



# SOWI Agency Program Guide

Special Olympics Wisconsin



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# General Introduction

## A Letter from SOWI President & CEO

On behalf of the Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) Local Program Manager Committee and the SOWI team, I am pleased to provide our **Special Olympics Wisconsin Local Program Guide**. This guide is a resource for Local Program leadership, providing the necessary information and tools to manage the Special Olympics Local Program in each local community.

Local Program leadership is critical to the success 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 Program

**Part 2:** Growing & Sustaining a Local Program

**Part 3:** Resources

The **Special Olympics Wisconsin Local Program Guide** provides the Local Program Manager with information and tools necessary to build a foundation for the Local Program. Parts 2 and 3 provide the next level of resources to grow the Local Program by offering new and expanded opportunities.

The SOWI staff 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

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

The Local Program is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a larger Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Program 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 Program 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 Program offers official Special Olympics sports training and competition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports® 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 Program 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 **Programs** “inverted pyramid” (shown on next page) approach acknowledges Local **Programs** as leaders and champions. With so many leaders at the grassroots level, the North America Local Program Guide is an important tool. The Local Program provides an empowering experience for Special Olympics athletes, Unified Sports® partners, families, volunteers, supporters, and fans. The Local Program makes the first impression about this movement.

The conduct of the Local Program 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 Programs**.

Take pride in your Local Program 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 Programs** can be developed in all communities.

## What does a Local Program Managers need to know?

The Local Program Manager 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 Program Manager** 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

## **Local Program Management**

A successful Local Program Manager will ensure the sustainability of the Local Program by creating a Management Team of volunteers to provide leadership, administration, and oversight. While everyone in the Special Olympics global movement plays a vital role, the importance of the Local Program 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.

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

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#### THE DEFINITION OF “MANAGEMENT TEAM”

- The Management Team is the group of individuals that operate at the higher levels of an organization and have day-to-day responsibility for managing other individuals and executing key functions.
- The Management Team is generally responsible for putting together the business strategy and ensuring the business objectives are met.

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

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

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 **Local Programs** (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 Program 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 Program growth and development
- Ensure that the team creates a plan for succession as members rotate off

As individual Local Programs 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 Program
- **Financial Review & Reporting:** Ensure the Local Program is fiscally responsible
- **Fundraising:** Oversee plans to raise funds necessary to support the Local Program
- **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 Program (from the school).

## 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 Program:** The Local Program is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Program 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<sup>®</sup> partners. The Local Program 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.
- **Local Program Manager:** 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
- **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>
- **LPMC:** Local Program Management Committee
- **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
- **SRAC:** Sports Rules Advisory Committee
- **YAC:** Youth Activation Council
- **YA:** Young Athletes™

## 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 more than 6 million athletes and Unified Sports partners in over 190 countries. With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and over 100,000 games and competitions throughout the year. Special Olympics is a global inclusion movement using sport, health, education and leadership programs every day around the world to end discrimination and empower people with intellectual disabilities.

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 Special Olympics WI, 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 Special Olympics WI 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.

## **SOWI Mission**

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) provides 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 and experience joy while participating in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## **SOWI Vision**

Sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities across Wisconsin. Globally, we strive to end discrimination against people with ID.

## **SOWI Strategic Goals**

- Improve opportunities for athletes to perform at their best
- Build positive attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities
- Build capacity by improving resources
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Special Olympics Wisconsin

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Statement**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are at the heart of all that we do** at Special Olympics Wisconsin as we strive to promote unity and create a world where everyone belongs.

**We value, celebrate and respect all differences**, backgrounds and perspectives and understand that greater diversity **and inclusion creates a stronger** and more innovative **organization** that delivers better results as we work with athletes in all communities.

## **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.

## Region

Wisconsin is divided into seven geographical regions to provide support, assistance, and competitive opportunities to local Programs. Each region is managed by both program and development staff, and serves athletes in its assigned counties.



## Local Program

The Local Program is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within a larger Special Olympics Accredited Program. The Local Program 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. Each Local Program offers official Special Olympics sports training and competition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities).

## 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.

## Board of Directors Communication Plan

At times, members of the Board of Directors may be approached by athletes, families, volunteers, or members of the public to voice concerns or lodge complaints.

When approached, we ask that Board members thank the person for bringing the issue to your attention. We then ask you to inform them, that the Board of Director acts in a stewardship role for the organization, and as such does not deal directly with day to day operations, but that you will forward the information to the appropriate person at the SOWI office to look into the situation.

If the person persists, we ask that you do your best to refrain from answering any questions or adding comments. As well intended as your help may be, often callers will attempt to twist the conversation and use the responses gained as leverage for their argument. It is best to just continue to apologize and remind them that it is not your role to get directly involved but that you will ensure that someone appropriate follows up with them.

Following the conversation, we ask that you notify the Board Chair and Kathleen of your conversation so that they are informed. Kathleen will forward to the appropriate person and will communicate back to the board member involved if needed.

## 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 Leadership Council
- Athletes as coaches and table officials in basketball
- 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 and Understanding Leadership
- 2) Global Messenger Workshop– public speaking and interviewing skills
- 3) Athletes as Coaches Training – general coaching skills
- 4) Athletes As Table Officials for Basketball – unified pairs learn organization of table, duties of the Timekeeper and Scorer and understanding Referee signals
- 5) Athlete Health Messenger – Fit5 (Hydration, Nutrition, Physical Fitness), Strong Minds and Advocacy
- 6) Athlete Health Research Advocate – what is health research and why should people with disabilities be involved
- 7) Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health
- 8) Government Relations Advocacy – How government affects SOWI, meet your lawmakers, share your story
- 9) Polar Plunge Ambassadors- enlisted and trained by SOWI to serve as spokespersons for Polar Plunge activities
- 10) Unified Leadership – leaders of different abilities learn their leadership competencies and share their gifts.
- 11) 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 LOCAL PROGRAM LEVEL

**Local Programs** 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 Leadership Councils, and many things in between. We have found if expectations are clear, athletes are a huge resource to the program, and can relieve workloads from staff and key volunteers.

### ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

SOWI has a statewide Athlete Leadership Councils (ALC) with representatives from each Region. They meet 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 Program issues.

*“The Mission of the SOWI Athlete Input Council is to work together to respect and support SOWI athletes, coaches, family, friends, volunteers, Local Program 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 ALC members and topics visit the [Athlete Leadership page on the SOWI website](#).

## Unified Leadership

[Building from sport, Unified Leadership teaches leaders without disabilities to value and learn from people with intellectual disabilities to make changes and create environments where people with intellectual disabilities get opportunities to have meaningful jobs and roles.](#)

We want you to know that Unified Leadership is a priority around the world. According to the Special Olympics International five year strategic plan, success is not when we have trained athletes to be leaders. We can only say our leadership program is working if: one, people with ID are in meaningful roles internally and two, through the

skills and voices of people with ID, we are successfully influencing others outside of Special Olympics to facilitate meaningful roles and engagement of people with ID.

The SOWI Unified Leadership Task Force is available to present a one-hour Unified Leadership curriculum for both internal and external audiences. Please contact Jeanne Hrovat [jhrovat@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:jhrovat@specialolympicswisconsin.org) for more information.

## **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 Raisers Edge 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

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.

## **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 communicate their wishes to their Local Program Manager. This provides an opportunity to determine the best plan for the Local Program 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 all steps of the Class A Volunteer registration process 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.). Local Program 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 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.

# Policies

## Athlete Policies

### Eligibility Statement

See also General Rules, Article 2: Special Olympics Athletes: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/governance-and-leadership-excellence/special-olympics-general-rules/article-2>

### 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 10 are eligible to participate in the Special Olympics Young Athletes™ program.

A Local Program 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 Local Program 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 Local Program/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 Programs 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 Program as coaches, volunteers, and Unified Sports® partners. Local Programs 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 Local Program provider staff.

## Athlete Registration

**NEW ATHLETES:** New athletes require the Athlete Registration Form, Athlete Release Form, Athlete Medical Form and the COVID-19 Participant Release Form postmarked or emailed by the appropriate medical deadline date for the sport in which the athlete is participating. The athlete's medical must last them the entire sport season. The COVID-19 Participant Release Form only needs to be completed once. All forms must be received by the State Office in Madison and approved **before** the athlete begins training.

**CURRENT ATHLETES:** If a current athlete's medical form expires prior to the last day of the State competition in which they wish to compete, an Athlete Registration Form, Athlete Release Form, Athlete Medical Form and COVID-19 Participant Release Form (if not already on file) must be completed and sent to the State Office postmarked or emailed by the appropriate medical deadline date and approved.

## 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:

- Local Program managers and co-managers
- Coaches, including Athletes as Coaches
- Chaperones
- Unified Partners
- AL 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 AL
- Fundraising event committee members
- Management Team Members (Games/Region/Local Program)
- 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 Local Program 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 Local Programs or SOWI sponsored events can adjust these to be more restrictive to reflect the needs of the Local Program 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**

o 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, resubmit a background check, and update SOWI on any information on the form that has changed every three years.
- 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. 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:
  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)

- b) Volunteer applicants whose criminal background check discloses one of the disqualifier offenses will be sent a letter of denial. The Local Program 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 to submit an *Adult Class A Registration Form*. They will be required to re-register by completing this form within 30 days and by completing the Protective Behaviors online training and submitting a background check.
- 5) 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) Local Programs 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 Local Programs, 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 Local Program for a State level competition must be a registered Class A volunteer in order for the Local Program to compete in that competition. Local Programs 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 Local Program's head delegate to ensure compliance that all present Local Program volunteers at the Games/tournament are Class A.
- c) The Local Program 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.
- 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 Local Program 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 Inc. 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 upload 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*.

#### 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 upload 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*.

## 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 Local Program 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 that 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 Local Programs or SOWI sponsored events can adjust the requirements to be more restrictive to reflect the needs of the Local Program 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) 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 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.

## **Local Program Issue Policy**

If an issue arises within an Local Program, please adhere to the following steps.

1. The Director of Field Services (DFS), Regional Athletic Director (RAD) and Local Program Manager (AM) should address concerns and resolve issue in person or by phone (not via email).
2. The DFS should send a status email every 24 hours to the person involved and the Local Program manager, with the RAD copied.
3. If the issue has not been resolved within 72 hours, the CEO, VP of Marketing, and VP of Sports & Health should be made aware of the situation.
4. Depending on the issue, if there is no resolution within 120 hours, SOWI’s lawyer will be contacted and the CEO and VP of Sports & Health should take control over the issue. VP of Marketing should prepare a PR Statement, if necessary, and monitor SOWI Social Media channels.

## **Discipline**

### **Documenting Incidents that Require Disciplinary Action**

All disciplinary action, whether handled by call, letter, or face-to-face interaction, must be documented and provided to the Director of Field Services. When documenting an incident that requires disciplinary action, follow this template:

- What happened during the incident?
- Where did the incident take place?
  - Practice, Competition, General Local Program Function, Outside of Special Olympics Event
- Who handled disciplinary action?
  - Incidents handled internally (within the Local Program)

- Sportsmanship, Language / Behavior, Practice attendance, Violation of Local Program rules
- Regional Athletic Director
  - Sportsmanship during SOWI event, Language / behavior towards officials/GMT members, Stakeholder is politically sensitive for Local Program
- Director of Field Services
  - Assault of any kinds (sexual, physical, verbal), Criminal activity, Drugs and/or alcohol, Stakeholder is politically sensitive for Local Program and RAD

## Suspension

Violations may result in further action by SOWI, including but not limited to: verbal warning, written warning, suspensions (time, venues, or competitions). Suspensions may be appealed in writing to the regional or state office. The appeal process will follow the same procedures as volunteer suspension appeals.

