

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WASHINGTON
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
2016-2017**



***Special
Olympics***
Washington



CONTENTS

SECTION 1- OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON

WELCOME.....	3
ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS.....	4
ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON.....	7

SECTION 2- VOLUNTEERING FUNDAMENTALS

VOLUNTEER TERMS AND CONDITIONS.....	10
VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT.....	11
MY TRS ACCOUNT.....	12

SECTION 3- THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

TYPES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.....	14
BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING.....	16
INTERACTING WITH ATHLETES.....	17

SECTION 4- CONCLUSION

CLOSING STATEMENT.....	22
OTHER RESOURCES.....	23



WELCOME!

Welcome to Special Olympics Washington's Volunteer Program. This resource is here to help you understand Special Olympics Washington, our volunteer expectations and provide tips for volunteering with peoples with intellectual disabilities. We really appreciate your willingness to join the SOWA team in providing sporting, health and family resources to Special Olympics athletes and our community. This guide will not only tell you more about us and our mission, but it will help you put your best foot forward as you embark on your volunteering experience.



SECTION 1- ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS





HISTORY

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation, Special Olympics formed to improve the lives of the intellectually disabled. That year, 1,000 athletes from 26 states and Canada competed in an Olympic type competition at Soldier Field in Chicago. During a time when the intellectually disabled were most often confined to institutions, the organization of Special Olympics began a movement to change the world's view about intellectually disabled people. The Special Olympics movement has grown to over 1.7 million athletes worldwide in 150 countries. Special Olympics Inc. holds the World Winter Games and World Summer Games on an alternate two-year schedule.

Special Olympics Washington incorporated in 1975 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (federal tax identification # 91-0962383) following several years of program presentation by local community volunteer groups. A board of directors that provides guidance to SOWA staff and volunteers governs the organization.

PURPOSE

Volunteers enable Special Olympics to offer sports training and competition to individuals with intellectual disability across the globe. Special Olympics would not exist today – and could not have been created – without the time, energy, dedication and commitment of the more than 700,000 Special Olympics volunteers. The Volunteer Handbook will serve to orient you to the Special Olympics Movement – to its mission, its history, and above all else, its athletes.



MISSION

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disability, 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.

PHILOSOPHY

Special Olympics is founded on the beliefs that:

- People with intellectual disability can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy and benefit from participation in individual and team sports.
- Consistent training is essential to the development of sports skills.
- Competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth.
- Through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disability benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually; families are strengthened; and the community at large, both through participation and observation, comes to understand, respect and accept people with intellectual disability in an environment of equality.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OATH

“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”



ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON

MISSION

Special Olympics Washington **BUILDS** Communities and **LEADS** in Wellness through Sports and Inclusion.

SPORTS

Winter Season— Alpine Skiing, Basketball, Cross Country Skiing, Figure & Speed Skating, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing

Spring Season— Aquatics, Athletics (Track & Field), Long Distance Running/Walking, Cycling, Powerlifting, Soccer, Unified Bocce (recreational)

Summer Season— Golf, Softball, Bocce, Rowing, Tennis

Fall Season — Bowling, Flag Football, Triathlon, Volleyball (recreational)



PROGRAMS

YOUNG ATHLETES

An innovative sports play program, designed for early childhood intervention, seeks to strengthen self-esteem and physical development for children with and without ID ages 2-7 years old.

UNIFIED SPORTS

Athletes with intellectual disabilities pair with persons without disabilities and form teams for training and competition. Unified Sports integrates Special Olympics athletes with other athletes to build self-esteem and increase understanding of persons with different abilities.

HEALTHY ATHLETES

Special Olympics athletes are provided opportunities to improve health and fitness through dental, vision, hearing, feet and general health screenings. Physicians and healthcare professionals provide these services at no cost to Special Olympics athletes at tournaments.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

Athletes are provided the opportunity to expand personal growth — from coaching and officiating to public speaking and volunteering. Athletes are also invited to volunteer at local and state events, regardless of leadership training. Additionally every Area is encouraged to create Athlete Input Councils, giving vital feedback to Special Olympics Washington.



SECTION 2- VOLUNTEERING FUNDAMENTALS





As a volunteer, you are required to go through a few steps to ensure consent to volunteer and make certain that volunteers understand their expectations. All event volunteers must sign that they understand the volunteer terms and conditions and read over the code of conduct. If you are a Class A type volunteer (Coach, Program Director, Chaperone, etc.) you will be required to go through a background check process and additional training.

VOLUNTEER TERMS AND CONDITIONS- Before volunteering, you must read and sign our Terms and Conditions

APPLICANT DISCLOSURE FORM PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 486 – LAWS OF 1987

Pursuant to RCW 9A.73.085, I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of Washington that I have never been convicted of any crimes against persons as defined in Section I of Chapter 486, laws of 1987, and listed as follows: aggravated murder, first or second degree murder; first or second degree kidnapping; first, second, or third degree assault; first, second, or third degree rape; first, second, or third degree statutory rape; first or second degree robbery; first degree arson; first degree burglary; first, second, or third degree manslaughter; first or second degree extortion; indecent liberties; incest; vehicular homicide; first degree promoting prostitution; communication with a minor; unlawful imprisonment; simple assault; sexual exploitation of minors; first or second degree criminal mistreatment.

