










Special Olympics Georgia

Program Guide

Special Olympics Georgia

www.specialolympicsga.org

Table of Contents

A Letter from our CEO 6
What is a Local Program and what purpose does it serve? 7
Who is this guide for? 8
What does a Local Coordinator need to know? 8
Glossary of Terms 9
Acronyms 10
Part 1: Quick Start Guide to Local Program Management 12

Section 1: Overview 12

Mission & Vision 12
Special Olympics Philosophy 12
Goal 12
Constituents 12
Athletes 13
Participants 13
Unified Sports® Partners 13
Families – Parents & Siblings 13
Volunteers 13
Sports 13
Support Structure 13
Special Olympics, Inc. 13
Special Olympics North America 14
Special Olympics Georgia 14
Area Program 14
Local Program 14
Donor/Sponsor 14

Section 2: Management Team 15

Who do you recruit as Management Team members? 15
Dividing Responsibilities Among Management Team Members 15
What areas will the Management Team focus on? 15
Local Coordinators Shape the Management Team 15
How is the Management Team shaped? 15

Section 3: Functions 18

Registration & Data: Overview 18
Athletes 18
Unified Sports® Partners 18
Volunteers 18
Disqualifiers 20
Submitting Volunteer Registration 20
Eligibility Statement 20
General Statement 20

Age Requirement 20
Identifying a Person with an Intellectual Disability 21
Families 21
Working with Agency/Provider Staff & Volunteers 22

Planning & Meetings 22
Short-Term Planning 22
Medium-Term Planning 22
Long-Term Planning 22
Area & Local Program Management Team Meetings 23
Sample Agenda for an Area and Local Program Management Team Meeting 23

Risk Management: Health & Safety 23
Sports Training & Competition 24
Incident Reporting 24
Insurance 24

Communications & Marketing 25
Planned Communication / Engagement 25

Language Guidelines 26

Branding 26
Uniforms 27

Sports: Training & Competition 29
Sports 29
Locally Popular Sports 30
Sports Rules 30

Unified Sports® 30

Sports Training & Practice 31

Levels of Competition 31
Criteria for Advancement 32

Other Sport Opportunities 32
Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) 32
Individual Skills and Modified Lead-Up Skills 33
Special Olympics Young Athletes™ 33

Recruitment & Training 33
Volunteers 33
Coaches 35
Head Coach 35
Assistant Coach 35
Sports Volunteer 36
Courses for Continuing Education 36
Athlete Growth 37

Fundraising 38
Additional Fundraising Considerations 38

Finance 39
Oversee & Manage Financial Resources 39
Additional Financial Considerations 40

Athlete Leadership in Action 40
What is Athlete Leadership? 40

Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program 42

Section 1: How to Grow & Sustain Your Local Program 42

Planning for Growth 42
Enhancing Existing Sports 42
Adding Unified Sports® Options to Already Existing Sports 42
Adding New Sports 42

Determining What Opportunities to Offer 43
Young Athletes™ 43
Unify Georgia 43
Youth Activation & Y.L.E.A.D. 43
Healthy Athletes® 44
Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) 44

Section 2: Developing Partnerships 45

What is a successful partnership approach for Local Program development? 45

Prospects 45
Identify Potential Prospects 45
Discover the Key Contact: Gatekeeper vs. Decision-Maker 45
Network Everywhere 45
Get in the Door 45
Persistence Pays Off* 45
The Pitch 46
Partnerships with Families 48

Section 3: Using Technology 49

Volunteer Management 49

Games Management 49

Communications & Marketing 49
Social Media 49

Part 3: Resources 52

Sample Checklists, Tools, and Best Practices 52

Area & Local Program Management Team Position Descriptions 53
Local Coordinator 53
Management Team Chairperson 53
Secretary 53
Volunteer 53
Training 53
Public Relations 53
Competitions 53
Finance 53
Fundraising 53
Athlete 54

Competition – Outdoor Events Checklist 55

Competition – Indoor Events Checklist 56

57

Codes of Conduct 58

Special Olympics Athlete Code of Conduct 58

Special Olympics Coach Code of Conduct 59

Ensure A Positive Experience 59

Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions 59

Quality Service to The Athletes 59

Special Olympics Family Member Code of Conduct 60

Developing an Emergency Management Plan 62

Considerations 62

Each coach is responsible for activating an Emergency Management Plan 62

Crisis Communication Plan 62

Incident Immediate Action Steps Guide 63

Inclement Weather Policies 64

Rain Policy 64

Winter Weather Policy 64

Hot Weather Policy 64

Thunder & Lightning Policy 64



A Letter from our CEO

On behalf of Special Olympics Georgia, I am pleased to provide our Special Olympics Georgia **Program Guide**. This guide is a resource for Local Program leadership, providing the necessary information and tools to manage the Special Olympics Georgia program in each local community.

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

This guide includes:

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

The Special Olympics Georgia Program Guide can serve as a tool to engage new Local Program leadership, providing the Local Coordinator 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.

Our team 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 Georgia movement.

Georgia Milton-Sheats, Special Olympics Georgia CEO







Introduction

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 Special Olympics Georgia. 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/minor league 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 Special Olympics Georgia 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.

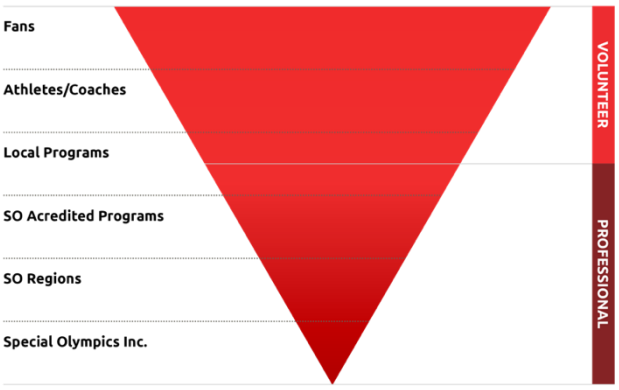
The conduct of the Local Program can either enhance or hurt the Special Olympics brand. When someone calls to learn more, sign up, donate, or volunteer, did they receive a call back in a timely manner? At local Games, did the venue convey that these are authentic sports teams and is the competition taken 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.









Who is this guide for?

The SOGA Program Guide has been created by Special Olympics Georgia to be used as a tool for training Local Program Coordinators and their Management Teams. Whether training a new coordinator or a long-time team member, this customizable guide provides the necessary information to be successful.

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

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

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

What does a Local Coordinator need to know?

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

- Athlete recruitment, registration, and tracking of participation 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, Coach Code of Conduct and a background screening through Verified Volunteers.
- 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 Coordinator** is expected to **engage** key volunteers to assist with the following:

- Compliance with all Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) and SOGA 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

Click here to download the Special Olympics Georgia Local Coordinator Agreement form.

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 Local 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:** Contains pertinent athlete information, including emergency contacts and medical conditions. This form must be completed by a licensed medical examiner before participation in Special Olympics Georgia. This form is also known as the Participation Form and is due every three years.
- **Athlete Release Form:** Each athlete is required to submit a consent form to participate in Special Olympics Georgia.
- **Class A Volunteer:** Any person who volunteers for a Special Olympics Georgia 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 three-eight athletes or teams in a particular sport based on age, gender, and ability level.
- **Global Messenger:** Athlete public speaking 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 Georgia 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® partners. The Local Program is at the grassroots level of the Special Olympics movement.
- **Medical:** See "Athlete Medical Form". Click here to download the Athlete Medical Packet (English). Click here to download the Athlete Medical Packet (Spanish).
- **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
- **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.
- **Area or Local Program:** One of multiple geographical divisions of an Accredited Program (sometimes called an Area, Region, District, Section, etc.) The Area or Local Program is comprised of local teams within a geographical area.
- **Local Coordinator:** The Local Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of all aspects of Special Olympics within a predetermined geographical area of the Accredited Program.
- **Preliminaries:** An event run at the same location as the competition for establishing scores to division athletes for final competition.
- **Unified Sports®:** 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® partners are specifically defined on a sport-by-sport basis.
- **Unify Georgia:** Unify Georgia Programs create social inclusion in schools, Parks & Recreation Departments, YMCA's, YWCA's and the community by building on Special Olympics' values, principles, practices, and experiences.
- **Unified Sports® 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

- **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®:** Law Enforcement Torch Run®
- **MATP:** Motor Activities Training Program
- **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
- **SOGA:** Special Olympics Georgia
- **SONG:** Special Olympics National Games
- **SRAC:** Sports Rules Advisory Committee
- **YAC:** Youth Activation Council
- **YA:** Young Athletes™
- **Y.L.E.A.D.** Youth Leaders Educating others About Disabilities



Part 1: Quick Start Guide to Local Program Management

Section 1: Overview

Mission & Vision

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

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

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

Special Olympics Philosophy

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

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

Goal

The **ultimate goal** of Special Olympics Georgia 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 Georgia, visit http://www.specialolympicsga.org/

Constituents

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

Athletes

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

Participants

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

Unified Sports® Partners

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

Families – Parents & Siblings

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

Volunteers

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

Sports

Training and competition in 26 Olympic-type sports takes place at all levels of the Program. Special Olympics' primary goal is to provide year-round training and competition opportunities, which are directed by qualified coaches. Individuals and teams compete in divisions according to age, gender, and ability. Each Local Program determines the sports and seasons of training and competition. Prior to each sport-specific season, volunteer coaches are trained and certified at clinics conducted by Special Olympics professionals and other sports experts. Officials and event committee members also receive training.

