



# Wellness Coordinator Manual

Special Olympics Washington



Special Olympics  
**Health**

MADE POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION



CENTERS FOR DISEASE  
CONTROL AND PREVENTION



**KAISER  
PERMANENTE**

OFFICIAL HEALTH PARTNER  
OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON

# Table of Contents

Welcome to your new role!	3
Wellness Coordinator Role Description	4
The Google Drive	5
Healthy Athletes	6
Healthy Communities	7
Fit 5	10
SOfit	11
Unified Fitness Clubs	12
Communicating with Program Leaders	10

## **Welcome to your new role!**

As a Wellness Coordinator, you are responsible for supporting and managing area teams as they are implementing SOWA's Healthy Communities programs. You will also provide support for other health and fitness opportunities in your area, such as nutrition workshops, community health events, fitness classes, or other opportunities that are available in our athlete's communities.

You are expected to participate in monthly meetings with your Area Leadership Team. You will also have quarterly calls with the Director of Health Programs to discuss your area's strengths, challenges, and any needs you may have. This will also be an opportunity for you to brainstorm, compare ideas, and problem solve with other SOWA Wellness Coordinators. Additionally, the Director of Health Programs is available at any time – do not hesitate to reach out with ideas, questions, comments, concerns, funny jokes, etc!

This manual will contain all the information you need to support programs in your area and be a champion for accessible and inclusive health in our athletes' communities. The Wellness Coordinator Google Drive will contain the necessary resources for each program, and it is where program data will be housed.

This is your area, your community, and your fellow community members. As the local point of contact on SOWA's Health Programs team, you have the best perspective to understand what your area needs. Listen to the athletes, coaches, and families that you work with. Take initiative and be creative! You have the freedom to tailor what is being done in your area to be the most impactful and meaningful programming for the individuals living, working, and competing there.

You will have a direct impact on the inclusivity and accessibility of health services, resources, and education for individuals with disabilities in your area. Thank you for taking on this role, and I cannot wait to see what we can accomplish!

Now for the housekeeping – there are a few things you need to do to make this role official:



### Wellness Coordinator Role Description

#### Overview

The Wellness Coordinator plays an essential role in implementing all Healthy Communities programming in the Area. Additionally, this leadership position will direct athletes and family members to needed health services and resources.

**Qualifications:** Experience in a health field and knowledge of healthcare services and resources available for people with disabilities is a plus.

**Supervisor:** Area Director and SOWA Director of Health Programs

#### Principle Duties:

- 1) Behave in a manner consistent with SOWA's core values of mutual respect, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication.
- 2) Serve as the Area liaison regarding health and wellness matters.
- 3) Ensure Program Leaders are implementing health programming as intended during practices and competitions, and provide guidance when necessary.
- 4) Collect athlete health data from Program Leaders and send to state office quarterly.
- 5) Understand both the Healthy Athletes and Healthy Communities programs offered, and represent SOWA at community events as needed.
- 6) Be familiar with health services and resources in the Area, and provide guidance to athletes and family members looking to access health services and resources.
- 7) Meet with the Director of Health Programs on a quarterly basis (Skype, phone, or in person)
- 8) Attend regular Area Leadership Team meetings.

#### Benefits:

Serving as a Wellness Coordinator for an Area allows opportunities for developing marketable job skills, creating personal and professional relationships, directing your own volunteer time, making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

# The Google Drive

As a Wellness Coordinator, you will have access to the Wellness Coordinator Google Drive. Create your SOWA Google account using any type of email address. If you don't already have one, you can create it [here](#). Use this formula: [County or Area] [Wellness] @ gmail.com

Google Drive is convenient because anyone can create an account, AND you can share documents with anyone (Program Leaders) even if they do not have an account. It also allows for real time editing. This means that all of the Wellness Coordinators and SOWA Health Department staff can access and edit documents at the same time, and you will always be using the most up to date version of that document.