### Athlete Suspension

Athlete suspension must be approved by the Regional Athletic Director. A typical athlete suspension means they are not allowed to participate in one sports season. Before suspending an athlete, Local Program Manager must take the following steps:

1. Verbal warning given
2. Written warning given to athlete (copies sent to Regional Athletic Director, parent/guardian or caseworker)
3. Face-to-face meeting with athlete to review unacceptable behavior and develop plan for improvement. Meeting must be documented with copies sent to athlete, parents/guardian or caseworker, Regional Athletic Director, and Director of Field Services.
  - a. If athlete is a minor, parent/guardian or caseworker must attend the meeting.
  - b. If athlete is over 18 and is his/her own guardian, he/she may choose to have another adult present.

Regional Athletic Director or Director of Field Services may take further action which could include, but is not limited to:

1. Suspension for more than one sport season
2. Expulsion for one year or more
3. Permanent expulsion from Special Olympics Wisconsin

### Example Athlete Suspension Letter

Dear Athlete:

(Local Program Name) is a local program that offers programs beyond Special Olympics. Any relationship with (Local Program Name) must be discussed with them directly; however, now that you have been suspended from membership in (Local Program Name), you may not participate in their Special Olympics program.

Based on a pattern of behavior over the past year and a past history of behavior issues, at this time, you are suspended from participating in any SOWI sanctioned activities as an athlete, volunteer or spectator for a minimum of one year and until you can show documentation from a certified professional that something has

changed that would indicate your involvement in SOWI would not be a risk to yourself or others. Your SOWI medical records status will be changed to “inactive” and your name will no longer appear on the Athlete Roster. If at that time, you feel it would be appropriate to re-register with SOWI, you may contact us to discuss the options.

During the time of your suspension, you must adhere to the following:

- You are not allowed to participate in or attend any Special Olympic activity or event locally or statewide
- You are not to call any SOWI staff, locally or at the State Office
- You are not to call or make contact with any other Local Program about participation until your suspension has been resolved.
- You are not to interact with any Special Olympics athletes in a negative manner

Any violations to this list of actions will be taken into account when considering your reinstatement. After the expiration of your suspension, if you feel that it would be appropriate to re-register with SOWI, you may contact the Regional Athletic Director to discuss your options.

To re-register with SOWI, please following these steps:

- You must apply for re-instatement.
- You must show documentation from a certified professional that something has changed.
- You must find an Local Program willing to accept you into their program. This cannot be done prior to the end of your suspension.

Cordially,

Regional Athletic Director / Director of Field Services

### **Appealing an Athlete or Volunteer Suspension**

Each athlete/coach/volunteer/family member has the right to appeal any disciplinary actions against them with the State office. The suspended party must submit a written request for a meeting to appeal the decision within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action. SOWI will review the request and determine whether to uphold the decision or host an appeals meeting to obtain additional information.

If deemed necessary, the appeal will be heard by a State Office representative, an Local Program Manager (may be AM not involved in the situation), and other independent individual with an understanding of Special Olympics and individuals with intellectual disabilities. A decision to reverse, amend or affirm the disciplinary action will be submitted in writing to the suspended party, including a plan of action for the athlete to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to suspension.

### **Game Misconduct Policy**

In order to track player, coach, or fan misconduct during any SOWI sanctioned team sport event where an ejection or official warning is rendered, it is critical to capture the necessary information as quickly as possible. The following [Officials Report Form](#) was created for this purpose, and must be used at all SOWI team events for

any misconduct or ejection. The Ejection Report Form must be reported within 48 hours of the incident. The reason for tracking this information is to capture if an individual athlete or coach continually displays behaviors that violate the Special Olympics Code of Conduct.

### Parameters

1. The Game Misconduct Policy only applies to sanctioned SOWI sports events
2. The [Officials Report Form](#) is to be used at all levels of competition for any game misconduct incident in the following sports:
  - a. Basketball
  - b. Soccer
  - c. Volleyball
  - d. Softball
  - e. Bocce Ball
  - f. Flag Football
  - g. Tee Ball
3. If an athlete, coach, or fan is ejected during a sanctioned SOWI event (due to technical, red card, or game misconduct) they will be required to sit out the remainder of the game plus the next game, whether that day or the next tournament. Notification of the received penalty must be sent to the following people:
  - a. Sr. Director of Sports
  - b. Sr. Director of Field Services
  - c. Tournament Director of the subsequent tournament (if advancing)
  - d. Local Program Manager of the athlete/coach
4. If an athlete, coach, or fan receives two (2) or more ejection warnings or ejections within a given sports season, the athlete, coach, or fan may be suspended for the remainder of the season, or following sports season depending on the date of the incidents.
5. If the athlete, coach, or fan continue receiving additional ejection warnings or ejections, a longer or more permanent suspension may occur.

### Player Ejection

1. Within the rules of the sport, announce the ejection by making eye contact with the ejected player. Do not make physical contact with the individual.
2. Request the athlete to go immediately to the bench and to the head coach.
3. One contest official will go to the sidelines, make eye contact with the head coach and announce that the athlete has been ejected from the contest and state the reason. Use the athlete's number, position, etc. to clearly identify him/her.
4. Unless athlete creates a disturbance, s/he may remain on the bench. *Athletes should not be left unsupervised at any time.*
5. It is vital that the coach knows the reason for the ejections. *Communication is key.*
6. Any athlete ejected for flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct must sit out the remainder of the contest in which they receive the ejection, and must sit out the following game, whether that same day or the next tournament.
7. Officials must fill out an [Officials Report Form](#) and send to appropriate SOWI Staff within 48 hours of the incident. SOWI will forward a copy of the Officials Report Form to the appropriate personnel, which includes the Regional Athletic Director, Local Program Manager, and other persons involved in the

incident. Officials that submitted the report form will also receive a copy of the incident report, and the letter sent to involved parties.

### **Fan Ejection**

Officials should never become involved with crowd control / unsportsmanlike conduct concerns of spectators. If a problem occurs, the contest should be stopped and officials should request that the Tournament Director or SOWI Staff resolve the issue before play is allowed to resume. Crowd control problems must also be reported on the Officials Report Form within 48 hours.