Support Structure

Special Olympics, Inc.

Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) is responsible for the overall leadership and management of all Special Olympics Programs, while providing technical assistance to each of the seven Special Olympics regions across the globe — which supports 5.6 million athletes and Unified Sports® partners in 172 countries. With the support of more than 1 million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and over 111,000 competitions throughout the year. Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport every day around the world. Through programming in sports, health, education, and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by addressing the global injustice, isolation, intolerance, and inactivity they face.

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

Special Olympics North America

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

Special Olympics Georgia

Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) is an Accredited U.S. Program and is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] charitable organization, incorporated to provide sports training and athletic competition for persons with intellectual disabilities. It is accredited by SOI and is responsible for following the policies and rules established by SOI in its delivery of services. It is known as a "Program" (with a capital "P") of Special Olympics. Special Olympics Georgia (SOGA) was founded in 1970 in conjunction with the Special Olympics movement that was begun in Washington, D.C. in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. In its early years, SOGA was run by volunteers in conjunction with the Georgia State Department of Human Resources. By 1975, Special Olympics Georgia had a staff person who worked with a few hundred athletes and conducted competitions in only a few sports. In over 49 years, SOGA has grown to serve 26,460 active athletes in 180 counties throughout the state. Athletes train year-round for competition in 26 sports, which are patterned after the Olympic Games and are held annually at each organizational level. Over 600 games, meets, and tournaments are held in communities throughout Georgia. Five Statewide events are held annually. They culminate in the Special Olympics World Summer and Winter Games, which alternate every two years.

Area Program

SOGA divides the State into 18 sections, called Area's. Areas are established to provide support, assistance, and competitive opportunities to the Local Programs. In this way, they can better assist Local Programs in their services to athletes, coaches, families, and volunteers of various communities. Each of Area has an active Area Management Team of volunteers that provides assistance with its operations. Click here to view the SOGA Area Map.

Local Program

The Local Program is the direct service unit for athletes and their family members within Special Olympics Georgia. 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® partners. The Local Program is at the grassroots level of the Special Olympics movement.

Donor/Sponsor

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

Section 2: Management Team

A successful Local Coordinator will ensure the sustainability of the Local Program by creating a Management Team of volunteers to provide leadership, administration, and oversight. Each Area and Local Program must be Accredited through Special Olympics Georgia. Click here to download the Special Olympics Georgia Accreditation Packet.

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 agencies (chamber of commerce) and businesses

Dividing Responsibilities Among 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
  - 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 Coordinators 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



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

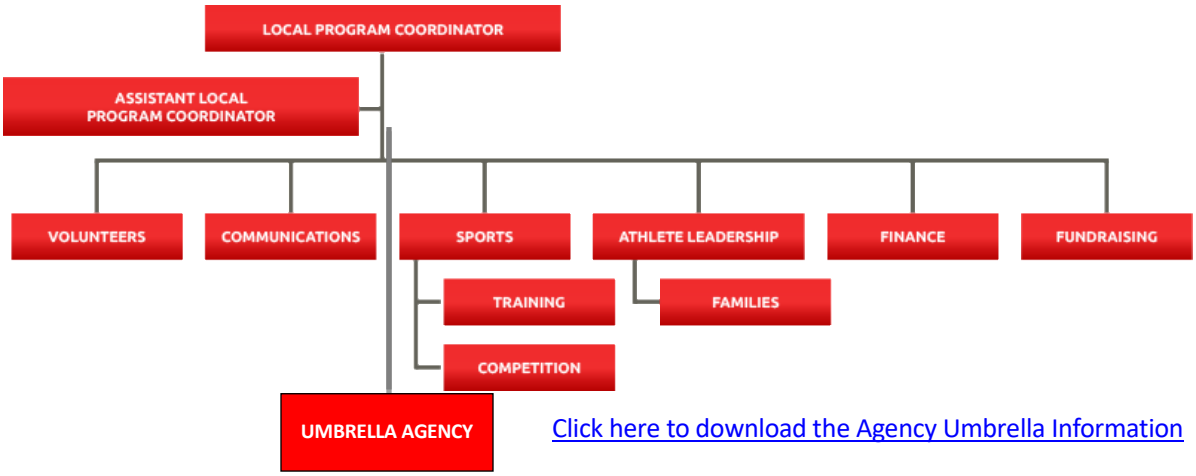
As individual Local Programs grow and expand, the Management Team may add one or more of the following roles and responsibilities based on need so that direct and responsive services are provided:

- **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, 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
- **Unify Georgia – Local Coordinator/School Liaison/Transition Specialist:** Help to recruit programs and/or schools. Provide support as programs and schools continue to grow. Maintain close communication with program and school teams to help athletes and Unified Sports® partners transition to the Local Program (from the school). Click here to download the Transition Brochure.

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



Below is an example of a more fully developed Local Program:



Click here to download the Agency Umbrella Information

Section 3: Functions

In order to run efficiently, all Local Programs rely on several functions for success.

Registration & Data: Overview

Athletes

Special Olympics Georgia aims to create an inclusive environment for all athletes. While no athlete will be turned away based on financial need, there are required steps to become a Special Olympics athlete.

- SOGA athletes must be at least 8-years-old and be a person with an intellectual disability, or a closely related developmental delay to compete. Children ages 2 to 7 years of age can train in the Young Athletes™ program. See General Rules, Article 2: Special Olympics Athletes: http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General_Rules/Article_02.aspx
- Athletes must submit an Athlete Medical Form to SOGA. This health information form must be signed by a medical professional every 3 years. The medical professionals allowed to screen and sign the Medical Form are a licensed Medical Doctor, licensed Chiropractor, Registered Nurse Practitioner, or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine.
- Athletes must submit the Special Olympics Georgia Release Form. Athletes under the age of 18, or who have guardians appointed to them, must have their parent or guardian sign the form. Athletes who are 18 years of age or older without a guardian may sign the Release Form themselves. Click here to download the Athlete Medical Packet (English). Click here to download the Athlete Medical Packet (Spanish).
- No athlete can be excluded due to lack of funds.
  See General Rules, Article 3: Sports Training & Competition:
  http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General_Rules/Article_03.aspx

Unified Sports® Partners

Unified Sports® partners follow a similar registration process as athletes. In order to become a Unified Sports® partner, an individual must complete the Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form, which includes a Special Olympics Release. Click here to download the Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form.

Volunteers

All volunteers must register and receive approval by SOGA. The registration procedure and forms are important tools for ensuring the safety and well-being of all athletes and volunteers. In compliance with Special Olympics, Inc. policy, all U.S. Programs must register and classify volunteers. Click here to download the Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form.

Class A Volunteers

All volunteers must complete a Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form.

What qualifies as a Class A Volunteer? A Class A Volunteer:

- Has regular close, physical contact with athletes
- Is in positions of authority, trust, or supervision with athletes
- Handles cash or other assets of the Local Program
- Chaperones athletes and may stay overnight or transport athletes
- Coaches for programs on the local, area and State level.
- State Games Organizing Committee Members.

- All local and area management team members.
- Unified Sports Partners that train and compete with Special Olympics Georgia Athletes at the local, area and State levels.

Volunteers must complete the Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form, complete a background screening via Verified Volunteers, complete the online Protective Behaviors certification, complete the Coach Code of Conduct form, and complete the online concussion training certification. Click here to download an information page that includes all of the links to the documents listed above.

Volunteers must present a valid photo ID to be copied when the application form is turned in.