RELEASE: I give my permission to use my likeness, name, voice, or words in either television, radio, film, newspapers, magazines or other media, or in any form for the purpose of advertising or communicating the purposes and activities of Special Olympics Washington.



VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT- By signing our terms and conditions, you are also agreeing to the code of conduct:

As a Special Olympics volunteer, I agree that while serving as a volunteer, I will:

- Provide for the general welfare, health and safety of all Special Olympics athletes and volunteers.
- Dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- Follow the established rules and guidelines of Special Olympics and/or any agency involved with Special Olympics.
- Report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- Abstain from the consumption or use of all alcohol, tobacco products and illegal substances while involved with any Special Olympics event, competition or training school.
- Not engage in any inappropriate contact or relationship with athletes, volunteers or other participants of Special Olympics



MY TRS ACCOUNT

Special Olympics Washington utilizes the volunteer management system, TRS. All volunteers are able to logon to create an account and manage their volunteer opportunities through their online dashboards. Signup as a coach, program director or mentor through our Class A volunteer portal or sign up as a general volunteer and indicate your volunteering interests. You can also sign up to volunteer at specific events throughout the year in your Volunteer Portal. Once signed up you can add new events and manage your volunteer shifts. You will also receive reminder notifications for your commitments through the program. If you are volunteering as a coach or any other volunteer opportunity that requires a background check, you will be required to fill out your information through the TRS system.

Volunteer!
*Learn more about our
volunteer opportunities*

Special Olympics
Washington

1 Registrant Type 2 Activity Selector 3 Profile 4 Review 5 Confirmation

Thank you for your interest in Volunteering for Special Olympics Washington.

Volunteers are the backbone of the Special Olympics movement. The most valuable traits you can offer are your time and willingness to provide the greatest athletes around the best experience possible.

There are volunteer opportunities ranging from event management and coaching, to fundraising and volunteering on the day of an event. In most cases, experience is not needed and training will be provided no matter what position you select.

Click on "Register Now" in the purple box on the right hand side of the page and you will be directed to a page where you will select your registraton type. If you are over 18 and interested in volunteering for events or receiving more information about other opportunities, please select "SOWA Volunteer"

Already have an account?
Login

Not registered for this event yet?
REGISTER NOW

SOWA Volunteer



SECTION 3- THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE





TYPES OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Event Volunteer- Volunteer at a variety of events during the year! Work with setup, scorekeeping, take down and cheering for athletes. Event volunteers fill a variety of roles that help events go smoothly and ensure that they are executed with quality and support for the athletes.

Volunteer Leadership Opportunities: Class A volunteer types. Require background checks and additional training.

Young Athlete Site Coordinator- Will be trained by SOWA staff and given resources to help implement the Young Athlete program for children with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Coordinator will recruit athlete participants and run the 8 week curriculum.

Area Young Athletes Liaison- As a key member of the Area Leadership team, the Young Athletes Liaison manages the Young Athlete Programs in the Area and interacts with the Director of Program Initiatives to maintain open communication between ongoing YA sites.

Family Area Representative- Responsible for encouraging and coordinating athlete families' involvement in Area activities and connect families to resources in the Special Olympics community.

Area Director- Responsible for providing strategic leadership and managerial responsibilities for the Area Programs. Plans, organizes, directs and coordinates programs and services for the athletes in the Area in accordance with established policies to further achieve the goals, objectives, standards and mission of SOWA.



Administrative Coordinator- Responsible for ensuring that all SOWA paperwork, policies and procedures are adhered to so the athletes may train and compete, coaches can volunteer, and unified partners can participate.

Finance Coordinator- Responsible for all aspects of financial administration for their Area.

Athlete Leadership Liaison- Manages Athlete Leadership Program in the Area and interfaces with the state ALPs support team to bring voices of the athlete into all aspects of SOWA.

Head Coach- Organize, train and inspire a team of athletes in a variety of sports.

Assistant Coach- Help the head coach with practices and competitions.

Games Organizing Committee Member- Become a member of the Games Organizing Committee (GOC) and help manage and organize sporting events across the state.

Sports Resource Team Member- apply to support the growth and expansion of each of the sports offered through Special Olympics Washington. Team up with 5-6 other experts in your sport from around the state to review rules, develop growth plans, and help to make important decisions that will be best for the athletes!



BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Special Olympics Washington volunteers receive a variety of benefits. First and foremost, volunteering is one of the most basic forms of supporting a non-profit that is working to better the lives of peoples with intellectual disabilities through sport and community building. Through volunteering, you are able to directly interact with athletes, encouraging inclusivity and supporting athletic competition.

