented" vehicle by a Special Olympics employee or registered volunteer for Special Olympics business with Special Olympics permission.

A vehicle is considered "commercially rented" if it is:

- a) obtained from an entity whose primary commercial purpose is renting vehicles for profit;

- b) a specific rental charge is made; and
- c) a rental contract is executed between the rental establishment and Special Olympics with respect to the particular vehicle. The policy is subject to the limit and deductible shown below.

Hired Auto Physical Damage Deductible & Limits

• Hired Auto Physical Damage (per vehicle)	\$55,000
• Deductible (per accident) collision	\$1,000
• Deductible (per accident) other than collision	\$100

**Excess Liability**

Description of Coverage

These policies provide insurance coverage in excess of scheduled underlying SOCIP policies for all Special Olympics Accredited U.S. Programs and Special Olympics, Inc. Contact American Specialty to determine if your policies (other than certain SOCIP policies) qualify to be scheduled for coverage under the excess policies for no additional premium.

Insurer: Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company

Excess (20x1) Coverage & Limits

• Each Occurrence	\$20,000,000
• Personal and Advertising Injury	\$20,000,000
• General Aggregate	\$20,000,000
• Products/Completed Operations Agg.	\$20,000,000
• Sexual or Physical Abuse and Molestation	Included
• Retained Limit	\$10,000

Insurer: Markel American Insurance Company

Excess (10 part of 20 excess of 1 excess of underlying) Coverage & Limits

• General Aggregate	\$10,000,000
• Each Occurrence	\$10,000,000
• Product/Completed Operations Aggregate	\$10,000,000
• Sexual Abuse and Molestation	Included

Insurer: Scottsdale Insurance Company

Excess (10x10x20x1) Coverage & Limits

• Annual Aggregate	\$10,000,000
• Each Occurrence	\$10,000,000
• Sexual Abuse and Molestation	Included

## **Participant Accident Medical Policy**

### Description of Coverage

This policy responds when injuries resulting from an accident occur during a *Covered Event* or during *Covered Travel*. This is an accident medical policy, not a sickness or illness medical policy. For example, it may cover the medical expenses caused by a broken leg, but not those caused by appendicitis. An accident must occur in order for coverage to apply.

The accident medical insurance policy is in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance or medical plan applicable to the injured participant.

Injuries are defined as accidental bodily injuries received while insured under this coverage and resulting independently of sickness and all other causes. A covered loss, for the purposes of this insurance, will include: a) the repair or replacement of existing prosthetic devices such as artificial limbs, glass eyes, and artificial dental work; and b) bodily injuries arising as a result of a seizure (including epileptic seizures). To be covered the injury must occur while:

- a) Participating in activities sponsored and supervised by Special Olympics; or
- b) Traveling to, during, or after such activities as a member of a group in transportation furnished or arranged by Special Olympics.

*Covered Event* is defined as any scheduled activity authorized, organized and supervised by Special Olympics. With respect to competition activities, this includes pre-competition activities and practice sessions.

*Covered Event* also includes activities authorized by Special Olympics that are *Directly Supervised by Registered Class A volunteers*, but only when participation is part of the Special Olympics athlete's overall sports training for Special Olympics, or for the purposes of qualifying for Special Olympics competition.

*Directly Supervised* is defined as supervised in person by a *Registered Class A volunteer*.

*Registered Class A volunteer* is defined as an individual currently registered in accordance with the Official Special Olympics General Rules or other Special Olympics policies in effect during the policy period.

*Covered Travel* is defined as travel that is traveling to, during, or after such activities as a member of a group in transportation furnished or arranged by Special Olympics.

*Insured Persons* is defined as United States Special Olympics athletes (including Young Athletes™), Unified Sports® partners, managers, coaches, officials, chaperones, supervisors, fundraising participants and other volunteers, whose names are on file with Special Olympics, while participating in a Covered Event.

### Participant Accident Coverage & Limits

• Excess Accident Medical/Dental*	\$10,000
• Accidental Death Limit	\$5,000
• Dismemberment:	
-Both hands or feet	\$5,000
-Both eyes	\$5,000
-Speech and hearing (both ears)	\$5,000
-One hand or one foot or speech or hearing	\$2,500
-Thumb and index finger of the same hand	\$1,250

Only one of the amounts above (the largest applicable) will be paid

*\*Dental includes sound and natural teeth and repair and replacement of existing artificial dental work.*

Note: Please see the policy wording for a listing of all coverage exclusions.

### **Volunteer Medical Malpractice**

#### Description of Coverage

This policy provides insurance coverage for medical malpractice claims for medical services rendered at Special Olympics events by state-registered medical/health professionals who are registered Special Olympics volunteers, other than doctors, acting in the capacity of a Special Olympics registered volunteer. Coverage is not provided for doctors. Commercial medical service firms volunteering the services of their paid employees are not covered. However, should any of these employees volunteer their services on a personal basis separate from their employment status, coverage would be extended provided such person is not a doctor and is a Special Olympics registered volunteer in accordance with the Official Special Olympics General Rules or other Special Olympics policies in effect during the policy period.

Insurer: Evanston Insurance Company

Named Insured: Special Olympics, Inc.

#### Medical Malpractice Coverage & Limits

• Each Claim	\$1,000,000
• Aggregate	\$3,000,000
• Deductible – each claim	\$2,500

Note: Medical Malpractice coverage for Healthy Athletes physicians is provided under a separate policy, which is paid for by SOI. Please contact American Specialty for further information.

## Crime

### Description of Coverage

This policy provides insurance coverage to Special Olympics, Inc., and Special Olympics Accredited U.S. Programs against fraudulent, dishonest or criminal acts committed by a Special Olympics employee, volunteer or board member acting alone or in collaboration with others and causing Special Olympics to suffer a loss of money, securities or property.

This policy provides world-wide coverage.

The policy also includes coverage for losses sustained by an ERISA Plan.

Insurer: Chubb Insurance Company

### Crime/Fidelity Coverage and Limits

- Employee Dishonesty policy limit \$500,000
- Retention (per occurrence) \$50,000

## Directors and Officers Liability (D & O)

### Description of Coverage

Each U.S. Program and Special Olympics, Inc. has bound D&O coverage through Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company. The D&O policy provides protection against liability caused by the wrongful acts of directors, officers, trustees, employees and volunteers of Special Olympics including employment-related practices. The policy does not cover bodily injury losses or breach of contract. Directors, officers, trustees, employees, volunteers, or the entity itself must be named in a lawsuit in order for coverage to respond. The limits, retention and premium that apply to each U.S. Program will vary, depending on whether or not the Program or Special Olympics, Inc. has sustained losses in the past or its desired limit of liability. The minimum limit will be \$1,000,000 per claim/annual aggregate. Each D & O policy has been endorsed to provide limited cyber liability coverage.

## Finance

Accounting for all funds raised and used by your Local Agency is important to protect the credibility of Special Olympics brand, as well as to ensure compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the United States (or comparable agency in your country) as a tax-exempt charitable not-for-profit organization.

### **Oversee & Manage Financial Resources**

*The following steps should be taken in order to ensure that the Local Agency's financial resources are managed appropriately:*

- **Identify a Local Agency volunteer to manage finances.**  
Recruit someone who is capable of helping to budget, manage funds, and report finances as required. Notify the Accredited Program office as to who has been identified for this role.

- **Create annual revenue and expense budgets.**  
Budget what Program activities, training, and competitions your Local Agency plans to engage in, and then manage within those parameters. Prepare budgets by consulting the Local Agency leadership regarding intended goals, budget expenses, and revenue based on prior performance. Budgets are typically prepared during the third or fourth quarter of the current year for the following year, and will be reviewed and approved by the Accredited Program prior to implementation.
- **Reconcile expenses and revenue.**  
On a monthly basis, reconcile expenses and revenue against the budgets with receipts. Generally, the Accredited Program will require quarterly reports to ensure that everything is accounted for and balanced.

### **Additional Financial Considerations**

- The finances of each Local Agency may be managed differently depending on your Accredited Program. Different accounting practices require that you meet with the Accredited Program's Chief Financial Officer or designee to fully understand reporting requirements.
- For Local Agencies to be eligible for Accredited Program funding, they are expected to comply with guidelines and practices for reporting finances, provide annual budgets, and generally be in good standing.
- To be reimbursed for expenses by the Accredited Program, an approved budget must be in place and a prior agreement must have been established. Receipts must accompany all requests for reimbursements.
- While athletes are prohibited from being charged to participate in Special Olympics per General Rules, Accredited Program offices may invoice the Local Agency for pre-arranged services (such as lodging at State Games). Generally, the Accredited Program's office will invoice the Local Agency and deduct the invoiced amount from the Local Agency's funds.
- Local Agencies are not permitted to open credit cards, debit cards, bank savings, checking accounts, certificates of deposits (CDs), general investments, or endowments.
- Deposits must be made daily upon receipt of funds. Thank you letters must be sent to all donors.
- All expenditures must have prior approval by the Accredited Program's office. All expenditures must be paid by check or credit card from an invoice. Personal expenditures are not permitted from Local Agency funds under any circumstance. Direct cash withdrawals are not permitted. Receipts must be kept on file for all transactions.
- Capital equipment purchases for non-disposable equipment, or items valued at \$1,000.00 or more, are considered fixed assets and the property of the Accredited Program. Purchase and disposal or sale of fixed assets must be pre-approved by the Accredited Program's office. Annually, all equipment must be inventoried and reported to the Accredited Program's office.
- Finance reports must be submitted monthly. Keep all receipts on file and submit all receipts with monthly summary reports. Keep all value-in-kind receipts and submit (at least) quarterly.



Full-year budget financial records must be forwarded to the Accredited Program's office by a designated date of the current year.

- Consult your Accredited Program's office accounting department for support. They can provide assistance with reporting requirements.

All Special Olympics Agencies who collect and spend money in the name of Special Olympics will have an in-house account with SOWI. Agencies that have their finances accounted for in-house with SOWI will be required to maintain their account balances by following all procedures outlined in this handbook in the Finance / Agencies with In-House Accounts section.