All volunteers 18 & older must undergo a background check. A background check is completed by Special Olympics Georgia using Verified Volunteers, that consults a sex offender list. Motor vehicle checks are required of all coaches or if an applicant answers "Yes" to any of the questions regarding suspension or revocation of a driver's license. Verified Volunteers website is http://app.verifiedvolunteers.com . The background screening through Verified Volunteers and SOGA is a cost share. When you create your account and follow all of the directions, in order to submit the background check, you will be given the option of paying $3 or $6. If you choose $3, SOGA will pay the other $3. If you pay $6, you have covered all the cost as a complete donation to SOGA.

All volunteers must receive training and materials regarding their volunteer duties and expectations.

Special Olympics Georgia may make a determination regarding the level of the volunteer's involvement based on the aforementioned background check.

SOGA will notify the volunteer and Local Program if they are unable to assist as a Class A Volunteer.

All volunteer information must be renewed every three years.

All volunteers are expected to follow the rules and standards set forth for volunteers under the direction of the Local Coordinator. Please note that for the safety of the athletes, coaches, and other volunteers, all volunteers will undergo the same screening process as Program Staff.

*Minors under the age of 18 do not need to complete Protective Behaviors Training. However, they do need to provide two, non-family references.

**If under the age of 18, the volunteer does not have to complete a background check until their 18th birthday.

Class B Volunteers

The qualifications for a Class B Volunteer differ from that of a Class A Volunteer. Class B Volunteers include volunteers who participate in one-day, day-of events or walk-on volunteers. Class B Volunteers have more limited contact with athletes. While Class B Volunteers have limited contact with athletes, a strict registration protocol must still be followed.

- Class B Volunteers must sign in and produce a valid photo ID on the day of the event for which they will be volunteering.
- When checking in as a Class B Volunteer, the volunteer must provide the following information:
    - Name
    - Complete Address & Email Address
    - Phone Number
    - Agency Name (if any)

Disqualifiers

In order to ensure the safety of SOGA athletes, Unified Sports® partners, and other volunteers, SOGA is selective with its volunteers. While SOGA invites anyone interested in volunteering for an organization committed to a culture of teamwork and inclusion, there are a number of disqualifiers for potential volunteers.

Disqualifiers for Being a Volunteer Include:

- Child abuse
- Sexual abuse or sexual misconduct between a minor/adult
- Causing a child's death
- Neglect of a child or any other individual for whom the potential volunteer has held responsibility
- Kidnapping
- Manslaughter
- Felony arrest/prosecution
- Arson
- Criminal sexual conduct
- Driving while intoxicated (DWI), driving under the influence (DUI), or comparable offenses; or three or more moving violations within the past three years, disqualifies the volunteer from driving on behalf of Special Olympics for seven years

Submitting Volunteer Registration

All Volunteer Registration Forms must be submitted before athlete training and competition begins. All volunteers listed as coaches, chaperones or listed on a housing form for competition, must have a completed and signed Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile form on file.

Proof of Protective Behaviors, Coach Code of Conduct, Concussion Training and Special Olympics General Orientation training should also be on file prior to athlete training and competition. *

* In the United States, Special Olympics, Inc. requires that all Class A Volunteers complete the Special Olympics General Orientation and Protective Training PRIOR to commencing any volunteer activities with the Local Program. If one is serving as a Special Olympics coach, Concussion Training must also be completed. Click here for the Special Olympics Georgia General Orientation.

Eligibility Statement

See also General Rules, Article 2: Special Olympics Athletes:
http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General_Rules/Article_02.aspx

General Statement

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

Age Requirement

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

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 Georgia if that person satisfies one of the following requirements:

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

Families

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

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

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

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

Working with Agency/Provider Staff & Volunteers

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

Planning & Meetings

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

Short-Term Planning

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

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

Medium-Term Planning

Medium-term planning may look at the coming year.
Considerations include:

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

Long-Term Planning

Long-term planning is essential for the sustainability of the Local Program. Long-term planning typically involves a three to five-year cycle and considers what the team envisions for the Local Program will look like in five years (both programmatically and financially). This plan should be compatible with the direction of Special Olympics Georgia.
In order to establish a successful long-term plan, the following steps should be followed:

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

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

Area & Local Program Management Team Meetings

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

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

Sample Agenda for an Area and Local Program Management Team Meeting

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

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

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

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

Risk Management: Health & Safety

Safety in Special Olympics Georgia 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 SOGA'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 SOGA of this plan.
- Ensure that there is at least a 4:1 ratio of athletes to coach in order to provide proper supervision.
- Be sure to establish that a coach can contact the Local Coordinator in case of an incident.
- Provide the coaches with the number and location of the nearest emergency services.

Incident Reporting

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

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

Following an injury or incident, forms should be promptly sent to Special Olympics Georgia and to American Specialty Insurance if the injury or incident occurs in the U.S. This form can be obtained from SOGA. Click here to download the incident report form.

Insurance

General Liability

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

Automobile Liability

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

NOTE: If the injury is serious or results in death, please contact American Specialty immediately at (800) 566-7941 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and the Special Olympics Georgia CEO.

*Please note that exclusions and additional terms apply to coverages. Please consult with SOGA for more information.

Communications & Marketing

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

For communications on behalf of Special Olympics Georgia and/or the Local Program, please use this Special Olympics Georgia letterhead, or contact SOGA for the template.

Template of Special Olympics Georgia letterhead:

Click here for a Special Olympics Georgia letterhead template.

Planned Communication / Engagement

Internal

What do you need to communicate?

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

When do you communicate?

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

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

How do you communicate?

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

Some great ways to communicate information to others are:

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

*Be mindful of the content posted to social media. Some information is only appropriate for members of closed groups, and not for the general public.

Reminders:

- Keep your list current! Be sure to add new athletes, families, and volunteers when they join a Local Program. Delete those who are inactive.

- Keep your communication lively so that others will continue to be engaged. However, always maintain professionalism — remember that you are representing Special Olympics Georgia!

External

What coverage to expect from Local Media?

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

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

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

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

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

Who's doing the talking?

Each Local Program should have prepared individuals qualified to speak to the media or public about SOGA. Be sure to engage trained Special Olympics Georgia Global Messengers.

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

Language Guidelines

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

View the Special Olympics Disability Language Guidelines:
http://resources.specialolympics.org/News/Resources_Updates/Good_To_Have__The_Special_Olympics_Disability_Language_Guidelines.aspx#.WV1Q4YqQz1L

Branding

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

Uniforms

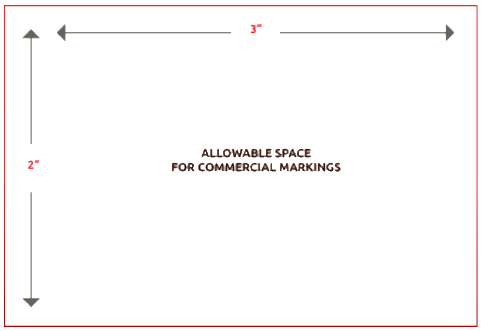
The following information is useful when ordering uniforms.