## Health Programs

### Healthy Athletes

#### What is Healthy Athletes

Healthy Athletes is a Special Olympics program that provides free health screenings in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the anxiety people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a visit to a doctor or dentist. The impact of the Healthy Athletes program on the health and well-being of Special Olympics athletes around the world is great, in some cases saving lives by discovering unknown health issues or providing health care that otherwise would not be available. Healthy Athletes not only serves the athletes but also trains volunteer health care professionals who then go back to their practices with increased knowledge of and compassion for people with intellectual disabilities.

#### How it works

SOWI offers free screenings for athletes at various competitions throughout the year in Special Smiles®, Healthy Hearing, Lion's Club International Opening Eyes®, Fun Fitness, Fit Feet, Health Promotion, Strong Minds 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 and athlete release form can participate in Healthy Athletes.

#### Healthy Athletes Disciplines Offered

Fit Feet: offers podiatric screenings to evaluate ankles, feet, lower extremity biomechanics, proper shoe & sock gear, and care of the feet & toenails.

FUNfitness: is the physical therapy component of Healthy Athletes. Designed to assess and improve an athlete's flexibility, functional strength, aerobic capacity and balance, these screenings also educate participants, families and coaches.

Health Promotion: athletes are educated on 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.

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.

Opening Eyes: The Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes program is a vision and eye health screening in partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Led by volunteer vision care professionals, Opening Eyes is able to offer free prescription eyewear and sports goggles to Special Olympics athletes.

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

Strong Minds: helps Special Olympics athletes strengthen their coping skills. Volunteers help athletes identify stress management/coping strategies that can be used in competition and in daily living.

Healthy Athletes is made possible by Special Olympics, Inc. grant funding provided by the CDC and Golisano Foundation. For more information on Healthy Athletes, visit [SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org](http://SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org), or contact the Sr. 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 and submit them to Special Olympics Wisconsin.

For more information on SOfit, contact the Director of Health Programs.

### 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).

### School of Strength

School of Strength is another fitness resource that provides workout videos for athletes, parents, coaches, partners and other supporters. It is a whole new way to exercise, featuring WWE Superstar Becky Lynch. Participants can work out with these videos five times a week to help stay fit and reach athletic goals. Participants should watch them in order starting with Video 1, progressing through the levels when each exercise in a video can be done correctly. School of Strength exercises can be done at practice, at the gym, or even at home. For more information on School of Strength, 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 a Fit5 Guide to use for future practices and trainings. SOWI 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 his or her performance in both sport and health, leading to a better quality of life.

## 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.

### **Advancement Policy for Quota (2012)**

The quota is the number of athletes that can advance from a regional/district tournament to a sectional or state tournament. If the number of athletes eligible for advancement exceeds the number of allotted quota, athletes shall be selected as follows\*:

- a. Priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes must be selected by random draw.
- b. 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 a random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
- c. If the quota is large enough for all second place finishers to advance, the remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of all third place finishers from all divisions of the event/sport.
- d. Repeat this process as necessary until the quota is filled.
- e. Selected athletes may advance in all events in which they placed 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>. Selected athletes who placed 4<sup>th</sup> or lower may only advance in one event. If an athlete places 4<sup>th</sup> in two events and is selected to advance in the random draw, he/she may only advance in one of those events.

### Rules

- *Multi-event Qualification:* Selected athletes may advance in all events in which they qualify, by place or lottery. If an athlete has already advanced in another event, it shall have no bearing on the random drawing.
- *Athlete Eligibility:* An Local Program may remove an athlete from eligibility for advancement for non-compliance with practice attendance policies, Code of Conduct violations, suspensions, behavior problems, etc. While we trust your judgment, *please be prepared to explain why you have not advanced an eligible athlete.*
- *Relay Advancement:* If an athlete is selected as a result of his or her performance in an individual event and they are on a relay team that placed 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> and there is enough quota left in the Local Program's allotment, then all members of the relay team would be eligible for advancement. The relay team members would also advance in other events where they finished 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> in addition to the relay according to the above defined criteria. If a relay athlete is selected based on an individual finish

and there is not enough quota at that point to send the rest of the team, then the team cannot advance.

- *Athlete Absence*: If a player is absent at any level of competition they may not advance with the team to the next level of competition. All players present at a competition must be on the bench and listed on the scorecard. They must have the opportunity to play in one game.
  - o *Injury*: If a player is unable to play due to injury, the coach must tell the scorer and the injury must be recorded on the scorecard. The injured athlete must remain on the bench (if possible) in order to advance to the next level of competition. Based on the severity of the injury, the player may be allowed to leave with the approval of the tournament director.
  - o *Illness*: If a player is unable to play due to illness, the coach must tell the scorer and the illness must be recorded on the scorecard. The athlete must remain on the bench (if possible) in order to advance to the next level of competition. Based on the severity of the illness, the player may be allowed to leave with the approval of the tournament director.

## **Advancement from Cancelled and Partially Completed Competitions**

**Individual Sports**: Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, Gymnastics, Basketball Skills, Swimming, Athletics, Powerlifting, Golf, Tennis, and Bowling

Cancellation of a Regional or District competition will result in the following procedure by meet/tournament coordinators:

- A. Quota Competitions – Local Program will be allowed to fill their assigned quota with athletes who were registered to compete in the meet/tournament. A random draw must be used to determine who advances.
- B. Non-Quota Competitions – The meet/tournament coordinator shall establish a quota based on three athletes qualifying per division. This quota will be further subdivided into a quota per participating Local Program based on the Local Program's percentage of athletes registered to compete in that meet/tournament.
- C. Open Entry Competitions – Defined as a meet or tournament where an athlete qualifies for the next level of competition based on participation in a meet/tournament regardless of place finish (i.e. Cross Country Skiing). All athletes registered, less scratches, for the competition will be eligible for the next level of competition.

Partial completion of a Regional or District competition will result in the following procedure by the meet/tournament directors.