Agencies are included in the SOWI annual financial audit.

### **PROCEDURES FOR AGENCY ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

When you purchase items for your Agency, please follow the steps listed below.

1. Please make sure the expense is an allowable expense. See the list of allowable and non-allowable expenses at the end of these procedures.
2. Contact the vendor from whom you wish to make the purchase to inquire about direct billing procedures. Each vendor will require something different. If you need a credit application filled out, either e-mail or fax it to the Finance Department at the State Office. We will complete the needed information and return it directly to the vendor.
3. Once the direct billing has been established with the vendor you will be able to make your purchase.
4. When you make a purchase, please have the bill/invoice sent directly to the State Office.

Special Olympics Wisconsin  
Attn: Accounts Payable  
2310 Crossroads Drive Suite 1000  
Madison, WI 53718  
[accountspayable@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:accountspayable@specialolympicswisconsin.org)

5. Fill out the *Invoice Approval Form*. This form must be filled out completely.
  - a. Name of Payee – the party you purchased items from.
  - b. Amount is the total amount due.
  - c. Purpose – Please be as detailed in this section as possible. Include names, dates, locations, and reason for purchase.
  - d. Agency Number – ALWAYS include your Agency number.
  - e. Agency Manager Approval and Witness - The witness cannot be a family member of the manager and must be a member of the Agency Management Team who is a Class A volunteer without financial restrictions. An invoice will not be paid without dual approval. Please be sure you sign and print your names.
  - f. Expense Code – Attached are a list of Expense Codes. The expense codes listed are throughout ALL levels of the organization. Your expense must be an allowable expense as listed in this section of the handbook. If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Department.
  - g. Date to be paid by – Date payment is needed. Special Olympics Wisconsin pays all invoices on a net due in 30 days basis unless otherwise noted.
  - h. Date of Purchase – Date you made the actual purchase.

6. Upon receiving both a completed *Invoice Approval Form* and the invoice, the Accounting Department will pay the invoice.
7. Invoices are paid every Wednesday. For an invoice to be paid on Wednesday, it needs to be in the State Office on or before Tuesday at the close of business. Checks will be printed on Wednesday and mailed as soon as possible. There may be times when it will take additional time to process payments.
8. Monthly Financial Statements will be available on the Agency log in page of the SOWI website. These statements will be available on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. For example January reports will be posted on or before February 15<sup>th</sup>. These reports will show all expenses and revenue for the month. If you need more specific reporting, please contact the Finance Department. Each invoice will be paid in full, as long as you have sufficient funds in your account.

# Fundraising

## Fundraising

Fans and funds are the fuel that service the mission of Special Olympics. How money is maintained, credibility, are important responsibilities of the Local Agency. A few examples of some of the established Special Olympics fundraising events that Local Agencies could take part in are the Law Enforcement Torch Run®, Polar Bear Plunges, Plane Pulls, and Over the Edge.

Local Agencies fundraise in order to create sustainable programs and encourage quality growth. The very first thing to do prior to engaging in fundraising is to contact the Special Olympics professional support staff through your Accredited Program's office. They will guide you through the fundraising policies and procedures, as well as provide ideas and strategies to ensure success.

*When organizing a fundraising event, the following steps should be followed:*

### First Steps

- **First and foremost, know that Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) actively encourages Agencies to raise funds.**
- The Special Olympics offices across the state will work to provide whatever assistance possible. Assistance may include:
  - Sample proposals
  - Sample letters of solicitation
  - Sample recognition ideas
  - Lists of successful fundraising events or promotions
  - The ability to brainstorm with other Agency managers and coaches from around the state and the Midwest
  - Review event plans and budgets and provide feedback and suggestions
- Read through the following *Fundraising Guidelines* (which contain information about how to comply with important state and Special Olympics policies), and be sure to contact your Regional Director of Special Events with any questions.
- Be sure to review the *Insurance* section of the *Agency Manager Handbook* to determine what types of events might be covered under SOWI's insurance policy.
- Complete a *Fundraising Project Application Form* (found in the *Forms for Duplication* section on-line at the SOWI website) and send to your Regional office 30-60 days before your fundraising event is held.
- Determine how much money your Agency will need by working with the Agency's manager and treasurer to develop a budget. Find resources on how to create a budget on the Agency log in page on the SOWI website under Best Practices.
- Find volunteers who are willing to help by heading up different projects.
- Ensure that anyone handling funds raised by the Agency is a Class A volunteer with no financial restrictions.

### ***Promote Your Agency and Your Fundraising Project in the Community***

- If you live in a smaller community, invite someone from the radio or TV news department to attend a planning session for your event. He or she may volunteer to participate, or suggest ways to structure your fundraiser to make it easier and more attractive to cover as a news story.
- Besides publicity, some local stations may be interested in helping sponsor the event, or helping to enlist other community organizations.

- SOWI staff is available to support you in your fundraising efforts. Please contact the Marketing Specialist for assistance in working with local Media (e.g. press releases, Public Service Announcements, etc.).

### **Recognize Volunteers and Contributors**

- Be sure to thank everyone who helped make the event or project a huge success.
- Recognition of a job well done through a letter or certificate is always appreciated and is the key to bringing back good volunteers year after year.
- A letter to the editor is often a good, no cost way to thank the community and the people who have been particularly supportive.

The Most Important Thing to Remember in Fundraising is that People Give for Three Reasons:

- Because they support the program or the cause
- Because of how they are asked or who asks them
- Personal reasons (direct stake in the program such as an acquaintance with an athlete)

*Every good fundraiser needs to promote the cause in a clear, emotionally appealing way and to select appropriate people to deliver the message or, in other words, “make the ask.” For helpful Language Guidelines and Spokesperson Tips, check out the Communications and Public Relations section of this handbook. Any good fundraising campaign will also find a way to recognize, promote and thank its contributors.*

### **Statewide Events**

SOWI Agencies can participate and earn money through several statewide events. Contact your Regional Director of Special Events to learn more.

- **Polar Plunge®**, February-March
  - Anyone can participate in this event.
  - Money is raised by soliciting pledges to jump into icy bodies of water at a community event.
  - 25% of money raised by an Agency team stays with the Agency.
- **Final Leg, Law Enforcement Torch Run®**, March-June
  - Athletes and Law Enforcement Officers can participate in this event.
  - Money is raised by selling Law Enforcement Torch Run T-Shirts, or other souvenirs as applicable.
  - Individuals raising funds have the choice to either receive incentives, or 25% of the money stays with the Agency.
- **Perfect Split**, August-December
  - Athletes can participate in this event.
  - Money is raised by soliciting pledges for bowling “non-events”.
  - 100% of money raised by an Agency stays with that Agency.

### **Special Olympics Brand Marks and Polar Plunge**

In order to comply with Special Olympics, Inc.’s guidelines below and to ensure risk management, all Polar Plunge events must be organized through the Special Olympics Regional offices. No Special Olympics Agency can organize a Polar Plunge event, but can participate in the Regional Plunges to raise money for the Agency.

As the owner of the Special Olympics Marks, Special Olympics, Inc. is responsible for registering, protecting and enforcing all of Special Olympics, Inc.'s ownership and related rights to the use of the Special Olympics Marks and the goodwill and value associated with them. Special Olympics, Inc. is therefore exclusively responsible for registering or recording all trademarks, service marks, copyrights, and all other recordable interests in any intellectual property comprising the Special Olympics Marks with the appropriate legal or governmental entities throughout the world, and for filing and prosecuting all actions against third parties for misappropriation, infringement or other misuse of the Special Olympics Marks or other intellectual property associated with Special Olympics.

Should Special Olympics, Inc. ever be challenged by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to show that it has properly protected Special Olympics, Inc.'s Marks it would be necessary to illustrate that the specific Mark was used consistently. It is for this reason that all Special Olympics Programs adopt the POLAR PLUNGE Graphic Guidelines and to use only the tagline "Freezin' for a Reason".

## FUNDRAISING-HOW TO ASK FOR MONEY

- 1) Make a cash or in-kind contribution yourself, and let them know . . . *as a coach, I volunteer more than eight hours a week during training.*
- 2) Ask in person when at all possible. Using the phone or writing a letter makes it easy for you, but it also makes it easy for them to say "no." *Reminder: Due to our Special Olympics, Inc. direct mail contract, Agencies are not allowed to organize their own direct mail campaigns by sending letters to **individuals** and asking for outright financial donations.*
- 3) Stress the cause . . . not the organization. Talk about what SOWI has done for your athletes. Causes are emotionally appealing; organizations are brick and mortar.
- 4) Know the facts about SOWI and your Agency. You can review the *Agency Support Page (p. 17)* in the front of this handbook or the *Annual Report* posted on the SOWI website under "About Us". A fact sheet on your Agency can be created using a template available on the Agency log in page on the SOWI website. *How many athletes are served? What sports do the athletes compete in? Have any of the athletes attended a World or National Games? What are the ages of the athletes? Do you have a booster club? What geographic part of the state does your Agency cover?*
- 5) Tell them why you are involved or committed.
- 6) Be relentlessly positive. Avoid discussing other causes or charitable organizations to reduce competition, and project confidence when appealing to a donor.
- 7) Meet the donor's needs for information and facts. *Does the donor request a financial statement from SOWI? Answer his/her questions and they will answer with a YES! If you are asked a question about Special Olympics and you don't know the answer, don't make one up. Create an opportunity to get back in touch with the potential donor by saying, "I don't know the answer, but I will find out and get back to you. When would it be convenient to call?"*

## Making 'The Ask'

Once all questions have been answered, and as the meeting is winding down, move towards the closing conversation.

- "Could you help with \$\$XX?"
- "We could use your support. A contribution in the \$\$X-X range would be greatly appreciated".

Here are some steps to consider when planning an 'ask':

- Set a goal.
- Identify prospects.
- Identify who will be making "the ask".
- Approach the prospect.
  - Send a letter/e-mail.
  - Follow up with a phone call.
  - If appropriate, request a meeting.