Commercial Messages on Athlete Uniforms and Competition Numbers

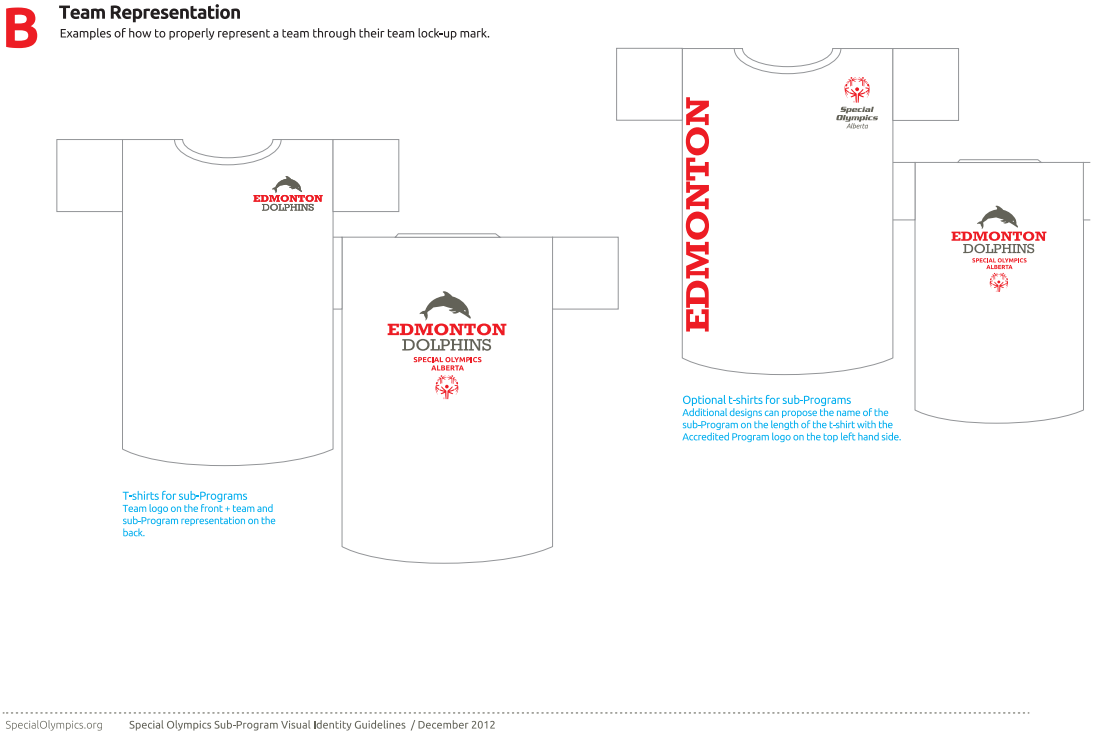
In order to avoid commercial exploitation of persons with intellectual disabilities – per the Special Olympics, Inc. General Rules – no uniforms, bibs, or other signs bearing competition numbers worn by Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports® partners during any competition or during any opening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

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

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



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



Branding for Team Uniforms and T-Shirts

Athlete Program Level Branding – No Sponsorship

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

Lockup for Local Programs, Clubs, or Teams

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

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



Branding for Volunteer Apparel

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

Sports: Training & Competition

As a Local 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 Accredited Local Program with SOGA
- Selection of sport(s) for competition
- Athlete medical forms and release forms completed and submitted
- Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile forms completed and submitted
- Head coach and assistant coaches trained and certified

Sports

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.

Special Olympics Georgia Official sports

Special Olympics Georgia offers the following 26 Official Sports.

Alpine Skiing, Artistic Gymnastics, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Cycling, Equestrian, Flag Football, Floor Hockey, Golf, Ice Figure Skating, Ice Speed Skating, Kayaking, Powerlifting, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Roller Skating, Sailing, Snowboarding, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, and Volleyball.

Locally Popular Sports

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

PLEASE NOTE:

- Locally Popular Sports may require pre-approval from SOI if they have been determined by SOI to be sports that might expose Special Olympics athletes to unreasonable risks to their health or safety.
- No Accredited Program may offer any training or competition in any sport which SOI has classified as a prohibited sport.
- Requests for permission to offer one of these sports must be accompanied by proposed rules and safety standards. SOI has classified the following sports as Locally Popular Sports that require pre-approval:
    - Combative sports
    - Martial arts (other than Judo)
    - Sledding sports
    - Motor sports
    - Aerial sports
    - Shooting
    - Archery

Read Article 3: Sports Training and Competition in the Special Olympics General Rules:
http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/General_Rules/Article_03.aspx

Sports Rules

All rules are in the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules book, located on the SOI website or SOGA website at http://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-rules/. http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/coach/

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.

Please refer to Sports Rules Article 1 (*link above*) for information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition, and Unified Sports®.

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 Training & Practice

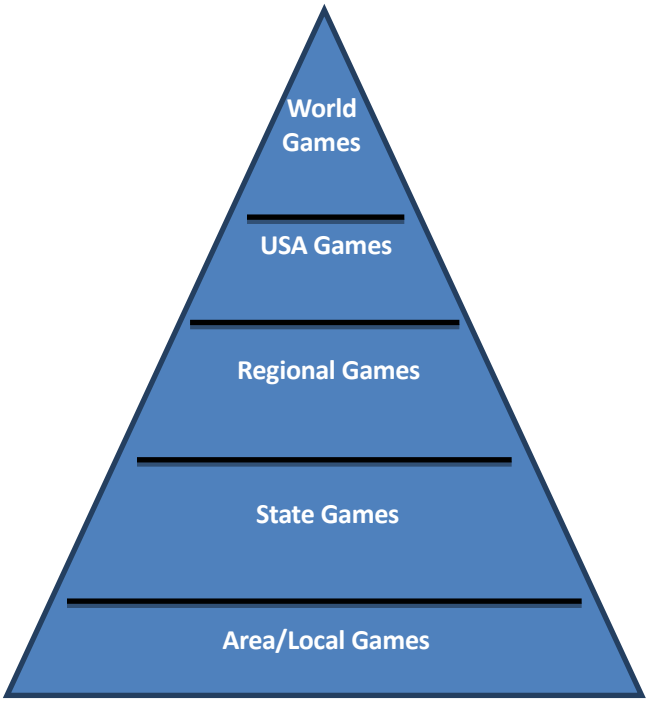
Requirements concerning Special Olympics training may be found in Article 1, Section 3.05:
http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/Sports-Rules-Article-1.pdf

Minimum Standards

The minimum standards for athletes desiring to compete in Special Olympics Georgia 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 USA 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 Area/Local 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 Georgia team, with assistance from the Games Organizing Committees, may establish quotas for the number of athletes and teams participating in Games.

SOGA 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®. The rules and processes to select athletes to the next higher level of competition should be shared with all athletes, families, and volunteers.

Other Sport Opportunities

In addition to traditional sports competition between eligible athletes, Special Olympics provides a variety of competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities.

Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)

http://www.specialolympics.org/motor_activities_training_program.aspx

- Participation for athletes with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities who require the greatest assistance and support
- A non-competitive training program that is individualized for each athlete's existing skill level
- Preparation of athletes through sport-related activities appropriate for their abilities and age
- Recognition for participation and personal bests through MATP ribbons or medals

Individual Skills and Modified Lead-Up Skills

- Athletes with lower ability can participate in lead-up skills for team sports
- Athletes with lower ability can participate in modified individual sport skills

Special Olympics Young Athletes™

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

Recruitment & Training

Volunteers

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

Action Steps for Volunteer Management

- Obtain a list of roles, qualifications, and time needed for volunteers regarding specific activities
- Maintain position descriptions for volunteers and include training duties
- Appoint a volunteer committee to assist with recruiting and training
- Follow up with referrals from SOGA or local volunteer agencies in a timely manner
- Hold interviews as necessary for potential volunteers to determine interests and skills
- Work with the Volunteer Coordinator and Management Team to assign volunteers to appropriate positions
- Arrange in-service training for volunteers as necessary
- Provide a way for volunteers to offer feedback about their experience
- Ensure that volunteers are properly supervised at events
- Ensure that all volunteers complete the appropriate volunteer registration forms
- Create and maintain a current volunteer database

- Ensure that thank you letters, appreciation notes, or activities are provided to thank volunteers
- Update appropriate web pages with volunteer needs

Volunteer Expectations

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

Increasing Volunteers

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

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

Where are potential targets for volunteers?

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

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

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

Coaches

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

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

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

Special Olympics North America Coach Education System Overview

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

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

Types of Special Olympics Volunteer Coach Roles

There are several roles for a volunteer who wishes to become involved in Special Olympics Georgia sports as a **certified** Sports Volunteer/Coach. While some coaches may choose to remain a Sports Volunteer, other coaches may strive to increase their level of certification. Coaches who wish to increase their coaching level can follow the recommended SONA Coach Education System outlined below.

- Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Sports Volunteer (team manager, equipment manager, practice volunteer, chaperone)

Head Coach

- Attend an in-person Coaches Clinic to become certified in the sport(s) desired
- Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course www.asep.com/asep_content/org/SONA.cfm
- Principles of Coaching Course https://wvu.augusoft.net//index.cfm?method=ClassInfo.ClassInformation&int_class_id=35840&int_category_id=0&int_sub_category_id=0&int_catalog_id=0

Assistant Coach

- All Sports Volunteer requirements

- Attend one, in-person Coaches Clinic in the sport(s) desired or be trained by the certified head coach of the sport(s) that you are assisting.
- Coaching Unified Sports Course - If coach will be coaching a unified aspect of the sport

Sports Volunteer

- Volunteer & Unified Partner Profile Form click here to download the form
- Protective Behaviors Training http://resources.specialolympics.org/protective_behaviors.aspx
- Special Olympics General Orientation click here to download the General Orientation
- NFHS Concussion Course www.nfhslearn.com/courses/38000
- Coach Code of Conduct form click here to download the form

Courses for Continuing Education

In order to maintain certification, a coach must update his/her certifications every three years. A non-comprehensive list of courses approved for continuing education include:

- First-aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course (strongly encouraged) www.nfhslearn.com/courses/26
- NFHS - Sports Nutrition www.nfhslearn.com/courses/55000
- NFHS - Sportsmanship Course https://nfhslearn.com/courses/37000/sportsmanship
- Officials Training
- A Coach's Playbook: Introduction to Autism and Instructional Strategies for Coaching: http://specialolympicsva.org/sports/coaches-corner/a-coachs-playbook-autism
- NFHS - Fundamentals of Coaching www.nfhslearn.com/courses/61001
- Special Olympics Georgia has online re-certification tests on the SOGA website, where coaches that have previously been certified in a sport(s) by attending a Coaches Clinic, can become re-certified in that sport(s). Remember, sports certifications expire every three years, so re-certifications are mandatory to continue coaching those sports. The link to the online re-certification tests is http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/coach/

Retaining Coaches

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

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

Athlete Growth

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

Create Links to Local Groups & Agencies Serving Individuals with Disabilities

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

Advertise Locally & Utilize Social Media

- Create website and social media accounts. Some social media platforms to consider are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Advertise upcoming events and include information such as how to join, how to volunteer, and how to donate.
- Local Programs can use relevant hashtags in their social media posts.
- Abide by any program established policies.

Target Local Schools

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

Target Young Athletes™

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

Engage Local College Recreation Departments with Special Olympics College

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

- Special Olympics College Club programs are made up of three core elements: Unified Sports®, Youth Leadership, and opportunities for Full Campus Engagement.
- http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Special_Olympics_College_Clubs.aspxFundraising

Fundraising

Fans and funds are the fuel that service the mission of Special Olympics Georgia. A few examples of some of the established Special Olympics fundraising events that Local Programs could take part in are golf tournaments, icon sales, fun runs and silent auctions. Click here for a detailed listing of fundraising ideas & events.

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 Georgia Development Team. 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:

- **Complete and submit a fundraising authorization form.**
  Before you can begin organizing a fundraising program, it is required by SOGA to complete a fundraising authorization form. This form will ask for basic information, including a simple expense and revenue budget to ensure that net earnings from the fundraising event are worth the Local Program's time and effort. This form should be completed and submitted to SOGA at least 30 days prior to the event. Click here to download the fundraising authorization form.
- **Build a fundraising event plan.**
  Identify the overall fundraising objective – that is, how much you want to raise (gross and net) – and develop a timeline for what needs to be done by when. Be familiar with SOGA's sponsors and any restrictions you have on contacting existing and/or new sponsors.
- **Recruit, train, and manage volunteers.**
  Successful fundraising – particularly special event fundraisers – typically require a group of volunteers assigned to specific tasks. Shared ownership will help to ensure success of the fundraiser. Assign manageable duties to others, train as necessary, monitor progress frequently, make timely adjustments, and have fun!
- **Keep detailed records.**
  Make sure that all expenditures reconcile with bills and receipts, and that all revenue reconciles with items sold (such as auction items, raffle tickets, etc.) Use forms provided by SOGA's office to track expenses and revenue.
- **Deposit funds.**
  After an event, all monies received must be deposited into an authorized Special Olympics Georgia account.
- **Thank supporters and sponsors.**
  Following a fundraiser, be sure that all supporters and sponsors have been thanked for their contributions. Thank you letter templates are available from the SOGA office. Certificates or plaques may be appropriate depending on the circumstances. Keep track of and continue to engage your supporters and sponsors.
- **Complete post-event evaluations.**
  In order to repeat a successful fundraising event, take time to conduct a post event evaluation.

Additional Fundraising Considerations

- All volunteers who handle large sums of money are required to register as Class A Volunteers.
- There are many ways to raise funds. Deciding what is in the Local Program's best interest should be examined closely with SOGA. Some common ways to raise funds include:

  - Sponsorships
  - Grants
  - Employee match programs
  - Letter writing campaigns
  - Memorial gifts
  - Special events (i.e. - raffles, auctions, concessions, dinners, garage sales, walk-a-thons, etc.)
- Consider participating in fundraisers already established by SOGA. Leveraging established fundraisers tend to be more cost-effective and successful than conducting a new event.
- Be aware of fundraising restrictions. Collaborate with SOGA's Director of Development before soliciting business for corporate support in order to avoid multiple asks that may aggravate donor prospects and donor relations.
- Fundraising is done to support Local Program teams. Fundraising for a particular athlete – unless approved by SOGA– is strictly prohibited.
- Fundraisers may serve several purposes. Identify the purpose and match the amount of effort that will go into it based on its purpose. For example, a car wash can bring in great awareness; however, the amount of money it raises may be limited. Determine the value and balance the work put into the fundraising effort.
- Fundraising events are not allowed to have any direct affiliation with tobacco or alcohol products. *
- All contractual agreements that address liability require approval by the SOGA office for them to be considered binding.
- In order for local programs to fundraise in the name of Special Olympics Georgia, their program must be Accredited and have a Special Olympics Georgia authorized bank account. All funds raised by or donated to a Local Program must be deposited into the authorized Special Olympics Accredited Program account within five (5) business days of the event.
- Funds should be sent by check or money order. **Do not mail cash**. Cash may be hand-delivered to the SOGA office. Always request a receipt for cash.
- Value-in-kind donations should be documented with a receipt to the donor. Please click here for the Value-in-kind donation form.

*For more information, see http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/resource-library/fundraising-opportunities-for-special-olympics-programs/

Finance

Accounting for all funds raised and used by your Local Program is important to protect the credibility of Special Olympics Georgia, as well as to ensure compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the United States as a tax-exempt charitable not-for-profit organization. Please visit http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/treasurers/ to view and download all SOGA financial information.

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 and serve as the Treasurer on the Management Team.** Recruit someone who is capable of helping to budget, manage funds, and report finances as required. Notify the SOGA 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 SOGA prior to implementation.

- **Reconcile expenses and revenue.**
  Monthly, reconcile expenses and revenue against the budgets with receipts. SOGA requires monthly reports to ensure that everything is accounted for and balanced.

Additional Financial Considerations

- 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 generally be in good standing with SOGA.
- Local Programs are not permitted to open credit cards, debit cards, or endowments.
- Deposits must be made daily upon receipt of funds. Thank you letters must be sent to all donors.
- Personal expenditures are not permitted from Local Program funds under any circumstance. Direct cash withdrawals and checks written out to "cash" are not permitted. Receipts must be kept on file for all transactions.
- Capital equipment purchases for non-disposable equipment, or items valued at $1,000.00 or more, are considered fixed assets and the property of SOGA. Subsequently, purchase and disposal or sale of fixed assets must be pre-approved by SOGA. Annually, all equipment must be inventoried and reported to SOGA.
- Finance reports must be submitted monthly. Keep all receipts on file and submit all receipts when audited. Keep all value-in-kind receipts and submit them to SOGA as you receive them.
- Consult your SOGA Finance Department for support. They can aid with reporting requirements.

Athlete Leadership in Action

What is Athlete Leadership?

Athlete Leadership empowers 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. As athletes gain the confidence that comes with achievement, they feel empowered and ready to take on new challenges to make use of all their abilities.

There are various roles athletes might serve in the Local Program. Some roles require meeting certain criteria as well as training. A support mentor can assist the athlete to become more successful and have a more meaningful experience.

Athletes can serve Special Olympics Georgia as an Athlete Leader in many roles such as: Local Program Management Team member, Global Messenger, Assistant Coach, Official, Board Member, Committee Member, and more!

Athlete Leadership Resources:

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

QUESTION: Can you name the roles that these athlete leaders are performing?



Answer Key: Top Row (left to right): Georgia Athlete Ambassador at Capitol Hill Day in Washington D.C., Special Olympics Georgia Athlete Global Messenger presentation, Special Olympics Georgia Athlete spokesperson at the Respect Campaign at an Atlanta Braves Game; Bottom Row (left to right): Special Olympics Georgia Athlete and Global Ambassador speaking on-air at an Atlanta radio station, Coach and Athlete embracing during competition.

Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program

Section 1: How to Grow & Sustain Your Local Program

Planning for Growth

As a Local Program grows, it will have to evolve in order to serve athletes in a quality manner. The goal of all programs is that growth be tied to athlete demand and interest. As more athletes join a Local Program, more sport opportunities will need to be added, practice facilities will need to be larger, the budget will have to increase, and the coach and volunteer base will need to grow. For this reason, it is better to plan for growth when launching a Local Program in order to best accommodate the Local Program's needs as they are discovered.