- A. Quota Competitions - Local Program will be allowed to fill their assigned quota with athletes who were registered to compete in the meet/tournament. A random draw must be used to determine who advances. Because not all athletes have had an opportunity to compete for the opportunity to advance, no preference shall be given to athletes who were able to complete their events prior to cancellation.
- B. Non-Quota Competitions - Athletes who have qualified through competition will be eligible to advance to the next level of competition. The meet/tournament coordinator will establish a quota based on three athletes qualifying per division for those divisions that cannot compete. This quota will be further subdivided into a quota per participating Local Program based on the Local Program's percentage of athletes registered to compete in that meet/tournament. Athletes scratched from the meet/tournament are not eligible to advance and are not to be counted in determining quota.

- C. Open Entry Competitions - All athletes registered, less scratches, will be eligible for the next level of competition.

### **Team Sports:**

Cancellation of a District/Regional Team competition will result in the following procedure by tournament coordinators:

- A. Teams in each officially established division will be randomly drawn to determine who is designated as the team to advance to the State tournament. This will be done whether a division consists of 2, 3 or 4 teams.
- B. If team representatives cannot make it to the tournament site, then tournament coordinators will conduct the draw on the planned date of the tournament and notify team representatives by that evening.
- C. Traditional and Unified random draws will be conducted separately from one another.
- D. Extra slots beyond designated 1<sup>st</sup> Place teams will be chosen by lottery from all remaining teams. These teams will have an equal opportunity for obtaining extra slots without reference to ability or division status.

Partial completion of a District/Regional tournament will result in the following procedures:

- A. Completed Divisions shall advance the division winner to State Games.
- B. Incomplete Divisions of Play – One team will be chosen at random from each incomplete division to determine who advances to State Games.
- C. Extra Slots / Partial Completion – once winners have been selected, a random draw shall be held from one pool containing **all** remaining teams from **all** divisions, whether the division was completed or not, to determine who advances.

## **Basketball Quota & Lottery Policy (2019)**

In regional, district and sectional competition, all first place finishers in each division will advance to the next level of competition. The remaining quota is filled by weighted lottery picks. This system has been developed to balance divisions and create equitable competition at all three levels of competition.

1. Athletic directors that host a regional or district tournament must send the total number of teams in your tournament to the VP of Sports & Health Programs after registration deadline.
2. VP of Sports & Health will distribute quota to each regional/district tournament.
3. All first place division winners will automatically receive one quota spot to advance to the next level of competition.
4. Remaining quota will be filled by weighted lottery. Place all second and third place finishers that have won at least one game into three groups. Group 1 includes top divisions, Group 2 includes middle divisions (largest group if odd number of divisions), and Group 3 includes lowest divisions.
  - a. Name groups by division range rather than groups or tiers to help minimize confusion and remain as transparent as possible (ex: Group 1: Divisions 1-4).
  - b. If there is an odd number of divisions for group breakdowns, the middle division range will be the largest as most of these teams have similar skill and ability levels. It is the higher and lower division ranges that balance is most critical.
5. Select lottery teams from groups 1, 2 and 3 to fill quota spots. Each group should receive the same number of lottery picks. You may have quota spots remaining after this process.

- a. *Note:* If you have an odd number of divisions and Group 2 is larger than Group 1 and Group 3, remember to notify all lottery eligible teams of this process. Teams in group 2 may be upset because they have a lower chance of receiving a lottery pick from the group selections, but they may have another opportunity to receive a quota spot during the random draw.
6. If you have extra quota spots remaining after selecting from the three groups, all remaining lottery eligible teams will be thrown into one bucket for Random Draw. Use Random Draw to fill out the remainder of your quota spots.
7. After all quota spots have been filled, select 2-3 Alternate teams (depending on size of your tournament) from the Random Draw pool of all lottery eligible teams. These teams will advance to the next level of competition if a pre-selected team is no longer able to attend.

**Example:** District 4/5 Tournament Advancement (Based on 2018)

District 4/5 has 12 divisions. District 4/5 received 23 quota spots.

- Groups:
  - Group 1: Divisions 1-4
  - Group 2: Divisions 5-8
  - Group 3: Divisions 9-12
- Quota Spots: 23
  - 1<sup>st</sup> place Finishers: 12 Quota Spots
  - 11 Remaining Quota Spots:
    - Group 1: 3 lottery picks
    - Group 2: 3 lottery picks
    - Group 3: 3 lottery picks
    - Random Draw: 2 lottery picks

## Basketball Skills Requirements

Level 1:

*Regionals:* An athlete will need to have a minimum total score of 5 points in order to compete at the District/Regional Basketball Skills Competition.

*State:* An athlete will need to have a minimum total score of 10 points in the District/Regional competition in order to advance to the State Basketball Skills Competition.

## Concussion Policy

### Objective

It is always Special Olympics Wisconsin's intent to take steps to ensure the health and safety of all Special Olympics Wisconsin participants. Special Olympics Wisconsin participants should always remember that safety comes first and should take reasonable steps to help minimize the risks for concussions and other serious brain injuries.

### **Defining a Concussion**

A concussion is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head as well as serial, cumulative hits to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth—causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. Although concussions are usually not life threatening, their effects can be serious and therefore proper attention must be paid to individuals suspected of sustaining a concussion.

### **Suspected or Confirmed Concussion**

A participant who is suspected of sustaining a concussion in a practice, game or competition shall be removed from practice, play or competition at that time. If a qualified medical professional is available on-site to render an evaluation, that person shall have final authority as to the removal or return to play of the participant. If a concussion is suspected, an Incident Report Form should be filled out and turned into SOWI. If applicable, the participant's parent or guardian should be made aware that the participant is suspected of sustaining a concussion.

### **Return to Play**

A participant who has been removed from practice, play or competition due to a suspected concussion may not participate in Special Olympics Wisconsin sports activities until either of the following occurs:

- (1) at least seven (7) consecutive days have passed since the participant was removed from play and a currently licensed, qualified medical professional provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice, play and competition or
- (2) a currently licensed, qualified medical professional determines that the participant did not suffer a concussion and provides written clearance for the participant to return to practice play immediately.