[The Google Drive](#) will house all of the necessary documents and information to support Program Leaders and be a great Wellness Coordinator! Spend some time looking through the various resources and documents in the Wellness Coordinator Google Drive. You'll find:

- **Getting Started as a Wellness Coordinator** – tasks to complete to make your role official, as well as the resources you need to get familiar with SOWA and our athletes
- **Folders for each Healthy Communities program available in Washington** – each folder will include the branding, manuals, documents, and information you and Program Leaders need to successfully implement the program
- [SOWA Health Report](#) – data from SOWA's health initiatives. Read this! It's interesting!
- **Healthy Communities Interest Form + Registration Forms** – if you should ever need it, this is what you should send to Program Leaders, athletes, families, etc. if they are interested in starting a Healthy Communities program.
- [Requesting Athlete Input](#) – we value our athletes input, and we do not want to do anything in our organization without getting feedback from our athletes. Use this document to submit questions or ideas that you would like SOWA athletes to discuss. They will send their feedback after they have discussed it.
- **Area Folders** – this is where you will find your personal folder for your area. It is good practice to keep the team specific folders you will find in here, but if you find a better organization process you are welcome to use that. This folder is for you.

Google Drive has so many capabilities, and you can take advantage of as much or as little of that as you would like. Often times a Google search can get you the answers you need when troubleshooting a function of Google drive, but you can also reach out to the Director of Health Programs if you're having any challenges with it!

You will also find important health information housed on the [Area Services Resource Webpage](#) and [SOI Health Resources Webpage](#) that are regularly updated.

## Healthy Athletes

Despite a mistaken belief that people with intellectual disabilities receive the same or better health care than others, they typically receive sub-standard care, or virtually no health care at all. Officially launched in 1997, Special Olympics Healthy Athletes provides athletes free health examinations, health education, and connects athletes to follow-up care as needed. Healthy Athletes also has the world's largest database of health data for people with intellectual disabilities. Through Healthy Athletes, more than 155,000 health care professionals and students across the world have been trained to treat people with intellectual disabilities. Internationally, Special Olympics has provided more than 1.8 million free examinations in over 130 countries.

In Washington, the Healthy Athletes program has grown exponentially since 2016. We now offer seven disciplines at screenings throughout Washington, and SOWA has 33 trained Clinical Directors who lead the screenings. You will not be as involved with this program as a Wellness Coordinator, but you should be familiar with it. Here is more information of the services each discipline provides:



**Fit Feet** offers podiatric screenings to evaluate ankles, feet, lower extremity biomechanics, and proper shoe and sock gear to participating athletes.



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



**Health Promotion** uses health screenings, interactive educational tools and displays, motivational literature and demonstrations to heighten the awareness of athletes, reinforcing the need to improve and maintain an enhanced level of wellness and self-care. It also provides screening for BMI, blood pressure, and bone density.



**Healthy Hearing** offers a free hearing screening designed to ensure proper audiology care for Special Olympics athletes.



**Opening Eyes** The Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes program provides a vision and eye health screening in partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Led by volunteer vision care professionals, Opening Eyes offers prescription eyewear, sunglasses, and sports goggles to Special Olympics athletes.



**Special Smiles** provides comprehensive oral health care information, including free dental screenings and instruction on correct brushing and flossing techniques to participating Special Olympics athletes. This also includes issuing preventative supplies like toothpaste and toothbrushes and fluoride varnish.



**Strong Minds** is an interactive learning activity focused on developing adaptive coping skills. Competition provides a natural opportunity to develop active strategies for maintaining emotional wellness under stress, such as: thinking positive thoughts, releasing stress and connecting with others.

## Healthy Communities

Healthy Communities is a Special Olympics Health program made possible by the Golisano Foundation, Center for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente of Washington. The program addresses the severe health disparities faced by people with intellectual disabilities through immediate and long-term solutions. Through partnerships, fitness and wellness programs, as well as robust Healthy Athletes programming, dozens of Special Olympics locations throughout the world are paving the way for inclusive health.

Special Olympics Washington is working to achieve recognition as an official Healthy Community. A Healthy Community is a location officially recognized by Special Olympics for efforts in creating year-round access to quality health care. Special Olympics has set a goal of having 100 locations recognized as Healthy Communities by 2020.