Here are some reminders to help you prepare for a meeting which will feature a financial 'ask':

- Have your message ready.
- Be prepared to answer hard questions.
- Know that prospects may be vague or put-off; maintain confidence despite this.
- All funds raised by or donated to a Local Agency must be deposited into the authorized Special Olympics Accredited Program account within five (5) business days of the event.
- Funds should be sent by check or money order. **Do not mail cash.** Cash may be hand-delivered to the Accredited Program office. Always request a receipt for cash.
- Value-in-kind donations should be documented with a receipt to the donor. Your Accredited Program office will have forms that can be utilized.

Here are some guidelines for conducting a successful meeting with a potential donor:

- Talk *with* prospects, not *at* them. Get them involved in a conversation, and make sure they have opportunities to ask questions.
- Speak about the history of the organization and its mission.
- Speak about your own experiences, as well as the experiences and benefits your athletes have gained throughout their involvement with SOWI.
- Talk about the proposed event's budget, who will be in attendance, and how sponsoring the event could benefit your prospect.

## Tips to Remember when Asking for Donations

1. Be specific: what do you want?

Example: "We need to raise \$800 to buy new uniforms for the 20 members of our basketball team" or "transportation expenses for our athletes to participate in three competitions this year will cost \$1,000."

Avoid: "We need money for our athletes."

2. Target who you will be approaching. Ask yourself, who has money in this community, and who would benefit from being associated with Special Olympics? Now draw up a list:
  - a. Don't overlook your friends, relatives or the friends and relatives of the athletes.
  - b. Business people: bankers, morticians, doctors, chiropractors, lawyers, dentists, auto dealers, insurance companies, protected contacts, etc.
  - c. Organizations: Lions, veterans groups, local business associations, student council and other student groups, etc. Call or go to the local chamber of commerce for a list of groups and organizations in your community and the surrounding area.
  - d. Consider approaching church groups.
  - e. Look for ways to double what you make. For example, your local grocery store may double what you make on a brat sale in their store. Lutheran and Catholic Insurance companies often double as well.
  
3. Decide how much you will ask for.
  - a. This is tricky. Ask too little and you might get too little; ask too much and very few may respond. The length of your potential donor list may dictate how much you'll ask for (if you have five people and need \$1,000, obviously you wouldn't ask for \$25 from each).
  - b. You might figure out how much it costs for each athlete to participate in your Agency and ask for the donor to sponsor an athlete for the year for that amount.
  - c. If you have a long list of possibilities, ask for \$20 from each and you'll probably get much more than if you had asked for \$25. According to studies, people will give more than \$20 if you ask them for \$20 and just \$25 or less if you ask for \$25.
  
4. Before writing the letter or calling, decide what you will give in return.
  - a. Call the local newspaper and ask what they charge if you take out a thank you ad. In many cases, the paper will match you dollar for dollar (meaning you can end up with a pretty nice ad).
  - b. Take the inexpensive way and write a letter to the editor thanking the donors (if you think they will publish it).
  - c. Think about what else you can do for them that lets the community know that they support your Agency (remember you can't put their name on the back of your uniforms).
  
5. When approaching someone in business, keep the following facts in mind:
  - a. Remember that your local businesses get asked to donate all the time. You need to show them what having a relationship with Special Olympics can do for their business. Point out the following facts:
    - i. Special Olympics retains a favorable name recognition among 95% of the US public.
    - ii. According to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Special Olympics is America's Most Credible Charity and was ranked one of America's Best Run Charities by *Financial World Magazine*.
    - iii. The 1994 Cone/Rope Benchmark survey on cause-related marketing reported that:
      1. 84% of adults believe cause-related marketing creates positive company image.
      2. 78% would be more likely to buy a product associated with a cause they care about.
      3. 66% would switch brands and 63% would switch retailers to support their cause.
      4. 54% would pay more for a product that supported a cause they care about.
  - b. Between athletes, donors and volunteers, Special Olympics touches the lives of one in every six families in America.
  
6. Use correct grammar and spelling, and be specific ("five people" is more specific than "some people").

## Tips for Securing Major Sponsors for a Special Fundraiser

You need to put together a package that will attract a sponsor. Begin by asking “what can we offer?”

- Draw up a list of potential sponsors and then decide who you want to approach. Know how much you want for a sponsorship before you ask. The cost should include cash. You can approach by saying give us half in cash and the other half in product or services.
- Advertising and association with Special Olympics is the big carrot for a sponsor. They will want to know (though they will not ask you) how much they will get for their sponsorship in terms of advertising.
- Get publicity lined up first:
  - Ask your local radio station to be one of your media sponsors – leave knowing approximately how often they will advertise your event, and if they are willing to list your major sponsors on the ad.
  - Ask the local newspaper to be a media sponsor – leave knowing how many ads they’ll put in for you, and if they are willing to list major sponsors.
  - Consider making up posters to promote your event. Figure how many you will put up, knowing that you will put major and supporting sponsors on them.
  - If you are going to have event T-shirts that you will give to all who participate, that is another way to put sponsor’s names on something. Tell the sponsor how many shirts you will be giving away. Remind potential sponsors that our shirts are worn all the time and seen everywhere – this gets their name and association out to the public.
  - Add in the value of anything else that you’ll have that will have a sponsor’s name on it or will give them exposure as being associated with Special Olympics.
- Make sure to give a deadline to a potential sponsor for when you need to know by.
- Make sure you receive the money before you have started your publicity of the event – it can be very difficult to get afterwards.

## WORKING TOGETHER: PROTECTED CONTACTS

The Protected Contacts list has been started in response to the feedback SOWI has received from companies and businesses statewide. When a company/business is solicited from an Agency, Games Management Team, Regional program, and the State Office, they have no way to ascertain which “Special Olympics” requests are for a State or local event, or which may be more time sensitive or take priority – or in some cases, which are legitimate. The Protected Contacts list has been created to help improve communication and coordination and will be updated annually. Please respect the following existing relationships by contacting the State Office or Regional office before contacting the sponsor. In turn, if an Agency has an existing relationship with a sponsor, please notify your Regional office so SOWI Development staff can respect your existing relationships. By working together at all levels, we can best honor donor intent and receive the maximum potential gifts for our efforts.

*Note: Businesses, corporations or organization’s that have multiple sites or operate statewide, nationally or internationally, as well as foundations or police organizations/associations may not be solicited without prior approval from the State Office.*



**Statewide**

American Family Insurance  
AT&T  
Any Law Enforcement Agency  
or Organization  
Blue Leading Corp.  
Buffalo Wild Wings  
Charter Communications  
Coca-Cola  
Commonwealth Mortgage Group  
Con-way Freight  
Delta Dental  
Dept. of Corrections  
Dunkin' Donuts  
Duplainville Transport  
EH Wolf and Sons  
Focus on Energy  
Fox Sports Wisconsin  
Gamber Johnson  
Greater Milwaukee Auto Auction  
Humana  
Hydrite Chemical  
iCare  
Johnson Controls  
JX Enterprises/Peterbilt WI  
Kiwanis  
Knights of Columbus  
Kwik Trip  
Milwaukee Brewers  
Osborn & Son Trucking Co.  
Pepsi  
Plexus  
Quad/Graphics  
Red Robin  
Sentry Insurance  
SOWI Board of Directors  
SOWI Staff  
Stephan & Brady  
Tavern League of Wisconsin  
Texas Roadhouse  
TTI, Inc.  
The Stan Group  
Truck Country/Freightliner of Wis.  
University of Wisconsin (all  
campus's)  
Vanta Commercial Properties  
Wal-Mart  
Walgreens  
Waupun Truck-N-Show  
WIAC  
WI Motor Carriers Assoc.  
Wisconsin Professional Police  
Association

Wisconsin Towing Association

**North Central Region 2**

Bull's Eye Credit Union  
Church Mutual Insurance  
Hardee's  
Trantow Consulting  
Limitless Gym's  
Aqua Finance  
Eye Clinic of Wisconsin  
Ritchay Funeral Home  
KI Mobility

**Indianhead Region 3**

Andersen Corporate  
Ann Marie Foundation  
Domer Foundation  
Edward Rutledge Charity  
Mayo Clinic  
Mega Charities  
Mega Foods  
Mega Holiday  
Win Technologies  
Xcel Energy  
Xcel Energy Foundation

**Fox Valley Region 4**

Alta Resources  
Baycom  
BEL Brands  
Bemis Company Inc.  
Buffalo Wild Wings  
Capital Credit Union  
Community First Credit Union  
Endries Foundation  
Essity  
Festival Foods  
Faith Technology  
Guardian Life Insurance  
Hillshire Brands  
Horicon Bank  
Jansport  
Jewelers Mutual Insurance Co.  
JJ Keller & Associates  
JP Graphics  
Kimberly Clark  
Lee Beverage  
McMahon  
Miles Kimball  
Miller Electric  
MillTown Paper  
Miron Construction  
Neenah Paper

Nestle  
Papa Murphy's  
Secura Insurance  
Soper Transport & Towing  
Thrivent  
ThedaCare  
US Oil  
Verve  
VF Outdoor

**Northeastern Region 5**

Bay Lake Bank  
Bay Tek Games  
Beyond Abilities  
Doc's Harley Davidson  
Favre Fourward Foundation  
FMC Corporation  
Gazette Foundation  
Green Bay Blizzard  
Green Bay Packers Org.  
Jones Sign  
Lake Gas Group  
KI  
Oneida Group  
Oneida Tribe of Indians of WI  
PMI  
Prevea Health  
Romo, Inc.  
Schneider National  
Waltco  
WI Hospitality Group  
Wisconsin Public Service Foundation

**South Central Region 6**

5Nines  
96.3 Country  
Aerotek  
Anytime Fitness  
Associated Bank  
Bachmann Pools & Spas, LLC  
Badger Sports Properties  
Baker Tilly  
Buffalo Wild Wings  
Charter  
CSM Trucking  
Coliseum Bar  
Conney Safety  
Cuna Mutual Group/Cuna Mutual  
Foundation  
Event Essentials  
Festival Foods  
Fetch Rewards  
First Business