Written clearance in either of the scenarios above shall become part of the participant's permanent record.

\*Qualified medical professionals may include physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, and athletic trainers.

## **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® 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 Program 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 Program Manager in case of an incident.
- Provide the coaches with the number and location of the nearest emergency services.

### Incident Reporting

## Sports: Training & Competition

As a Local Program 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 Program 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, Snowboarding, Snowshoe Racing

## 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, 3v3 Basketball, 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

<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching>.

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/Local-Program-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.

## **Sports Competition Event Grant**

### **Sports Competition Event Grant:**

The Sports Competition Event Grant was created to support registered Local Programs of Special Olympics Wisconsin in their efforts to organize, promote and implement multi-Local Program team competitions in sports offered by Special Olympics Wisconsin. Local Programs can request up to \$500 per tournament request, and a maximum of \$1,000 per calendar year. Grants will be issued on a “first-come, first-served” basis. Local Programs will be notified when the grant money is no longer available.

1. Grant applications are to be submitted by a representative of a registered (current) SOWI Local Program.
2. A grant application must be received at your SOWI Regional Office at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date of the event.
3. The competition (i.e., tournament, meet, etc.) must involve a minimum of three different SOWI Local Programs.
4. The competitive event in question must utilize properly certified/current sport officials and follow applicable SOI, SOWI and National Governing Body rules.
5. SOI and SOWI awards policies must be followed.
6. Each grant application must be accompanied by a rough draft of the organizational aspects of the event schedule in question (i.e., competition format, number of teams to be involved, any committee structure, site, date, etc.)
7. Each grant must include a budget listing of overall tournament expenses and how grant money will be allocated, plus overall expenses.

All grants will be reviewed as soon as possible after receipt. Final notification of grant approval and amounts to be received will be as expeditious as possible to facilitate the applicant's event planning process.

#### RESTRICTIONS:

1. A registered SOWI Local Program may receive more than one grant per program year and multiple grant applications are encouraged.
2. A maximum award of \$1000.00 is **available annually** for each grant application based on area of need.
3. Grants will be issued after the review of the Grant Committee; forms received will be date-stamped, awarded by merit and in order of receipt.

#### REVIEW PROCESS/AWARDS:

All grants will be reviewed receipt and any follow-up contacts will be made at that time. Final notification of grant approval and amount will be as expeditious as possible to facilitate the applicant's event planning processes.

See appendix for Sports Gant Form

## Finance

Accounting for all funds raised and used by your Local Program 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 Local Program 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 Program's financial resources are managed appropriately:*

- **Identify a Local Program 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 Program plans to engage in, and then manage within those parameters. Prepare budgets by consulting the Local Program 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.

### Additional Financial Considerations

- The finances of each Local Program 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 Programs** to be eligible for Accredited Program funding, they are expected to comply with guidelines and practices for reporting finances, provide annual budgets, and be in good standing with the Accredited Program.
- 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.
- Athletes are prohibited from being charged to participate in Special Olympics per General Rules, Accredited Program offices may invoice the Local Program for pre-arranged services (such as lodging at State Games). Generally, the Accredited Program's office will invoice the Local Program and transfer the invoiced amount from the Local Program's funds.
- Local **Programs** are not permitted to open credit cards, debit cards, bank savings, checking accounts, certificates of deposits (CDs), investments, or endowments.
- Funds must be forwarded to the Accredited Program for deposit upon receipt. Thank you letters must be sent to all donors.
- Personal expenditures are not permitted from Local Program 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 \$2,500.00 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.
- 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 **Local Programs** who receive and spend funds in the name of Special Olympics will have an in-house account with SOWI. **Local Programs** 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 / **Local Programs with In-House Accounts** section.

**Local Programs** are included in the SOWI annual financial audit.

## PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL PROGRAM ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

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

1. Make sure the expense is an allowable. 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 and establish a direct. 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- the total amount due.
  - c. Purpose – Please be as detailed in this section as possible. Include names, dates, locations, and reason for purchase.
  - d. Local Program Number – ALWAYS include your Local Program number.
  - e. Local Program Manager Approval and Witness- the witness cannot be a family member of the manager and must be a member of the Local Program 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 – included is 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 bi-weekly. Invoices are scheduled to be paid the week following receipt into the State Office. There may be times when it will take additional time to process payments.
  8. Monthly Financial Statements will be available on the Local Program 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.

## SOWI Allowable Expenses

### Allowable Expenses

- Uniforms for athletes
- Snacks & meals for athletes and coaches
- Costs associated with athlete training or competition
- Volunteer mileage reimbursed at the current IRS charitable rate
- Gift cards for a reasonable amount to show volunteer appreciation (make sure to list the name of the recipient) – not to exceed \$25.00 in value
- Bus rental
- Purchase of sporting equipment used during training for Special Olympics events
- Costs associated with recruiting new athletes or increasing athlete participation
- Costs associated with promoting Special Olympics in your community
- Reasonable fundraising expenses (concessions, candy sales, t-shirt sales, wreathes, etc.)
- Office supplies such as postage or paper
- Storage for sporting equipment
- Professional training fees (please have recipient fill out *IRS W9 Form*)
- First aid / medical supplies
- Laptop/computer and software – Not to exceed \$1000.00
- Banquets/Local Program part - Average cost should not exceed \$20.00 per athlete. (If athlete and/or family and friends are charged, this is tax able and proper form completed to).

\*Any item with a purchase value \$1000.00 or greater will require the prior approval of the SOWI Sr. Director of Field Services Office

\*All items that have a purchased price of \$2500.00 or greater are considered asset and SOWI needs to be notified for insurance and tax asset inventory tracking.