Enhancing Existing Sports

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

Adding Unified Sports® Options to Already Existing Sports

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

Adding New Sports

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

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

Interest

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

Facilities

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

Coaches

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

Other Volunteers

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

Budget

- When determining the Local Program's needs, be sure that the budget provides information about how much revenue the Local Program will need to sustain and/or grow
- All funds must be raised by each individual Local Program – either through fundraising or donations
- Collaboration with SOGA will help determine the Local Program's budget and ensure that the Program is staying within the parameters of the organization

Determining What Opportunities to Offer

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

Young Athletes™

Young Athletes™ is for Special Olympics athletes ages 2-7. It introduces motor skills and basic sports skills to prepare athletes for traditional sports programming of training and competition at age 8.

Young Athletes™ Resources: http://www.specialolympics.org/young-athletes/

Unify Georgia

Special Olympics Georgia's Unify Georgia Program incorporate Special Olympics sports and related activities while enhancing the youth and adults experience and empowering them to become agents of change in their communities. This program is a catalyst for promoting inclusion by bringing together individuals with and without intellectual disabilities in a variety of activities. Local programs that register with SOGA to conduct all components of Unify Georgia can be eligible for a gift card to assist with program costs.

The three components of Unify Georgia are:

- Inclusive Sports Opportunities (Unified Sports®)
- Inclusive Youth & Adult Leadership and Advocacy
- Whole Program Engagement

Unify Georgia Resources: click here to download the Unify Georgia Informational Guide.

Youth Activation & Y.L.E.A.D.

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

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

Youth Activation Information:

http://www.specialolympics.org/Common/Special_Olympics_A_to_Z.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/Sections/What_We_Do/Project_Unify/Youth_and_Schools.aspx

Youth **L**eaders **E**ducating others **A**bout **D**isabilities, or Y-LEAD, is an opportunity for youth from all over the state of Georgia to learn vital leadership skills. Training occurs once a year at the Inspire Youth Forum where those youth chosen to participate in Y-LEAD get to experience team building, leadership training, educational sessions, and participation in activities with Special Olympics Georgia athletes, staff and volunteers. The Youth Forum is geared to give Y-LEAD members the leadership development they need to take back to their local area. It is also designed to give them the opportunity to interact with athletes all through the week and put their leadership training into immediate practice.

Y.L.E.A.D. Information:

Click the link below to learn more about the Youth Forum and download the registration forms.

http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/youth-leadership/

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.

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

Healthy Athletes Resources: http://www.specialolympicsga.org/become-an-athlete/leadership-programs/healthy-athletes/







Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)

MATP provides sport opportunities for athletes who may not be able to compete, or are not ready to compete, in official Special Olympics Sports due to the severity of their disability or skill level. Offering MATP is a great way to recruit and ensure that opportunities are provided for all athletes to get involved. MATP is most often conducted within the agency or school systems where athletes reside.

Motor Activities Training Program Guide: http://www.specialolympics.org/motor_activities_training_program.aspx

Section 2: Developing Partnerships

What is a successful partnership approach for Local Program development?

Throughout North America, Local Programs are forging partnerships in their communities in creative and exciting ways. The following information is provided to help you get started with creating your own partnerships with sponsors, volunteers, clubs and organizations, athletes, and others in your community.

Prospects

Identify Potential Prospects

Who aligns with the Special Olympics mission? It is important to think outside of the box!

- Health and insurance companies
  - **Example:** What opportunities might be available for addressing obesity and Special Olympics athletes?
- Prominent companies in your community
- Potential family connections

Identify the value of your Local Program to a company through goals and objectives that the company is trying to meet.

Discover the Key Contact: Gatekeeper vs. Decision-Maker

- Get past the gatekeeper to the decision maker
- Develop a relationship and focus on getting the decision-maker to an event

Network Everywhere

- Keep an open mind
- Always listen for opportunities; all interactions provide an opportunity to share the Special Olympics mission and identify program needs
- Be Positive, on Point, and Persistent
- Many times, you will have to get through a lot of “No's” before you find the “Yes”
- Be persistent and reframe your ask when necessary
- Develop a YES mentality

Get in the Door

- Look at different levels of engagement; start small
- The first level may be inviting the decision-maker to an event
- Connect the decision-maker with an athlete who can introduce them to Special Olympics Georgia
- In the course of conversation with the decision-maker, find out what is important to them as an individual and to their company
- Do not go into the conversation with a specific agenda; listen and develop their involvement together. Create a partnership.

Persistence Pays Off*

*The following statistics are from the National Sales Executives Association.

- ***2% of first contacts yield results; ask an individual to coffee***

- ***3% of second contacts yield results; take the individual to lunch***
- ***5% of third contacts yield results; invite them to an event such as the Polar Plunge***
- ***10% of fourth contacts yield results; involve the individual in the Polar Plunge as a participant***
- ***80% of 5th-12th contacts yield results; invite their company to become a team in the Polar Plunge***

Successful Steps in Getting Results

The following steps are helpful in getting results as your Local Program works to develop partnerships.

Introduction

- Be observant when meeting with a prospect. For example, look around their office and note any pictures, certificates, honors, and/or banners. It's important to do research when seeking to develop a relationship.
- Get comfortable. Be upfront and state the objective of the visit.
- Help your prospect realize what you bring to the table that can be of value to their company.

Fact Finding

- Uncover their needs. Look for the hot buttons and what is meaningful to them.
- Listen 80% of the time and talk 20% of the time.
- Ask drill-down questions. Usually start with:
    - Why? What value does this provide? How would this impact the program?
- Look and listen for clues about their priorities and dislikes.

Tips

- Assume a "Yes." Use "when" instead of "if."
- Do not assume you know an individual nor company's needs.
- Be persistent. Understand that it takes time to build relationships.
- Align your ask within the framework of the company/organization. For example, when introducing inclusive physical education, demonstrate how it can align with a school's existing programming.
- Avoid giving too much information up front.
- Educate rather than sell. Understand and be able to demonstrate the impact of the activity/program, as well as its importance and value.
- Be honest; do not exaggerate numbers.
- Be flexible and open to change.
- Always enter with an open mind and confidence.
- Understand return on investment (ROI). What do you provide that the prospect needs?
- Be prepared!

The Pitch

Prepare your pitch by creating an outline that fits on an index card. Always start by introducing yourself, the organization, and your title. Be sure to explain that you are there because of the athletes.

Present the value of Special Olympics Georgia – both facts and anecdotal benefits; balance the two. Be sure to share what you feel will have the greatest impact.

Other tips for preparing your pitch:

- Share the vision, mission, and goals of Special Olympics Georgia, as well as the need(s) you are trying to meet.
- Bring an athlete with you so that they may share a personal story and be a part of your pitch.
- Share why ***you*** got involved – your own personal story
- Describe the impact of Special Olympics Georgia on athletes, families, and the community
    - **Example:** Special Olympics Georgia athletes are five times more likely to be employed than their peers with intellectual disabilities that have never participated.
    - Through Special Olympics Georgia, athletes feel accepted, respected, and have the opportunity to become productive citizens.
      See Special Olympics Resource Toolkit for Research and Facts:
      http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Research/Program_Research_Toolkit/Program_Research_Toolkit_Section.aspx
- Outline the impact of their donation in dollars
    - **Example:** 85 cents of every dollar goes directly to supporting athletes.
- Volunteering becomes a team-building activity. This can include volunteering for events, coaching, and/or fundraising opportunities.
- Present an option to get involved in an event or provide year-round sponsorship. See it as a partnership.
- Attend a fundraiser
- Play Unified Sports®
- Provide donation information
- Provide information on how to make a donation
- Direct them to the Special Olympics website www.specialolympicsga.org
- Provide instructions on how they can get information via social media, such as Facebook or Twitter
- Ask if you can check back with them in two weeks
- Set up a meeting or presentation at site
- Have answers ready for possible objections
    - **They already gave:** Offer a team building or volunteer opportunity
    - **Hard times:** Offer in-kind/budget relieving options to offset costs
    - **The budget is complete:** Find out when budget is due and get in 60-90 days before it's due
    - **They are too busy:** Invite to coffee rather than lunch. Convey the need of just 30 minutes and send calendar invite
    - **The ask is too large:** Have a menu of funding options to fit all budgets.
- Quantify their impact. Identify number of athletes, parents, and volunteers impacted
    - **Example:** 3,000 volunteers and families were exposed to your company's support, and that support helped showcase the skills and abilities of our 5,000 athletes
- Prepare for the close of the pitch
- Briefly and concisely summarize the ask. Ask directly if you have their support
- Reaffirm the nature of their commitment
- Negotiate – know your worth and stand by it. If you "give away the farm," there's no incentive for them to increase their support going forward.