Full Compass  
General Communication  
Johnson Bank  
Johnson Health Tech  
JP Cullen  
Kalahari Resort  
Madison.com  
Madison Gas & Electric  
Mattel/American Girl  
National Guardian Life Insurance  
QBE  
Red Robin  
ServiceMaster Clean  
Sprecher's Pub  
State Collection Service  
Texas Roadhouse  
Trek  
UW Health  
Walgreens  
Wegner CPA  
West Corporation  
WKOW

Z104  
Zimbrick  
  
**Southeastern Region 7**  
Aqua Fun Pools, Inc.  
Brat Stop  
Bristol Oaks  
Insinkerator/Emerson  
Rustoleum  
The Waterman, Inc.  
UNFI-Sturtevant

**Greater Milwaukee Region 8**  
ABB, Inc.  
Anthem Blue Cross & Blue  
Shield  
Best Buy  
Briggs & Stratton  
Chancery  
Eaton Corporation  
Entercom Milwaukee  
GE

Highland House  
Indiana Insurance  
Johnson Controls  
Journal Broadcast Group  
Matty's Bar & Grille  
Milwaukee Admirals  
Milwaukee Bucks  
Milwaukee Wave  
Milwaukee Electric Tool  
National Business Furniture  
Northwestern Mutual  
Qdoba  
Quintron Instrument Company  
RW Baird  
SPX Transformer Solutions, Inc.  
The Starr Group  
Tello's Grille and Café  
Thompson Reuters  
Waterstone Bank  
Wells Fargo  
WE Energies

## FUNDRAISING POLICIES

### **Fundraising Project Application Form**

Any project or event must be approved in advance by SOWI. A *Fundraising Project Application Form* (see *Forms for Duplication*) must be completed and sent to your Regional office 30-60 days before the project/event is held. Submitting this form ensures your Regional Director of Development is aware of your event and can lend assistance as needed. For example, if the Regional office is aware of your event, when they receive calls, they can confirm the event and provide accurate information. Whenever possible, the Regional office will help promote your event through their newsletter or monthly mailings.

### ***Advertising and Recognition of Sponsors/Supporters***

Volunteers and officials may wear jackets, T-shirts, caps and other apparel bearing small and attractively designed identifications of corporate logos at sports venues. Athletes may carry and use non-apparel, non-sports equipment items such as tote bags, bearing small and attractively designed identifications of corporate or organizational sponsors.

Athletes who are **not** in competition and who are **not** at sports venues (e.g. at training sessions, practices, trips, or away from competition sites) may wear apparel bearing small and attractively designed identifications of corporate or organizational logos.

Opening and Closing Ceremonies sites are deemed to have the same status as sports venues. Hence, team or delegation members and officials **shall not** wear warm-up suits, jackets, caps, etc. which bear corporate or organizational identifications which might be considered advertising.

### ***Alcoholic Beverages***

A Special Olympics Agency shall not allow the manufacturer or distributor of alcoholic beverages to publicly or visibly connect the trademark of an alcoholic beverage with Special Olympics events or activities. Non-alcoholic beer products are treated in the same manner as alcohol and beer products.

Alcohol distributors may sponsor Agency fundraising projects if the name of the company does not have a beer or an alcohol brand listed in it such as "Andrews Distributing".

Events involving alcohol are excluded from the SO liability insurance unless approved by insurance (see Insurance pg. 5).

Agencies shall not sell alcoholic beverages at a concession stand, sponsored fundraising event or any other activity where it is perceived the dollars raised will benefit Special Olympics or the Agency. Agencies may only accept funds donated through the sale of alcoholic concessions if the contribution is a blind donation by a third party and there was no advertising of alcohol sales utilizing the name of the Agency or Special Olympics.

*An Agency may accept blind and unidentified contributions (cash or in-kind) from alcohol/tobacco manufacturers or distributors. These manufacturers or distributors may publicly link the trademarks of their products other than tobacco or alcoholic beverages with Special Olympics.*

### **Tobacco Products**

A Special Olympics Agency shall not allow the manufacturer or distributor of a tobacco product to publicly or visibly connect the trademark of a tobacco product with Special Olympics in any way.

### **Contractual Agreements**

Contracts for facility rental may be signed by the Agency manager. See the *Insurance* section for further information, including the *Request for Certificate of Insurance* which must be submitted prior to an event needing insurance.

### **Telemarketing (Telephone Solicitation)**

Special Olympics Wisconsin has contracted with a telemarketing firm to provide these services exclusively in the state. An Agency may not enter into a contract for telemarketing services or conduct a campaign themselves.

- SOWI contracts with Heritage/Medallion Productions, an Arkansas-based, third-party fundraising firm that supports 48 of the U.S. Special Olympics Programs.
- This firm calls businesses to raise funds, offer opportunities to donors and potential donors for volunteering, coaching, family involvement, information on planned giving, community events, calendar of events for the 670 sports events held statewide, in addition to educating donors and potential donors about SOWI and the many new programs that are available for athletes (Healthy Athletes®, Young Athletes™, ALPs, Unified Sports® and the many benefits the athletes derive from being involved with SOWI).
- The campaign typically raises about \$300,000 pledged dollars for Wisconsin between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- An average of 54% of dollars raised from the business campaign is net profit for SOWI. All expenses for this program are taken out of Medallion's percentage.

### **Direct Mail and Telemarketing**

SOWI participates in an integrated direct mail and residential telemarketing program in cooperation with Special Olympics, Inc. This is a valuable source of revenue for us that we could not manage internally, but for which we also must abide by specific rules or risk losing this program. Letters sent to individuals asking for contributions is prohibited. This policy applies to all levels of SOWI (State Office, Regions and Agencies).

- Special Olympics, Inc. composes and mails all of the direct mail pieces for SOWI.
- Special Olympics, Inc. creates and deploys fundraising emails throughout the year in conjunction with other direct marketing efforts.
- Special Olympics, Inc. mails approximately 10 renewal campaigns annually, so it is possible for a donor to receive multiple mail pieces over a 12 month period.
- Special Olympics, Inc. approves all scripts and schedules for residential telemarketing.
- The names for our program come from our existing donor list as well as rented donor names from other mailers.
- SOWI receives net revenue for this program.
- There are no restrictions on friend-asking-friend event pages (like Polar Plunge® event pages) or online auction or merchandise sales.

These contributions support your local Agency as well as Special Olympics' worldwide programs and initiatives. By participating in a cooperative direct mail effort with Special Olympics, Inc. and other state Programs, we make these dollars go further for athletes here and around the world.

### ***In-Kind Donations***

An in-kind donation is the receipt of goods, materials or services that would have normally been purchased. The value assigned to in-kind donations should be the fair market value (i.e. what would have been paid to make the purchase). It is the responsibility of the donor to determine the value. *In-Kind Donation Forms* can be found in the *Forms for Duplication* section on the SOWI Website or by contacting your Region office or the State Office for these forms to be completed and signed by the donor and submitted to SOWI.

### ***Region/Agency Geographical Boundaries***

The geographic boundaries of each respective Region/Agency must be honored whenever fundraising occurs through any means. Permission must be obtained through the Regional office prior to locating any event or making any solicitation outside of the Agency's geographical boundary.

### **Gift Acknowledgements**

All gift acknowledgements will be processed by the State Office in accordance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules.

### ***Raffle Licenses***

Raffles are a great way for Agencies to fundraise, especially if prizes can be donated. A raffle is a game of **chance** in which tickets are **sold** and a drawing for **prizes** is held. If you are holding a drawing that includes all three of these components, it is considered a raffle.

For every raffle conducted by an Agency, before printing tickets you must approve the raffle with the State Office at (800) 552-1324. The State Office will provide the Agency with a custom-made ticket for the event, the official license number, and guidelines to conduct the raffle to comply with the Wisconsin Department of Administration – Division of Gaming raffle rules.

There are two classes of raffle licenses. The determination as to which license is appropriate is based on "pre-event" raffle ticket sales or "day of event" ticket sales. A post event accounting of the dollars raised and products/services raffled is required by the state of Wisconsin and **must be completed within one month** of the raffle. Failure to do so could result in suspension of SOWI's raffle licenses by the Division of Gaming.

All sections of the raffle reporting form must be filled out completely before returning it to the State Office. We use these forms to turn in our paperwork to the IRS and obtain the new licenses each year. Some key points in holding your raffle and completing the paperwork are:

- Contact the State Office to obtain the license **BEFORE** planning your raffle and printing tickets.
- When requesting a raffle license, provide your name and contact information, the date of your raffle, an explanation of what the raffle is for, and if you are selling tickets in advance.
- Raffle tickets cannot be used as an admission ticket to an event.
- All raffle drawings shall be held in public. The drawing cannot be held at an event that requires admission payment to enter (i.e. a basketball game, a \$5 spaghetti dinner). You must hold the drawing outside of the event instead so that any ticket holders can be present.
- **Raffle tickets, stubs or money for the raffle cannot be sent via U.S. Mail.**
- For prizes valued over \$600, the winner's **social security number must be obtained PRIOR** to issuing the prize. This information must also be reported on the form.
- A complete name and address must be supplied for each winner of prizes worth \$100 or more.

- You will also need to submit any in-kind forms and invoices for your raffle with the reporting form.
- No other revenue or expenses (donations, sponsorships, event fees, and auction bid proceeds) from your event that are not directly raffle-related should be listed on your raffle report.
- Class A raffle ticket stubs must be kept for 12 months after raffle date.

If you have questions about your raffle or need to obtain the license, contact the State Office.

SOWI's raffle license was audited in 2008, and breaking any of the regulations provided by the Division of Gaming can result in the loss of our license for all levels of SOWI, including all Agencies. Several Wisconsin groups have had their raffle procedures audited and/or had their licenses revoked in 2008, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County and the Sportsman's Club in Green Bay.