In addition to ensuring that SOWA events are well executed, volunteers can receive shirts and swag at state events for volunteering. SOWA is able to provide volunteer opportunities to fulfill volunteer service hour requirements of high schools, colleges and community groups.



INTERACTING WITH ATHLETES:

Challenges to Inclusion, Age Appropriate Interactions, People First Language, and Dignity of Risk

As a part of your volunteer experience, you will most likely be interacting with athletes to some extent. This section will address the ways in which peoples with Intellectual Disabilities are discriminated against and give you tools to overcome these ideas and tendencies.



Challenges to inclusion-

Hero Worship- People consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues a profession to be brave or "special" for overcoming a disability. But most people with disabilities do not want accolades for performing day-to-day tasks. The disability is there; the individual has simply learned to adapt by using his or her skills and knowledge, just as everybody adapts to being tall, short, strong, fast, easy-going, bald, blonde, etc.; they are not superhuman because of this adapting.

Pity- People feel sorry for the person with a disability, which tends to lead to patronizing attitudes. People with disabilities generally don't want pity and charity, just equal opportunity to earn their own way and live independently.

The "Spread Effect"- People assume that an individual's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits, or that the total person is impaired. For example, many people shout at people who are blind or don't expect people using wheelchairs to have the intelligence to speak for themselves. Focusing on the person's abilities rather than his or her disability counters this type of prejudice.

Stereotypes- The other side of the spread effect is the positive and negative generalizations people form about disabilities. For example, many believe that all people who are blind are great musicians or have a keener sense of smell and hearing, that all people who use wheelchairs are docile or compete in Paralympics, that all people with developmental disabilities are innocent and sweet-natured, that all people with disabilities are sad and bitter. Aside from diminishing the individual and his or her abilities, such prejudice can set too high or too low a standard for individuals who are merely human.



Age Appropriate Interactions- Treating adults as adults: While interacting with people with ID, it is common for some to view these people as younger and less mature. At SOWA, the average age of our athletes is 28. Here are some ways of making sure you are interacting with athletes appropriately.

Tone- Would you speak to any other same age peer in the same tone? If not, adjust. Baby talk or speaking louder than normal shouldn't be the norm.

Eye Contact- If someone uses a translator or has a helper/teacher/guardian, address the person and look at them instead of the translator or helper.

Physical Interaction- Would you pat another same age peer on the head? Give them a piggy-back ride? If not, adjust.

Introductions- Would you introduce another friend as your "buddy" or refer to him as that "little guy"?

Ask yourself...

Who is an age appropriate partner?

Are we *mentors*? Are we *coaches*? Are we doing *charity*? A partner is a teammate, not a coach. A friend, not a mentor.



Dignity of Risk- The dignity of risk is the idea that coddling people with intellectual disabilities limit them. Many SOWA athletes are able to live independently and are quite self-sufficient. When interacting with athletes, follow these main guidelines:

1. **Offer** to help, don't assume
2. **Ask** for clarification if you don't understand someone's speech
3. **Share** your feelings if someone does or says something inappropriate,
4. Remember: **independence is precious.**



People First Language- People First Language (PFL) represents more respectful, accurate ways of communicating. People with disabilities are not their diagnoses or disabilities; they are people, first. While interacting with athletes at SOWA events, try...

Instead of that; say this:

He's autistic; He has Autism

She's Downs; she has Down Syndrome

They're disabled; they have disabilities

She's in a wheelchair; she uses a wheel chair

She's learning disabled; she has a learning disability

They're normal players; they are players without intellectual disabilities

He's handicapped; he has a physical disability



SECTION 4- CONCLUSION



Closing Statement

Thank you for taking the time to look through Special Olympics Washington's Volunteer Handbook. We really appreciate the time that you are taking to help our organization make the athlete's experience the best that it can be.

Volunteers are the backbone of Special Olympics, supporting the organization as coaches, games management volunteers, as athlete volunteers and as volunteers at general events. No job is too small to not make a difference.

To make your experience the most enjoyable and beneficial, we have provided this resource to give information on our organization and the volunteer program but also on ways to interact with athletes and come into your volunteer experience prepared.

Special Olympics is focused on creating a community around sports and this is not limited to the athletes. Our community is composed of families, children, staff and volunteers. Are you interested in joining our community? Please contact us at volunteer@sowa.org for questions. If you would like to sign up to volunteer, please visit our website at specialolympicswashington.org.

Sincerely,

Special Olympics Washington Staff



Other Resources

Special Olympics Washington Website:

<http://www.specialolympicswashington.org/>

Volunteer:

<http://www.specialolympicswashington.org/volunteer>

Coach: <http://specialolympicswashington.org/become-a-coach/>

Calendar: <http://specialolympicswashington.org/events-calendar/>

Special Olympics Washington North America Website:

<http://www.specialolympics.org/north-america/>

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