### Non-Allowable Expenses

- Cash donations (memorials or cash gifts - SOWI permits nominal memorials for athletes & coaches )
- Gasoline purchases (unless refueling rented vehicle to transport athletes to Special Olympics event)
- Gift cards purchased to put gas in volunteers personal vehicles

- Cell phone service or land line phone service
- Loans
- Vehicle purchases
- Stock purchases
- Salaries or stipends for any Local Program position

## 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 Program. A few examples of some of the established Special Olympics fundraising events that **Local Programs** could take part in are the Law Enforcement Torch Run<sup>®</sup>, Polar Bear Plunges, Plane Pulls, and Over the Edge.

Local **Programs** 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 Local Programs 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 Local Program 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 *Local Program 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 Local Program will need by working with the Local Program's manager and treasurer to develop a budget. Find resources on how to create a budget on the Local Program 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 Local Program is a Class A volunteer with no financial restrictions.

#### *Promote Your Local Program 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 Local Programs 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.
  - 20% of money raised by an Local Program team stays with the Local Program.
- **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 20% of the money stays with the Local Program.
- **Big Red Raffle**, August-November
  - Athletes can participate in this event.
  - Raffle Tickets are sold directly for \$5.00 per ticket
  - 20% of money raised by an Local Program team stays with the Local Program.

### 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 Local Program can organize a Polar Plunge event, but can participate in the Regional Plunges to raise money for the Local Program.

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, Local Programs 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 Local Program. You can review the *Local Program 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 Local Program can be created using a template available on the Local Program 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 Local Program 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?"*

## 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 Local Program, 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 reviewed and updated quarterly. Please respect the following existing relationships by contacting the State Office or Regional office before contacting the sponsor. In turn, if a Local Program 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.*

This is a living document and the link to its location is can be found on the SOWI website:

The list is located on the SOWI website backend where access is allowed only to those approved via username and password. Once there go to Agency Management/Tools & Resources/Agency Information. The document has two tabs. One tab – Protected Contact List references those companies that are protected by either the local program and/or SOWI. This is a living document so additions and subtraction of names can occur quarterly and updated to this location.

The second tab is the updated no contact list.

## FUNDRAISING POLICIES

### Fundraising Project Application Form

Any project or event must be approved in advance by SOWI. Fundraising PreEvent Notification) must be completed and sent to your Regional office 30-90 days before the project/event is held. Submitting this form ensures your 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.

The link can be found at <https://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/get-involved/host-a-fundraiser/>

### *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 Local Program 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 Local Program 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).

**Local Programs** 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 Local Program. **Local Programs** 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 Local Program or Special Olympics.

*An Local Program 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 Local Program 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 Local Program 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 Local Program 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™, Unified Leadership, 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 **Local Programs**).

- 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 Program 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/Local Program Geographical Boundaries*

The geographic boundaries of each respective Region/Local Program 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 Local Program’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 **Local Programs** 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 Local Program, before printing tickets you must approve the raffle with the State Office at (800) 552-1324. The State Office will provide the Local Program 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 **Local Programs**. 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 **Local Programs** and do not participate in United Way campaigns. Therefore, a SOWI Local Program cannot be an affiliate or a member Local Program of United Way or have donors earmark United Way donations to their Local Program.

On occasion, SOWI receives unsolicited United Way donations (i.e. someone writes "Special Olympics Wisconsin" or a specific SOWI Local Program 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 Program.

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

## 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 Program Managers 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 Program 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

### Weather Contingency Plans

#### **PLAN A: Events Will Be Delayed**

The Games Management Team and SOWI Staff will monitor weather conditions and determine if conditions are severe enough to halt competition. If competition is delayed, events may be delayed and restarted from the point of stoppage as conditions improve/clear.

- A. Weather/event updates should be posted at Tournament Central or an identified site within the main designated shelter. Make regular announcements if possible.
- B. When events resume, announcements and Tournament Central postings should clearly identify updated times and events.
- C. When event delay reaches 90 minutes, tournament must be moved indoors or be partially or fully cancelled.

#### **PLAN B: Utilize Indoor Facilities (if possible)**

- A. Identify appropriate areas for staging, awards and spectators.
- B. Identify which events shall be held indoors. If executing an event indoors becomes dangerous, confusing, or breaks SOWI rules, the event must be cancelled.
- C. Coordinate shoe cleaning station for athletes/volunteers entering facility for safety of competition and respect of the venue.

#### **PLAN C: Partial or Full Cancellation of Events**

If the weather pattern is not clearing, there are no safe indoor options, or the event delay has surpassed 90 minutes, the event must be cancelled. For advancement of teams after a full or partial event cancellation, see

[Advancement From Cancelled and Partially Completed Competitions.](#)

## Weather Related Competition Delays Procedures (2017)

**Severe Weather** – When Severe Weather is expected, the “Day-of” registration packets should include updated information with procedures in the event that severe weather occurs and directions for evacuation at tournament sites. All Local Programs, athletes and volunteers should know where to go. Make sure a procedure is in place to make announcements in order to facilitate orderly and safe movements to shelters.

SOWI Staff should receive weather updates via radio, TV, internet, etc. and a system of communication should be in place to inform each Games Management Committee of current conditions and warnings. The following weather conditions will merit the following indicated actions.

- Rain with no severe conditions: Competition continues.
- Severe Thunderstorm Watch: Competition continues and weather conditions should be monitored by radio, TV, etc.
- Tornado Watch: Competition continues and weather conditions should be monitored by radio, TV, etc.
- Severe Thunderstorm/Lightning (lightning seen): Evacuation to designated shelters - competition halted. Competition must be halted a minimum of 30 minute following the last sighted lightning strike.
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning: Prepare for potential evacuation to designated/approved shelters. Staff or GMT will make the announcement for evacuation at the first sign that a thunderstorm with lightning is occurring.
- Tornado Warning: Evacuation to designated shelters - competition halted upon notification of the official warning.

**Cold Weather Safety** – There are three main factors to be considered by the Event Organizers regarding cold weather safety: the temperature and related weather conditions, the duration of the exposure, and clothing and other protection against cold weather. These factors together with any other relevant information such as the "wind chill factor" must be taken into consideration when a decision is made regarding cold weather.