### ***United Way Affiliation***

Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics Wisconsin are not United Way agencies and do not participate in United Way campaigns. Therefore, a SOWI Agency cannot be an affiliate or a member agency of United Way or have donors earmark United Way donations to their local Agency.

On occasion, SOWI receives unsolicited United Way donations (i.e. someone writes "Special Olympics Wisconsin" or a specific SOWI Agency name on the contribution form). In this instance, the donor is giving to United Way and United Way in turn contributes to SOWI. This money goes into the general SOWI operating funds at the Regional level whenever possible and supports the cost of training and competitions. Due to inconsistencies in donor information provided by United Way, administrative fees deducted from these contributions, and delays in receiving funds, it is not manageable for this money to go to the local Agency.

Sometimes corporations will match employee United Way donations (as described above) and may write their checks directly to the local Agency. This money comes directly from the corporation to the local Special Olympics Agency and doesn't pass through the United Way system, and therefore, may be collected and spent by the Agency for allowable SOWI expenses.

### **Thrivent Choice Donations**

SOWI is very cognizant of honoring donor intent. However, the mechanics of donating to SOWI through Thrivent Choice hinders us from separating our local programs from the SOWI account we currently have set up. We don't receive enough details from Thrivent to ensure funds are parceled out correctly from the lump sum we receive each month.

Development staff has been in touch with Thrivent to explain this issue and, unfortunately, they are unable to change their protocols. We did ask customer service representatives at the Thrivent Choice office to inform sales reps that they could not promise the program was capable of directing donations to local Agencies because of this lack of information. Therefore, if donors give in a similar manner in the future, it will go to the statewide SOWI efforts (which do indeed support the local programs, but not as directly).

**Seller's Permits & Sales Tax**

All in house Agencies will receive a seller's permit (the State Office will obtain them from the WI Dept. of Revenue). This will allow you to raise funds by selling items, holding golf outings, and holding auctions. For more information, please refer to the Finance section.

## Communications and Public Relations

### Communications & Marketing

For success to occur with all stakeholders, the Local Agency needs to communicate often, and in a variety of ways.

For communications on behalf of Special Olympics Wisconsin and/or the Local Agency, please use this Special Olympics Wisconsin.

### Planned Communication / Engagement

#### *Internal*

#### *What do you need to communicate?*

- Practice schedules
- Competition dates
- Fundraising activities
- Training opportunities for athletes and coaches
- Travel details
- Celebrations
- Meetings

#### *When do you communicate?*

It is important to communicate on a regular basis, even when something isn't immediately planned. For example: "We will start training for Winter Games in six weeks; look for the specific practice schedule to be out by \_\_\_\_."

At other times when there may not be forthcoming events, consider communicating on an as-needed basis.

#### *How do you communicate?*

Consider that everyone has different preferences. Do not rely solely on one means of communication.

Some great ways to communicate information to others are:

- Email
- Text messaging
- Newsletters (print and/or digital)
- Private/moderated groups on Facebook with member/access control
- A phone tree

#### *Reminders:*

- Keep your list current! Be sure to add new athletes, families, and volunteers when they join a Local Agency. Delete those who are inactive.
- Keep your communication lively so that others will continue to be engaged. However, always maintain professionalism — remember that you are representing Special Olympics!



## External

### ***What coverage to expect from Local Media?***

- Overall education/awareness about the Local Agency, including its needs and activities
- Upcoming competitions
- Results from competitions
- Athletes and/or coach profiles
- Volunteer recruitment needs
- Assistance with fundraising activities

### ***What to communicate with fans, followers, and the general public?***

- Program news, activities, and ways to engage
- Achievements, milestones, and good news
- Athlete, coach, volunteer, and family profiles
- Volunteer opportunities
- Ways to support the Local Agency financially – including donations, special events, and fundraisers
- Upcoming events

### ***How to communicate with fans, followers, and the general public?***

- Website
- Newsletters (print and/or digital)
- Emails
- Printed collateral – including fact sheets, brochures, posters, and flyers
- Town halls

### ***Who's doing the talking?***

Each Local Agency should have prepared individuals qualified to speak to the media or public about Special Olympics Wisconsin.

Any and all individuals speaking to the media or public should maintain clear, consistent messaging about the Local Agency.

## Using Technology

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***Technology enables a Local Agency to work smarter, more efficiently, and more effectively.***

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Here are ways technology can be used to benefit a Local Agency.

## Communications & Marketing

### ***Using Facebook Groups***

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***Special Olympics uses Facebook Groups as a way to connect with current and athletes, coaches, parents, and Caregivers.***

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### ***Helpful Social Media Guidelines, including Facebook Groups***

Social sites are just that – social. While privacy does not exist in the world of social media, almost every social media platform has privacy settings that can help protect your privacy.

Your personal and professional life could overlap and may reflect on the author personally and/or professionally. Remember, even after being deleted, comments and posts continue to live online in archival systems.

### ***Using All Social Media Platforms (Including Personal Use)***

Always protect confidential and proprietary information. Do not publish confidential information about Special Olympics athletes, staff, volunteers, families, community partners or sponsors.

Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of Special Olympics. Delete any profane or derogatory.

Respect the privacy of others. Do not publish or tag photos of others without their permission. Avoid publishing someone’s last name, school, or place of employment on social media if you do not have their permission.

### ***Representing the Special Olympics Accredited Brand Online***

- At no point should Special Olympics Wisconsin Facebook Groups be used for the purpose of expressing personal beliefs or opinions. Keep your personal views separate.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a distinction between your personal identity and the identity you represent on behalf of Special Olympics.
- Avoid arguments and confrontations online. If you see a comment that would warrant an official response, contact Special Olympics Wisconsin.
- Use the Special Olympics Wisconsin logo in accordance with branding guidelines set forth in the SOI Branding Standards online:  
<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/brand-awareness-and-communication/branding/brand-guidelines/Brand-Identity-Guidelines.pdf>
- Monitor your Facebook Group on a daily basis to respond to questions and comments as needed – remember, social media is a dialogue, not a one-way communication.

### **Other Means of Using Technology**

Technology can be used in many ways to bolster a Local Agency. If your Accredited Program’s website does not have the capability of sharing files, considering using one of the following free online tools.

#### ***Dropbox\****

- Create folders with meaningful headings
- Add section titles to create a path of reference
- Add to your Dropbox account, then continue to add or make changes

#### ***Google Docs\****

- Easily edit and style with tools to help format text/documents
- Choose from hundreds of fonts and add links, images, drawings, tables, etc.
- Access, create, and edit your documents wherever you go – from your phone, tablet, or computer

\*NOTE: Special Olympics does not endorse these products, but is citing them for the purposes of illustration.



## Language Guidelines

***It is critical that appropriate terminology is used when speaking about a Special Olympics Local Agency. This helps to educate the public while reinforcing the organization's brand.***

View the Special Olympics Disability Language Guidelines:

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/News/Resources\\_Updates/Good To Have The Special Olympics Disability Language Guidelines.aspx#.WV1Q4YqQz1L](http://resources.specialolympics.org/News/Resources_Updates/Good_To_Have_The_Special_Olympics_Disability_Language_Guidelines.aspx#.WV1Q4YqQz1L)

## Resources

The Special Olympics Resources site is a self-service website that includes a variety of tools and valuable resources. Local Agencies should contact the Accredited Program for additional resources.

View Special Olympics Resources: <http://resources.specialolympics.org/ResourcesDefault.aspx>

## Sample Checklists, Tools, and Best Practices

The following resources are offered as suggestions based on Local Agency needs. You may customize the forms in this Resources section to suit your individual needs. Please check with the Accredited Program to determine if they have an alternate form for these resources that can be utilized by the Local Agency.

- Local Agency Management Team Position Descriptions
- Local Agency Management Team Training Checklists
- Sport Training and Competition Checklist
- Codes of Conduct - Athletes, Coaches, Family Members
- Developing an Emergency Management Plan
- Incident Action Steps Card
- Inclement Weather Policy



## **Local Agency Management Team Position Descriptions**

### **Local Agency Coordinator**

The Local Agency Coordinator is responsible for providing strategic leadership and managerial responsibilities for the Local Agency. The Local Agency Coordinator plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates programs and services for the athletes in their Local Agency in accordance with established policies to achieve the goals, objectives, standards, and mission of Special Olympics. The completion of responsibilities will be performed by the Local Agency Coordinator and Management Team members who have been empowered to lead and complete the specific functions outlined below.

### **Sports & Competition Coordinator**

The Sports & Competition Coordinator is responsible for administration, planning, and assisting in the delivery of a Local Agency's quality training and competition events for Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports® partners.

### **Administrative/Operations Coordinator**

The Administrative/Operations Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all Special Olympics paperwork, policies, and procedures are adhered to so that athletes may train and compete, coaches can volunteer, and Unified Sports® partners can participate. The Administrative/Operations Team also oversees all data input into the Games and Volunteer Management Systems.

### **Finance Coordinator**

The Finance Coordinator and their team are responsible for all aspects of the financial administration for the Local Agency. They also ensure that special events and fundraisers are following the Accredited Program's financial guidelines.

### **Fundraising Coordinator**

Based on budgetary needs, the Fundraising Coordinator is responsible for developing dynamic and creative ways to secure new sponsors, execute fundraising programs and events, and build relationships within the community.

### **Outreach Coordinator**

The Outreach Coordinator is responsible for all aspects of children, youth, and adult athlete recruitment. The Outreach Coordinator works with schools, transitional programs, families, community sports programs, adult vocational settings, group homes, and governmental organizations in order to connect eligible athletes in the communities with Special Olympics Local Agencies within the geographic area.

### **Communications Coordinator**

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for promoting awareness of what people with intellectual disabilities can achieve through participation in Special Olympics through all forms of media.

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for recruiting, registering, matching, training, and coordinating all volunteers – including athlete leaders. They ensure that there are adequate numbers of volunteers by roles, and that volunteers meet eligibility requirements as mandated by their roles (coach, partner, leadership, etc.).