- Never over-promise, but always over-deliver
- The Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement can outline roles and responsibilities that are clear and easy to follow. Check with the Special Olympics Georgia for a sample.

The difference between success and failure of one-time support versus ongoing support hinges on making the supporter/sponsor a true partner in your Local Program's success.

How do we make the Supporter or Sponsor a True Partner in the Local Program's Success?

- Develop and deepen the relationship
- Connect with them
- Meet face-to-face
- Engage them with athletes by inviting them to events
- Provide opportunities for athletes to network with other supporters
- Seek their expertise and input as appropriate – involve them!
- Be genuine
- Consistently evolve and reinvent the relationship. Keep it fresh
- Stay true to rights and benefits
- Deliver results promised to the partner
- Provide a thank you and/or small gift that will be meaningful to them
- Call quarterly to touch base and continue to deepen the relationship
- Speak of personal bests – they and athletes can relate to them. This also allows you to deliver the true sports and health impact. This helps them see Special Olympics as a powerful sports organization.
- Challenge their mindsets; educate and enlighten
- Work toward sustainability. Continue to deepen the connection with frequent communication and follow up.

Partnerships with Families

Engaging families in any of the diverse roles in Special Olympics Georgia will strengthen your Local Program. Visit the Special Olympics Resources page on families to explore ways to actively engage athletes' families: http://resources.specialolympics.org/Common/Special_Olympics_A_to_Z.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/Topics/Family_Support_Network/Family_Toolkit.aspx

Learn, practice, and improve. Partnerships propel the Program.





Section 3: Using Technology

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

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

Volunteer Management

Technology and volunteer management systems provide a strong platform for volunteers to learn about Special Olympics Georgia and the various ways to get involved. Technology helps volunteers learn about opportunities, register, and monitor progress towards training. It also provides access to applications and allows them to learn of placements. A strong volunteer management system will retain volunteers and help provide ongoing communication and recognition.

SOGA utilizes the volunteer management software VSys to ensure all of the requirements are met for background checks, applications, and training. VSys allows people to register online and notifies them of deadlines to renew background checks and applications.

A volunteer management system for your Local Program will enable you to keep track of all volunteers and continue to engage them in future events, document volunteer hours, and share important details of volunteer opportunities.

Creating an online presence for volunteer opportunities, and streamlining the process for volunteers to register, will increase the numbers of people engaging in Special Olympics Georgia programs. Communicate with the Senior Volunteer & Program Manager for SOGA to assess what opportunities are available for the Local Program to work collaboratively.

Games Management

Each Local Program is encouraged to use a Games Management System (GMS) to maintain data and performance records on all athletes. This system is also essential to the divisioning process so that athletes are entered into the appropriate division, which ensures that they are competitive and results in the most positive experience at all levels.

The official SOI website provides a resource on the use of the GMS. It contains training videos, downloads, and tips: http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Games/GMS/GMS_Learning_Center.aspx

Communications & Marketing

Social Media

Social media can be a powerful and cost-effective way to reach a broad audience.

What is Social Media?

What defines and constitutes social media is constantly evolving and changing. Social media is a form of communication that is comprised of platforms that allow for the two-way sharing of information. Information shared on social media includes text posts, photos, audio, and visual media. Social media is comprised of multiple platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and more.

Social Media Policy

It is important to have guidelines when using social media within the Local Program. Discuss this with SOGA to obtain their policy. Share this information with the Local Program athletes, coaches, families, and volunteers.

Using Social Media

> ***Special Olympics uses social media as a way to connect with current and potential athletes, coaches, donors, volunteers, parents, and the general public. Social media can be used to promote awareness of the Local Program.***

Helpful Social Media Guidelines

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

Your personal and professional life could overlap when what is shared becomes part of the public domain and may reflect on the author personally and/or professionally. Remember, even after being deleted, comments and posts continue to live online in archival systems.

Using All Social Media Platforms (Including Personal Use)

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

Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of Special Olympics Georgia. Individual bloggers and webmasters may be held accountable for the information that they publish on their sites if it is illegal, defamatory, copyrighted, etc.

Delete any profane or derogatory comments on your personal social media pages. Always report posts that you feel are threatening, harassing, or inappropriate.

Respect the privacy of others. Do not publish or tag photos of others without their permission. Avoid publishing someone's last name, school, or place of employment on social media if you do not have their permission. It is important to note that what you publish may be subject to public disclosure in legal proceedings.

Using Social Media Internally

- You should only make a social media account in the name of a Special Olympics Local Program with approval from SOGA.
- All Special Olympics Facebook pages should include a member from Special Olympics Georgia as an administrator.
- If someone asks you a question outside of your expertise on social media, direct the person to the proper resource. Do not act as a spokesperson.
- Refer all requests for acknowledgement or comment to SOGA.
- Social media is highly visual. Sharing information, photos, and videos is commonplace.
- Remember that organizational policies regarding the use of photos and images apply online as well as in print.

Representing the Special Olympics Georgia Brand Online

- At no point should Special Olympics Georgia Local Program accounts be used for the purpose of expressing personal beliefs or opinions. Keep your personal views separate.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a distinction between your personal identity and the identity you represent on behalf of Special Olympics Georgia.
- Do not comment anonymously, conceal, or misrepresent your identity in your online activities.

- Do not use the Special Olympics Georgia name or logo to promote or endorse any product, religion, cause, political party, or candidate.
- When instances of misinformation occur in social media posts or comments, respond with facts and data.
- Avoid arguments and confrontations online. If you see a comment that would warrant an official response from Special Olympics Georgia, contact the CEO of Special Olympics Georgia.
- Use the Special Olympics logo in accordance with branding guidelines set forth in the SOI Branding Standards online: http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/brand-awareness-and-communication/branding/brand-guidelines/Brand-Identity-Guidelines.pdf
- Monitor your social media accounts on a daily basis to look for inappropriate posts and to respond to questions and comments as needed – remember, social media is a dialogue, not a one-way communication.



Part 3: Resources

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

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

Sample Checklists, Tools, and Best Practices

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

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



Area & Local Program Management Team Position Descriptions

Local Coordinator

The Local Coordinator is responsible for providing strategic leadership and managerial responsibilities for the Local Program. The Local Program Coordinator plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates programs and services for the athletes in their Local Program in accordance with established policies to achieve the goals, objectives, standards, and mission of Special Olympics Georgia. The completion of responsibilities will be performed by the Local Coordinator in conjunction with Management Team members who have been empowered to lead and complete the specific functions outlined below. SOGA prefers that Local Coordinators not serve on Area or Local Management Teams, so that their work load is not overwhelming. However, if a Local Coordinator is in a position on an Area or Local Management Team, they can only serve as either the Competition, Training, or Family Chairperson. Click here for the Local Coordinator Agreement.

Management Team Chairperson

The Chairperson oversees the organization of regular meetings, projects, etc. for the Management Team in a specified geographical are. The Chairperson is the liaison to the SOGA state office and staff. Click here for the Chairperson Job Description.

Secretary

The Secretary is the communication link among the Management Team Members, the Local Coordinator, and the SOGA state office and staff. Click here for the Secretary Job Description.

Volunteer

The Volunteer position establishes and oversees the volunteer management system (recruits, screens, places, trains, supervises, and evaluates); secures a sufficient number of volunteers for staffing all Management Team and coaching needs. Click here for the Volunteer Job Description.

Training

The Training position provides training clinics for coaches, officials, athletes, Games Management Teams, and Competition Directors; and oversees the development of sports programs for all athletes. Click here for the Training Job Description.

Public Relations

The Public Relations position develops and implements on-going activities, materials, and media opportunities to increase community awareness of Special Olympics Georgia. Click here for the Public Relations Job Description.

Competition

The Competition position recruits and manages a team of volunteers for each competitive event conducted to ensure the availability of quality, Olympic-type competitions in a safe environment for Special Olympics Georgia athletes. Click here for the Competition Job Description.

Finance

The Finance position identifies the Program's financial needs and manages funds raised by the local Special Olympics program throughout the year. Click here for the Finance Job Description.