- **Precautionary Range:** When temperatures fall below 0°F Raw Temperature or -5° F wind chill. The Event Organizers have the option to cancel the event or to offer an amended event taking precautions to ensure the safety of athletes, coaches, event management and volunteers. Safety precautions may include shortening events, limiting the number of events, providing more shelter for participants, providing more breaks in competition, etc. The decision will be made based on location, temperature, projected forecast, wind direction, availability of shelter, the level of dress of volunteers, GMT, athletes, coaches, etc.
- **Cancellation Range:** When temperatures fall below -10° F Raw Temperature or -20° F Wind Chill measured at the coldest point at the venue, a competition will be postponed or canceled by the Event Organizers until conditions do not fall within the cancelation range.

In the absence of the appropriate equipment to measure and monitor current conditions on site, Event Organizers will utilize the local television, weather.com, weather service, etc. to monitor the current and/ or wind chill and to determine the proper course of action to accommodate participant safety.

**Hot Weather Safety** – The two main factors to consider for hot weather safety are the current temperature and percent relative humidity. Decisions to delay, postpone, reduce, or cancel competition will be based on the

Apparent Heat Index (See chart provided by Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.). In addition, event managers should take into consideration the exposure of participants to full sunlight, or participation on surfaces such as asphalt or sport turf which can increase Apparent Heat Index values by up to 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Safety for all participants (Athlete, coach, volunteer, etc.) is the number one concern when determining course of action to follow.

- **Precautionary Range 1:** Apparent Heat Index 90°-99° Events will proceed with caution. Event Organizers will monitor the situation and take measures to ensure that the safety of the athletes is taken into consideration. These measures may include additional water stations for hydration, allowance of extra rest, etc. At the Event Director's discretion, event organizers may choose to shorten or postpone games depending on additional factors such as access to shade or air conditioning nearby, length of activity, availability of water, amount of rest, condition of participants, etc.
- **Precautionary Range 2:** Apparent Heat Index of 99° -104° F Competition will be reduced to accommodate participant safety. i.e. Length of an official game will be shortened, number of events or games played reduced, etc. Event organizers may choose to cancel or postpone games depending on additional factors such as access to shade or air conditioning nearby, length of activity, availability of water, amount of rest, condition of participants, etc.
- **Cancellation Range:** Apparent Heat Index 105° F or above – Competition will be postponed until the Apparent Heat Index drops below 105°, or if time will not allow a postponement, competition will be cancelled.

In the absence of the appropriate equipment to measure and monitor current conditions on site, Event Organizers will utilize local television, weather.com, weather service, etc to monitor the apparent heat index and to determine the proper course of action to accommodate participant safety.

**Resumption of Activities & Shortened Events** – the Games Management Team and SOWI Staff will determine resumption of competition. Games Management Team should be aware of all weather related policies and precautions of the host facility. The length of games may be reduced in order to complete play in the time allowed.

- **Indoor Team Sports:**
  - Basketball: The most an official game may be reduced to is 4-minute quarters with a 5-minute intermission between halves.
  - Volleyball: The most an official match may be reduced to is best of three games to 15 points.
  - Bocce: If the length of games needs to be reduced, Games Managers shall reduce the time at which no new frame shall begin. An equal number of frames shall be allowed for both teams. If possible, reduce an equal number of games played by each team in order to compensate for tiebreak procedures. The most an official game may be reduced is to 10 points or 25 minutes.
- **Outdoor Team Sports:**
  - Softball: If the length of games needs to be reduced, Games Managers shall reduce the time at which no new inning shall begin. An equal number of innings shall be allowed for both teams. If possible, reduce an equal number of games played by each team in order to compensate for tiebreak procedures. The most an official game may be reduced to is 2 full innings or a 30-minute game.

- If the length of games needs to be reduced, Games Managers shall reduce the length of time allowed for each half of play. Use caution when reducing the 5-minute intermission between halves to insure teams have adequate rest. The most an official game may be reduced is to 7-minute halves.

## Weather Resources

Click on the following links to view Inclement Weather Resources for assistance with weather related delays and cancellations. All documents are in folder located in <Z:\Departments\Sports & Wellness\Sports & Health Programs Operations Manual\Documents linked from Policy Guide>.

- [WIAA Weather Guidelines](#)
- [Temperature Index Charts \(hot and cold\)](#)
- [Wind-chill Index Chart](#)



Additional links for information:

The following documents can be found on the SOWI website under the following link:

<https://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/get-involved/local-program-management/>

- Athlete Registration Forms
  - Athlete Medical Form
  - Athlete Medical Form in Spanish
- Local Program Policies
  - Volunteer Policies Video
  - Class A Policy
    - SOWI Rec Swim Policy
    - SOWI Rec Swimming Memo
    - SOWI Waiver for Athletes not traveling with Official Delegation
  - Concussion Policy
- Codes of Conduct
  - Athlete Code of Conduct
  - Family Code of Conduct
  - Spectator Code of Conduct
  - Disciplinary Steps for all Code of Conduct Violations
- Local Program Forms and Information
  - Account Descriptions
  - How to Grow and Sustain your Local Program
  - Recruitment and Training
  - Budget Template
  - Forms for Duplication
  - In-kind Contribution Receipt
  - Invoice Approval Form
  - Local Program In-house Petty Cash Receipt
  - Petty Cash Ledger
  - Local Program Deposit Ticket
  - Local Program Deposit Ledger Template
  - Sales Tax Reporting Form
  - Money Handling Accountability
  - Sales Tax Certificate
  - Local Program to Local Program Funds Transfer
  - 2021 SOI Incident Report Form
  - Insurance Certificate
  - Request for Certificate of Insurance
  - Proposed Rule Change Form
  - Fundraising PreEvent Notification Form

- Sports Competition Event Grant Application
- Allowable Expenses
  
- Marketing and Communication
  - Communications and Public Relations
    - Social Media Policy
  - Branding
  
- Families