### **Unified Champion School Coordinator**

The Unified Champion School Coordinator develops and implements Special Olympics Unified Champion School programs in schools within a geographic area. They recruit, educate, and mentor school personnel to develop and implement Special Olympics Unified Schools' components and Young Athletes™ in schools.

### **Athlete Leadership Coordinator**

The Athlete Leadership Coordinator oversees athlete leadership and ensures that there is an active Athlete Input Council, that year-round workshops are offered, and athlete leaders are recruited, trained, and engaged in all aspects of programming and governance within the Local Agency.

### **Young Athletes™ Coordinator**

The Young Athletes™ Coordinator recruits community and school-based young athletes, registers, assists with securing equipment, and troubleshoots culminating event activities. They work with the Administration Team in registering these Young Athletes™. The team also ensures the training of all Young Athletes™ Coordinators.

### **Athlete Representative**

The Athlete Representative is an athlete from the Local Agency's Input Council who brings information from the council to the Local Agency's Management Team and reports back to the council, as well as offers insights on programming from the athlete perspective.

### **Family Services Coordinator**

The Family Services Coordinator is responsible for encouraging and coordinating families' involvement in Local Agency activities by providing local resources, hospitality areas at local competitions, picnics, or other social activities to network with other families. They also coordinate workshops to educate families about Special Olympics and other topics of interest.

### **Wellness/Fitness Coordinator**

The Wellness/Fitness Coordinator is responsible for coordinating year-round fitness, health promotion, and access to health and fitness resources for athletes, families, caregivers, and volunteers.

## Local Agency Management Team Training Checklist

The following represents a sample checklist to train individuals for various jobs. It identifies the requirements of each position including roles and responsibilities.

### All Positions

- Special Olympics Mission
- Special Olympics General Orientation
- Special Olympics Structure: Accredited Program; North America; Special Olympics, Inc.
- Protective Behaviors
- Concussion Education

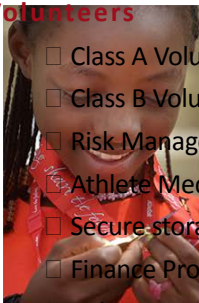
### Agency Manager & Co-Agency Manager

- Policies and Procedures
- Athlete Medical Requirements
- Volunteer Screening (Class A Requirements)
- Storage / P.O. Box / Phone
- Finance Procedures
- Public Relations (PSAs, press releases, emergency/crisis communication plan)
- Insurance information for facilities, rental vehicles (certificate)
- Risk Management
- Incident Report Forms
- Contracts (process for approval)
- Medical Forms
- Sign-up Procedures per Sport Season
- Travel Procedures and Needs
- Facilitating monthly meetings (sample agenda)
- Procedure for providing info to potential new athletes
- Procedure for providing info to potential new volunteers

### Sports

#### Volunteers

- Class A Volunteer Requirements (volunteer screening)
- Class B Volunteers – Day of Volunteering (requirements and restrictions)
- Risk Management
- Athlete Medical Requirements
- Secure storage of medicals (print/scanned and digital) as back-up
- Finance Procedures as it relates to expenses
- Volunteer Management System
- Procedure for providing info to potential new athletes
- Procedure for providing info to potential new volunteers



#### *Before the Start of the Season*

#### *New Volunteers: Becoming Class A Volunteer Approved*

- Update Club B Volunteer application information renewals
- Update Training Requirements, General Orientation, Protective Behaviors, and Concussion Training
- Volunteer Management System software
- Athlete Coach Ratio Requirements
- SO Accredited Program Rules and Class B Athlete Volunteer form to find them
- Check athlete Eligibility Requirements / how to obtain what is needed; use of logo
- Social Security Number (SSN) - Individual must provide SSN for background check
- Coach Education Requirements and Opportunities
- Unified Sports® – philosophy
- Sports Calendar – Deadlines and where to find them
- Pre-Season Coach Meeting Agenda
- Seasonal Sign-up Procedure
- Coach binders, what they should contain, and where to find that information
- Code of Conduct for Athletes, Unified Sports® partners, coaches, and families
- Secure storage of medicals (print/scanned and digital) as back-up
- Finance Procedures, approval for spending, and/or cash advance for travel
- Public Relations, including emergency communication plan
- Insurance info for facilities, rental vehicles (certificate), and fundraising events
- Risk Management
- Incident Report Forms
- Reserving Facilities / Contracts
- Volunteer Management System software
- Games Management System software
- Travel Procedures and Needs
- Communicating with Coaches
- Procedures for dealing with misconduct of athletes, partners, coaches, volunteers, and/or families
- Ensuring equipment and uniforms are distributed prior to competition and collected immediately after
- Emergency/crisis communication plan
- Procedure for providing info to potential new athletes and new partners
- Procedure for providing info to potential new volunteer
- Procedure for moving a Class B Volunteer into a data management system

### Medicals

- Class A Volunteer Requirements (volunteer screening)
- Athlete Medical Requirements\*
- Secure storage and back-up storage of medicals (digital)
- Procedure for providing info to potential new athlete
- Data entry

#### *\*Checklist for Medicals*

- Ensure medicals and release forms are complete
- If forms are not complete, do not accept; send back and get corrections
- If forms are complete, make a copy and send in original to the State Office



### ***Before the Start of the Season***

- Determine which athletes will need renewals
- Send renewal request letter and required form to athletes requiring renewals for the upcoming season
- Work with Management Team at pre-season sign-up to ensure that all involved have valid medicals

### **Fundraising**

- Accredited Program's Policies and Procedures related to fundraising restrictions
- LETR, Tip a Cop, Polar Plunge, and Revenue Share
- Memorials – including how SO Program handles acknowledgement to family of deceased and the donor
- Program's Special Events
- Thank Yous and Receipts
- In-Kind Donations and Procedures
- Finance Procedure as it relates to expenses, deposits, and cash on site
- Roles of fundraising: Class A or Class B Volunteer requirements
- Public Relations – including PSAs, press releases, emergency/crisis communication plan, use of logo, and social media
- Insurance info for facilities, rental vehicles (certificate)
- Contracts (process for approval)

### **Communications**

- Policies and Procedures
- Athlete Medical Requirements
- Class A Volunteer Requirements, including volunteer screening
- Risk Management
- Finance Procedures related to expenses
- Public Relations – including PSAs, press releases, emergency/crisis communication plan, and use of logo
- Contracts (process for approval)
- Sign-up Procedures per Sport Season
- Thank you notes
- Newsletters / mailings
- Social media
- Website protocol/requirements and the Accredited Program

## **Sport Training & Competition Checklists**

## Checklist for Training Sites

### **Logistics**

- Facilities arranged and evaluated for safety and accessibility
- Equipment procured and prepared
- Length of practice
- Time of day for practice
- Availability of coaches and volunteers
- Communication of dates and times to athletes
- Documentation of scores or assessments

### **Athletes**

- Number involved
- Age level and maturity
- Skill level
- Adjusting for different skill levels
- Preparedness for potential injuries

### **Safety**

- Practice conditions
- Water available
- Weather Conditions
- Hazard-free playing surface
- Equipment in proper condition
- Emergency procedures
- Medical forms on site

### **Skills to Be Learned**

- Physical
- Motor
- Technical
- Mental

### **Delivery of Instructions**

- Key points
- Teaching methods
- Position of athletes: Not facing the sun, athlete needs such as hearing or vision, etc.
- Delegation of volunteers and assistant coaches
- Intervention for behavior or crisis
- Positive feedback and support
- Progression throughout the session:
  - Easy to difficult
  - Slow to fast
  - Unknown to known
  - General to specific

### **Organization of Practice**

- Warm-ups (body and skills)
- Review previously taught skills
- Introduce new skills
- Game or event situation; competitive experience
- Cool down and team talk
- Cell phone numbers of chaperones and coaches
- Emergency contact information for chaperones and coaches

### **Other**

- Communication with parents, coaches, and event staff
- Coordination with Special Events

## Competition – Outdoor Events Checklist

FACILITY	
<p><b>Outdoor Competition Area:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repairs, refinishing, or re-sodding maintenance current (e.g. field free of large divots, holes, obstructions or protruding objects) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Competition area is clearly marked and free of trash, debris, or hazardous objects <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Out-of-bounds is clearly marked and free of debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Adequate buffer area between competitors and spectators <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Goal post, goalie cages, baseball bases, etc. installed properly <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Standing water drained or removed from the competition/spectator area <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Competition area contains adequate lighting (if appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol> <p><b>Areas Adjacent to Competition Area:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate number of waste containers in place <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Areas are free of slip, trip and fall hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Water fountain areas are free of puddles, algae build up and/or mud <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Barriers to protect spectators are adequate and in good condition <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Restrooms are available and clean <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol>	<p><b>Bleachers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Footers are blocked appropriately and do not move <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Vertical openings between guardrails, footboards and seatboards are less than four inches <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Metal bleachers are free of corrosion and/or damage <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Wood bleachers are free of dry rot and/or damage <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Transitional areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Handrails, seats and supports are securely fastened <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Wood seats and handrails are free from splinters <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Bleachers appear sturdy enough for anticipated loads <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol> <p><b>Parking Lot:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lighting appears adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Area is free of slip, trip and fall hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Security is present <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</li> </ol>
EMERGENCY RESPONSE	
<p><b>First Aid Equipment Checklist:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List of athletes with special conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List of emergency phone numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adhesive bandages with gauze pads – assorted sizes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Antiseptic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arm sling (triangular bandage is fine)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bandage scissors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly closures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cotton swabs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elastic tape</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> White tape</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elastic wraps</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency blanket</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Latex gloves (multiple pairs)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags and bags for ice packs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sterile Water</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Resuscitation (CPR) masks/face shield</li> </ul>	<p><b>Access to Emergency Service:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephones and the appropriate emergency numbers are accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>There is adequate passage for emergency vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Athletes' medical history forms are on site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>Athletes' emergency contact lists are on site <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol>