Fundraising

The Fundraising position develops and implements projects and activities throughout the year to raise funds that support the needs and growth of the local Special Olympics Program. **(Reminder: You must have a Special Olympics Georgia Bank Account in order to fundraise in the name of Special Olympics Georgia)** Click here for the Fundraising Job Description.

Athlete

The Athlete position is a registered Special Olympics Georgia athlete from your local Special Olympics program that serves on the Management Team to improve Special Olympics on the Area/Local level by giving valuable input from an athlete's perspective, to give feedback to the Management Team from other Special Olympics athletes concerning any changes that needs to be implemented on a Local/Area level. Click here for the Athlete Job Description.









Competition – Outdoor Events Checklist

FACILITY

Outdoor Competition Area:

1. Repairs, refinishing, or re-sodding maintenance current (e.g. field free of large divots, holes, obstructions or protruding objects)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Competition area is clearly marked and free of trash, debris, or hazardous objects
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Out-of-bounds is clearly marked and free of debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Adequate buffer area between competitors and spectators
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Goal post, goalie cages, baseball bases, etc. installed properly
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Standing water drained or removed from the competition/spectator area
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Competition area contains adequate lighting (if appropriate)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Areas Adjacent to Competition Area:

1. Adequate number of waste containers in place
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Areas are free of slip, trip and fall hazards
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Water fountain areas are free of puddles, algae build up and/or mud
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Barriers to protect spectators are adequate and in good condition
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Restrooms are available and clean
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bleachers:

1. Footers are blocked appropriately and do not move
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Vertical openings between guardrails, footboards and seatboards are less than four inches
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Metal bleachers are free of corrosion and/or damage
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Wood bleachers are free of dry rot and/or damage
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Transitional areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Handrails, seats and supports are securely fastened
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Wood seats and handrails are free from splinters
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Bleachers appear sturdy enough for anticipated loads
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parking Lot:

1. Lighting appears adequate
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Area is free of slip, trip and fall hazards
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Security is present
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

First Aid Equipment Checklist:

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

Access to Emergency Service:

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

Competition – Indoor Events Checklist

COMPETITION AREAS

Competition Area:

1. Competition area is dry and free of obstructions and protruding objects
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Competition area is clearly marked
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Competition area contains adequate lighting
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Out-of-bounds areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Adequate buffer area between competitors and spectators
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Sport apparatus/equipment is secure and in good physical condition
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Non-essential equipment removed from competition area
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Emergency exits are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Locker/Shower Rooms:

1. Locker/shower room appears sanitary (e.g. free of algae buildup, floor is dry)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Water temperature is monitored (e.g. scald protection devices installed in the shower or coach/chaperone assist with water temperature)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Lockers are properly secured and free of laceration exposures
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Housekeeping in locker room area is in order (e.g. clothing and athletic equipment is properly stowed in lockers)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Locker/shower room contains emergency lighting
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Emergency exits are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Shower rooms are free of laceration exposures
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

FACILITY

Facility:

1. Exits and entrances are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Facility contains emergency lighting
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Power supply cords are free of frayed wires and do not create trip and fall hazards (e.g. extension cords taped to the floor)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Access to electrical systems restricted (e.g. individual to monitor the electrical system or keep the system locked at all times)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Interactive attractions properly installed and supervised (e.g. inflatable rides)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Sufficient waste containers are provided
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Water fountain areas are free of puddles, algae buildup and/or mud
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Smoke detectors/heat detectors/fire alarms/fire extinguishers (present and operational)
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Facility is handicap accessible
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parking Lot:

1. Lighting appears adequate
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Area is free of slip, trip and fall hazards
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Security is present
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Walkways, Steps, Stairs, Ramps:

1. Walking areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Walkways contain adequate and operable lighting
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Handrails are securely fastened
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Stairs contain a non-slip material
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Stairs/steps are free of clutter and debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Sufficient waste containers are provided
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Exits and entrances are adequate, unobstructed and clearly marked
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bleachers:

1. Footers are blocked appropriately and do not move
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Vertical openings between guardrails, footboards and seatboards are less than four inches
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Metal bleachers are free of corrosion and/or damage
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Wood bleachers are free of dry rot and/or damage
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Transitional areas are clearly marked and free of obstructions, protruding objects, trash and debris
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Handrails, seats and supports are securely fastened
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Wood seats and handrails are free from splinters
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Bleachers appear sturdy enough for anticipated loads
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

EMERGENCY RESPONSE	
First Aid Equipment Checklist: ☐ List of athletes with special conditions (asthma, diabetes, etc.) ☐ List of emergency phone numbers ☐ Adhesive bandages with gauze pads – assorted sizes ☐ Antiseptic ☐ Arm sling (triangular bandage is fine) ☐ Bandage scissors ☐ Butterfly closures ☐ Cotton swabs ☐ Elastic tape ☐ White tape ☐ Elastic wraps ☐ Emergency blanket ☐ Latex gloves (multiple pairs) ☐ Plastic bags and bags for ice packs ☐ Sterile Water ☐ Resuscitation (CPR) masks/face shield	**Access to Emergency Service:** 1. Telephones and the appropriate emergency numbers are accessible ☐ Yes ☐ No 2. There is adequate passage for emergency vehicles ☐ Yes ☐ No 3. Athletes' medical history forms are on site ☐ Yes ☐ No 4. Athletes' emergency contact lists are on site ☐ Yes ☐ No









Codes of Conduct

The following are sample codes of conduct for Local Programs. Check with SOGA to see which Code of Conduct is currently in use.

Special Olympics Georgia Athlete Code of Conduct

Special Olympics Georgia is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sport and the mission and vision of Special Olympics. All Special Olympics Georgia athletes and Unified Sports® partners agree to the following code:

Sportsmanship

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

Training & Competitions

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

Responsibility for My Actions

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

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my Program or a Games Organizing Committee, up to and including not being allowed to participate.

_____	_____	_____
Name	**Athlete** or **Unified Sports®** **Partner** *Circle Role*	**Date**

Special Olympics Georgia Coach Code of Conduct

Special Olympics Georgia is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all coaches to honor sport and the mission and vision of Special Olympics. All Coaches agree to observe the following:

Respect for Others

- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of athletes, coaches, volunteers, friends, and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, or ability.

Ensure A Positive Experience

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is positive.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage, and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate, and honest with athletes.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminary competitions and finals competition in accordance with the Special Olympics Sports Rules.

Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity, and professionalism to all involved in the sport.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke, or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competition.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and other – including verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed towards athletes in my care.

Quality Service to The Athletes

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluations and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program for individual practices and the season.
- I will keep copies of the medical, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.

_____	_____	_____
Name	**Coach** or **Asst. Coach** *Circle Role*	**Date**

Special Olympics Georgia Family Member Code of Conduct

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

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

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

- I will refrain from coaching my athlete or other athletes during competitions and practices if I am not the assigned coach.

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

- Verbal warning by officials, coaches, and/or sub-Program and SOGA personnel
- Game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file in the Accredited Program Office
- Written warning
- Game forfeit through official or coach
- Season suspension
- Misbehavior Report submitted to Event Director

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

_____ _____

Signature of Family Member **Date**

_____ _____

(Print) **Local Program**

_____

Athlete's Name

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 athletes' 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 athlete can be safely moved.
- The coach should know the athlete and his/her personality to best assess injury versus reaction.
- The coach should remain calm, which will also serve to keep the athlete and others calm.
- The coach should listen to the athlete describe what happened.
- The coach should ask simple, clarifying questions.
- The coach should observe the athlete'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 athlete evaluates airway, breathing, circulation, and consciousness.
- The secondary survey of the athlete evaluates the seriousness of all other injuries once it is determined that the athlete 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 athlete 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 SOGA CEO, COO, and SOGA Games 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 SOGA, 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 athlete 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 athlete/volunteer to the hospital, either stay with the athlete 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 SOGA. Explain the situation. SOGA 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 Coordinator should contact the appropriate family/guardian of athlete/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 SOGA.
- 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 athlete(s)/volunteer(s) involved have all been released to their own supervision or the supervision of others, call SOGA, the appropriate family/guardian of the athlete(s)/volunteer(s), your Local Program Coordinator/Head of Delegation and apprise all of status.
- Complete an Incident Report Form and send to SOGA within 12 hours.

Inclement Weather Policies

Rain Policy

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

Winter Weather Policy

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

Hot Weather Policy

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

Thunder & Lightning Policy

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

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

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