## Competition – Indoor Events Checklist

COMPETITION AREAS	
<p><b>Competition Area:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competition area is dry and free of obstructions and protruding objects <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Competition area is clearly marked <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Competition area contains adequate lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>4. Out-of-bounds areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>5. Adequate buffer area between competitors and spectators <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>6. Sport apparatus/equipment is secure and in good physical condition <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>7. Non-essential equipment removed from competition area <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>8. Emergency exits are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol>	<p><b>Locker/Shower Rooms:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locker/shower room appears sanitary (e.g. free of algae buildup, floor is dry) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Water temperature is monitored (e.g. scald protection devices installed in the shower or coach/chaperone assist with water temperature) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Lockers are properly secured and free of laceration exposures <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>4. Housekeeping in locker room area is in order (e.g. clothing and athletic equipment is properly stowed in lockers) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>5. Locker/shower room contains emergency lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>6. Emergency exits are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>7. Shower rooms are free of laceration exposures <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol>
FACILITY	
<p><b>Facility:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exits and entrances are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Facility contains emergency lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Power supply cords are free of frayed wires and do not create trip and fall hazards (e.g. extension cords taped to the floor) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>4. Access to electrical systems restricted (e.g. individual to monitor the electrical system or keep the system locked at all times) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>5. Interactive attractions properly installed and supervised (e.g. inflatable rides) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>6. Sufficient waste containers are provided <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>7. Water fountain areas are free of puddles, algae buildup and/or mud <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>8. Smoke detectors/heat detectors/fire alarms/fire extinguishers (present and operational) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>9. Facility is handicap accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol> <p><b>Parking Lot:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lighting appears adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Area is free of slip, trip and fall hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Security is present <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</li> </ol>	<p><b>Walkways, Steps, Stairs, Ramps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walking areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Walkways contain adequate and operable lighting <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Handrails are securely fastened <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>4. Stairs contain a non-slip material <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>5. Stairs/steps are free of clutter and debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>6. Sufficient waste containers are provided <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>7. Exits and entrances are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol> <p><b>Bleachers:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Footers are blocked appropriately and do not move <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>2. Vertical openings between guardrails, footboards and seatboards are less than four inches <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>3. Metal bleachers are free of corrosion and/or damage <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>4. Wood bleachers are free of dry rot and/or damage <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>5. Transitional areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>6. Handrails, seats and supports are securely fastened <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>7. Wood seats and handrails are free from splinters <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li>8. Bleachers appear sturdy enough for anticipated loads <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</li> </ol>

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**First Aid Equipment Checklist:**

- List of athletes with special conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc.)
- List of emergency phone numbers
- Adhesive bandages with gauze pads – assorted sizes
- Antiseptic
- Arm sling (triangular bandage is fine)
- Bandage scissors
- Butterfly closures
- Cotton swabs
- Elastic tape
- White tape
- Elastic wraps
- Emergency blanket
- Latex gloves (multiple pairs)
- Plastic bags and bags for ice packs
- Sterile Water
- Resuscitation (CPR) masks/face shield

**Access to Emergency Service:**

1. Telephones and the appropriate emergency numbers are accessible  
 Yes  No
2. There is adequate passage for emergency vehicles  
 Yes  No
3. Athletes' medical history forms are on site  
 Yes  No
4. Athletes' emergency contact lists are on site  
 Yes  No



## ATHLETE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

The following athlete behavior is unacceptable while participating in Special Olympics training or competition, including, but not limited to, practice, in transit, and at the competition venue:

- Profanity or verbal abuse
- Tobacco use in restricted areas
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Any unwelcome physical contact
- Possession of harmful weapons\*
- Frequent unexcused absences
- Use of alcohol
- Physical or verbal sexual overtures
- Physical abuse\*/Assault
- Use of illegal drugs or any controlled Substance\*
- Public forum posts that degrade the Organization (social media)
- I will never engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language and gestures with any official, coach, family member, or volunteer, and SOWI Staff. I will treat other athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and volunteers with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or ability.
- Felony or misdemeanors (or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior) which seriously disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others\*
- The non-payment for any purchased items from the Agency of participation. Items to include but not limited to: Articles of clothing, banquets, travel, etc.

*\*Criminal offenses regardless of where it occurs may result in immediate suspension from any and all Special Olympics activities.*

### Guidelines for limiting or denying an athlete's involvement in SOWI

SOWI may limit or deny an athlete's participation in SOWI based on the following, as determined by SOWI in its sole discretion.

- a. Admission or adjudication of involvement in abuse, neglect, sexual assault, or conduct involving violence or threat of violence (for example, assault and battery or armed robbery)
- b. Record of being charged with abuse, neglect, conduct involving violence or threat of violence (for example, assault and battery or armed robbery), or sexual assault with corroborating information
- c. Extreme or repeated violations of the SOWI Code of Conduct
- d. Current use of illegal drugs
- e. If the safety of other athletes is at risk
- f. An open invoice that has not been rectified when there has been a request of the agency and the Regional Athletic Director
- g. Not all situations or circumstances can be addressed in these guidelines. SOWI will address each situation on a case-by-case basis.

SOWI recommends all Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports partners review, understand and **sign the Athlete Code of Conduct** before sports training begins. If an athlete or Unified Sports partner participates in multiple sports seasons, he/she need only submit one form per SOWI sports year (i.e., October - September). The Agency manager will retain a copy in the Agency files throughout the SOWI sports year.

## Special Olympics Athlete Code of Conduct

SOWI prides itself in providing high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this code of conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior, which will ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes (including Unified Sports® Partners) are expected to abide by the Athlete Code of Conduct as established by SOWI. Athletes should be reminded that **participation in Special Olympics is a privilege, not a right, and that the Agency manager has the authority to make immediate accommodations until final decisions can be made.**

By agreeing to abide by the Special Olympics Wisconsin Code of Conduct, each athlete agrees to adhere to the following athlete behavior:

- Uphold the mission, philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics Wisconsin
- Behave in a manner consistent with Special Olympics Wisconsin's core values of mutual respect, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication
- Each athlete further agrees and acknowledges that participation in SOWI is voluntary and SOWI may terminate an athlete's participation if the athlete fails to follow SOWI rules and policies, including the athlete code of conduct.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

- Profanity or verbal abuse
- Frequent unexcused absences
- I will never engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language and gestures with any official, coach, family member, or volunteer, and SOWI Staff. I will treat other athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and volunteers with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or ability.

*\*Criminal offenses regardless of where it occurs may result in immediate suspension from any and all Special Olympics activities.*

### TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions.
- I will not "hold back" in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- Tobacco use in restricted areas
- Use of alcohol
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Physical or verbal sexual overtures
- Any unwelcome physical contact
- Physical abuse\*/Assault
- Possession of harmful weapons\*
- Use of illegal drugs or any controlled Substance\*
- Public forum posts that degrade the organization (social media)
- Felony or misdemeanors (or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior) which seriously disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others\*
- The non-payment for any purchased items from the Agency of participation. Items to include but not limited to: Articles of clothing, banquets, travel, etc.



I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my Agency, Regional and/or State Special Olympics Wisconsin Staff, up to and including not being allowed to participate.

<b>Athlete/Unified Sports Partner's Signature</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____
Print Athlete's Name_____	
Agency # _____ Agency Name:_____	
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature (If athlete is a minor or not their own guardian.)</b> _____	
_____	

## Special Olympics Coach/Volunteer Code of Conduct

SOWI prides itself in providing high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this code of conduct is to establish a high standard of coach/volunteer behavior, which will ensure the safety and well-being of all coach/volunteers involved in training and competition. All coach/volunteers (including Unified Sports® Partners) are expected to abide by the Coach/volunteer Code of Conduct as established by SOWI. Coach/volunteers should be reminded that **participation in Special Olympics is a privilege, not a right, and that the Agency manager has the authority to make immediate accommodations until final decisions can be made.**

By agreeing to abide by the Special Olympics Wisconsin Code of Conduct, each coach/volunteer agrees to adhere to the following coach/volunteer behavior:

- Uphold the mission, philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics Wisconsin
- Behave in a manner consistent with Special Olympics Wisconsin’s core values of mutual respect, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication
- Each coach/volunteer further agrees and acknowledges that participation in SOWI is voluntary and SOWI may terminate a coach/volunteer’s participation if the coach/volunteer fails to follow SOWI rules and policies, including the coach/volunteer code of conduct.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other coach/volunteers, coaches, volunteers or staff.

### TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

**I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my Agency, Regional and/or State Special Olympics Wisconsin Staff, up to and including not being allowed to participate.**

**I hereby certify that I have reviewed, understood, and agreed to this Code of Conduct.**

Coach/Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Coach/Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency# \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Special Olympics Family Member Code of Conduct

We hope as family members, you will embrace the spirit of Special Olympics and help to provide a competition and training environment that enhances coach/volunteer character and skill development. The following Family Code of Conduct should be emphasized during training, competition, and special events at any level – including sub-Program, Accredited Program, National, Regional and World.

*As a Special Olympics family member, I pledge the following:*

- I will let my coach/volunteer choose the sports in which he/she would like to participate. I will not force my choice upon him/her.
- I will remember that coach/volunteers participate to have fun and that the game is for them; not for the family members.
- I will see to it that my coach/volunteer's medical form is up-to-date, complete, and on file.
- I will learn the rules of the game and the SOI policies before I complain or protest.
- I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my coach/volunteer and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all coach/volunteers, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or competition.
- I understand that I play a vital role in the health and safety of my coach/volunteer's participation. I have a responsibility to assist Special Olympics in providing for the health and safety of all coach/volunteers by reporting suspicious behavior, talking to my child about personal safety, dropping off and picking up my Athlete from Special Olympics events at the times designated by the organization (not excessively earlier or later than said established times), and any and all other reasonable measures to assist in the protection of Special Olympics coach/volunteers.
- I (and my guests) will never engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language and gestures with any official, coach, or family member.
- I will never encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the coach/volunteers.
- I will teach my coach/volunteer to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will demand that my coach/volunteer treat other coach/volunteers, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- I will teach my coach/volunteer that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my coach/volunteer will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will praise my coach/volunteer for competing fairly and trying hard, and I will make my coach/volunteer feel like a winner every time.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my coach/volunteer or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I will emphasize skill development and practices, and how they benefit my coach/volunteer over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in lower age groups.

- I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the coach/volunteers ahead of any personal desire that I may have for my coach/volunteer to win.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and competition, and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches during competitions. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- I will demand a sports environment for my coach/volunteer that is free from drugs and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events and competitions.
- I will smoke/chew tobacco only in designated areas.
- I will refrain from coaching my coach/volunteer or other coach/volunteers during competitions and practices if I am not the assigned coach.

As a Special Olympics Wisconsin family member, I also understand that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I may be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Verbal warning by officials, coaches, and/or Agency and SOWI personnel
- Game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file
- Written warning
- Game forfeit through official or coach
- Season suspension

**I hereby certify that I have reviewed, understood, and agreed to this Code of Conduct.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Family Member**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Print)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Local Agency**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Coach/volunteer's Name**

## SPECTATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

“Special Olympics celebrates and strives to promote the spirit of sportsmanship and a love of participation in sports for its own sake”. This is one of the founding principles of Special Olympics. With this in mind, Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) has established the following Spectators' Code of Conduct in order to promote a positive environment for athletes to showcase their talents and compete in.

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches, officials, and other spectators.
- Act appropriately. Do not taunt or disturb fans. Enjoy the competition together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants, and refrain from "booing" opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play. Negative cheers or chants that encourage an athlete to fail are not allowed.
- Support the referees, officials and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety and remain alert to help prevent accidents.
- Abstain from using tobacco products or alcoholic beverages at the sports venues, athlete housing or Special Olympics entertainment venues. Use of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the before-mentioned areas. In addition, spectators under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants are subject to removal from a Special Olympics venue.
- Conduct all cheering from the appropriate spectator areas. Spectators are not allowed on team benches, near the scoring table, within enclosed start/finish areas or on the competition surface for an event.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for athletes, coaches and officials.
- Be supportive after the competition, win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

**Competition officials (referees, umpires, etc.) and event management personnel reserve the right to warn spectators of undesirable behavior and request immediate correction of the behavior.** If spectators display inappropriate and disruptive behavior that interferes with competition, competition may be stopped until the spectator(s) is/are removed from the viewing area and competition venue. Examples of inappropriate and disruptive behavior include (but are not limited to):

- use of obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner at any time
- use of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages in restricted areas
- taunting of players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threat of violence or physical violence
- negative cheers or chants that encourage an athlete to fail i.e. in basketball, chanting “Air Ball” during a free throw attempt; in volleyball, chanting “Side Out” while a player attempts to serve the ball; in athletics race walking, cheering for an athlete to “run they’re catching you”, etc.
- intentionally creating a loud noise or disturbance at inappropriate times during a competition (according to the rules of the sport) in order to disrupt the performance of an athlete i.e. shaking of a cow bell, blowing a whistle or horn during a basketball, soccer or volleyball game; creating noise at the start of an aquatics race after the official has indicated being quiet for the start of the race; creating a noise during a gymnastics routine to intentionally disrupt the concentration of the performing athlete; use of a bullhorn to cheer on or coach athletes, etc.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT DISCIPLINARY STEPS**

Violations may result in further action by SOWI including, but not limited to: verbal warning, written warning, restriction for a period of time, or from specific venues or competitions. Suspensions may be appealed in writing to the Regional office or the State Office. The appeal process will follow the same procedures as volunteer suspension appeals.

## Developing an Emergency Management Plan

### Considerations

- Ideally, a physician, an athletic trainer, or a physical therapist knowledgeable in the triage and immediate management of athletic injuries should cover practices and games.
- The coach should provide the coach/volunteers' medical forms and any special instructions to medical personnel.
- An emergency medical technician (EMT) and ambulance should be available immediately upon calling.
- The coaching staff should be educated and skilled in immediate management designed to contain the extent of the illness/injury until appropriate medical personnel are available.
- The coach and all personnel should be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

### Each coach is responsible for activating an Emergency Management Plan

- The coach should assess the situation as quickly as possible after an incident has occurred.
- The coach should assess the incident right where it occurred, determining whether the coach/volunteer can be safely moved.
- The coach should know the coach/volunteer and his/her personality to best assess injury versus reaction.
- The coach should remain calm, which will also serve to keep the coach/volunteer and others calm.
- The coach should listen to the coach/volunteer describe what happened.
- The coach should ask simple, clarifying questions.
- The coach should observe the coach/volunteer's face and eyes while talking.
- The coach should observe for any asymmetry, trauma, general body alignment, and functional abilities.
- The coach should survey the area where the injury occurred for any unsafe articles or terrain.
- The coach should evaluate the criticality of the situation, and then institute action based on the evaluation of the situation.
- The primary survey of the coach/volunteer evaluates airway, breathing, circulation, and consciousness.
- The secondary survey of the coach/volunteer evaluates the seriousness of all other injuries once it is determined that the coach/volunteer is breathing and alert, with good cardiac function.
- If no medical personnel are available, the coach should respond based on his/her assessment of the criticality of the situation.
- When in doubt, do not put the coach/volunteer back into play.
- Always refer to a healthcare professional for additional follow-up.

### Crisis Communication Plan

The difference between crisis and emergency is that crisis is a crucial or decisive point or situation, a turning point, while emergency is a situation which poses an immediate risk and which requires urgent attention. If this is a life-threatening injury or crisis, the Accredited Program President and CEO, Crisis Communication Liaison, and Public Relations Director should be contacted immediately.





## Incident Immediate Action Steps Guide

Each serious health and/or safety incident is unique and requires a particular set of responses. As a representative of Special Olympics Accredited Program, it is your responsibility to do what is reasonable under the given circumstances. While this guide cannot address every possible scenario, it provides you with basic action steps to take or consider taking **IMMEDIATELY** after an incident has occurred or commenced. Please make sure to fill in the phone numbers below prior to sanctioned events or travel.

In the event of an incident, follow the guidelines below, keeping everyone involved as calm as possible throughout.



- Assess the situation and remove all unnecessary individuals from the area. Only essential personnel should be present.
- Appoint others to keep the area clear.
- Appoint a person or person(s) to stay with the individual(s) involved at all times. Instruct the volunteer(s) to not render any treatment beyond his/her training. Do not move an injured individual unless he/she is in immediate danger.
- Determine if medical support (on site or ambulance) needs to be contacted. If yes, do so immediately. Have coach/volunteer medical form ready for medical personnel.
- Determine if law enforcement needs to be contacted. If yes, determine whether 911 or the local non-emergency number should be used. Non-emergency #: + \_\_\_\_\_ +
- If a family member/guardian/friend cannot accompany the coach/volunteer/volunteer to the hospital, either stay with the coach/volunteer or appoint someone to do so until a family member/guardian/friend can arrive.
- In the event of a serious incident or crisis, immediately contact + \_\_\_\_\_, the Crisis Communications Contact for your Special Olympics Accredited Program. Explain the situation. Special Olympics Accredited Program will start coordinating any assistance needed. If you aren't sure if the incident qualifies as "serious," err on the side of contacting Special Olympics.
- You or your Local Agency Coordinator should contact the appropriate family/guardian of coach/volunteer/volunteer to apprise them of the situation.
- Cooperate with medical personnel and/or law enforcement in completing any necessary paperwork.
- In the event of media presence, speak from the statement on your Crisis Communication plan and do not speculate or expand upon this statement. Refer all media calls to the Special Olympics Accredited Program.
- Record names and phone numbers of individuals present at time of incident for use on Incident Report Form and for possible subsequent questions.
- Once incident/crisis is over and the coach/volunteer(s)/volunteer(s) involved have all been released to their own supervision or the supervision of others, call the Special Olympics Accredited Program, the appropriate family/guardian of the coach/volunteer(s)/volunteer(s), your Local Agency Coordinator/Head of Delegation and apprise all of status.
- Complete an Incident Report Form and send to the Special Olympics Accredited Program within 12 hours.



## Inclement Weather Policies

### Rain Policy

Decisions on field closures are made as late as possible in order to give the best possible chance for the game to be played.

### Winter Weather Policy

Players are more susceptible to injuries during cold weather, particularly from pulled or torn muscles. Players should be encouraged to wear appropriate clothing to aid body heat retention, yet afford adequate movement without creating a safety hazard. As a general rule, training programs should follow their High School Activities Association policies for cancellations.

### Hot Weather Policy

The risk of heat-related illness from vigorous sports activity increases with the temperature. The body generates heat, which cannot be dissipated readily when the ambient temperature exceeds 85°F, depending upon the humidity. Hot weather is considered at any point where the heat index reaches or exceeds 90°F. As a general rule, training programs should be reviewed if the heat index at the start of training is projected to be above 95°F. Coaches should exercise caution and provide additional water breaks.

### Thunder & Lightning Policy

If inclement weather is forecasted, an individual should be designated to monitor the weather forecast and radar during the competition. If the facility being used for competition has a lightning detection system, and a facilities policy in place that is more stringent than described below, the facilities policy will supersede the Special Olympics policy.

If lightning is detected within eight miles of the practice or competition facility, all coaches, players, referees, and spectators are to withdraw from the field and seek proper shelter. No place outside is safe near thunderstorms. The best shelter is a large, fully enclosed, substantially constructed building. A vehicle with a solid metal roof and metal sides is a reasonable second choice.

**30-minute Rule:** Wait at least 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or the last lightning flash before giving the “all clear” signal and resuming normal activity. If thunder is heard or lightning is seen again within that 30-minute time frame, the event will continue to be postponed or officials may deem to cancel the event.