The Director of Health Programs is responsible for achieving Healthy Community recognition, but the work you do in your area will have a direct impact on our ability to get there. It's important that you understand the organization's goals, as well! To achieve status as a Healthy Community, SOWA needs to meet the following criteria:

1. All health grant requirements met
2. SOWA locally funds at least 50% of Healthy Athletes event costs across all Healthy Athlete events.
3. SOWA offers at least three Healthy Athlete disciplines per year within the selected Healthy Community geographic areas.
4. 70% of athletes who receive referrals at Healthy Athletes within the selected Healthy Community geographic areas have a place to go for follow-up care following a Healthy Athletes examination.
5. SOWA offers health, wellness, or fitness programming outside of Healthy Athletes events for athletes involving partners, coaches, and/or families as appropriate. A minimum of 20% of athletes in the Healthy Community geographic focus areas are enrolled in an ongoing wellness program.
6. Sufficient sustainable resources to achieve the above criteria and deliver the project.

Perhaps the most important part of the Healthy Communities program is also the most challenging – our funders understand that no two communities are identical, therefore no two Healthy Communities programs in those communities will be identical. Each community and area of Washington has the freedom to develop and implement the wellness programming that is most impactful for the individuals of that community.

Later on in this manual, you'll find information on the various programs that can be implemented through the Healthy Communities program. For the duration of our Healthy Communities grant, local SOWA teams and athletes can receive and implement any of the following at no cost at all.

# Implementing Healthy Communities Programs

## Starting a Healthy Communities program

Anyone (team, coach, athlete, family) interested in starting a Healthy Communities program will first fill out the following registration and training form(s):

- [Fit 5 Training & Registration](#)
- [SOfit Training & Registration](#)
- [Unified Fitness Club Training & Registration](#)
- Other / Unsure – general [Healthy Communities Interest Form](#)

The Director of Health Programs will receive their information, mail out the supplies needed to begin the program, and connect the Program Leader to you, the Wellness Coordinator via an introductory email. From that point forward the Wellness Coordinator will be the main point of contact for Program Leaders participating in Healthy Communities.

## Timeline

In general, Healthy Communities programs will last 8 weeks. For more information, see the individual program manuals.

## Data Collection

Each Healthy Communities program will have slightly different data to collect. Teams will be submitting that data to you via a Google spreadsheet or End of Session Form which you will find in your drive.

## Potential program modifications

However, some modifications can be made depending on the situation. Sustainability of these program is one of our biggest goals, so adapting to each Program Leader's needs will be necessary at times! Here are some potential modifications, and more specific detail can be found further on in this manual:

- Timelines – Each Healthy Communities program has a suggested timeline that Program Leaders should follow whenever possible. However, programs may need to shorten or extend a program over the course of a season. We can also adapt programs to run monthly or yearly.
- Program Leader – Program leaders can be Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Trainers, Athlete Leaders, Wellness Coordinators, or anyone else determined to be better suited for the role. More often than not, the Head Coach will be the Program Leader.
- Data Collection – At minimum, Program Leaders should be collecting attendance and data on athlete goals (varies for each Healthy Communities program).

**Cost of Healthy Communities programs, events, resource development: FREE!**



# Healthy Communities Programs



MADE POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION



**KAISER PERMANENTE.**

OFFICIAL HEALTH PARTNER OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS WASHINGTON



## Fit 5:

### **Best in a practice setting:**

This program takes about 15 minutes each week. Program Leaders will receive a program manual and a Coaches Guide, and every athlete receives a Fit 5 Guide and tracker. The Coaches Guide is a tool to use during practice that leads you step by step through the content to cover with your team. Athletes have three simple goals: drink 5 bottles of water a day, eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and exercise 5 times a week. Athletes and teams receive incentives for tracking their goals and submitting that information back to SOWA. Fit 5 can be lead or co-lead by SOWA coaches, athletes, unified partners, or volunteers.



## SOfit:

### **Best in a club or classroom setting:**

This program is a holistic approach to health and fitness that focuses on four kinds of wellness: nutritional, physical, emotional, and social. Each session of SOfit includes educational activities and physical activity. Program Leaders receive a program manual and a curriculum content book, and all athletes receive a SOfit Playbook. SOfit can be lead or co-lead by SOWA coaches, athletes, unified partners, or volunteers.



## Unified Fitness Club

### **Best in a school or community setting:**

Unified Fitness Clubs are year-round physical-activity-based programs that utilize activity trackers and incentives to engage participants of all abilities and activity levels in healthy lifestyles. Clubs typically meet weekly and select activity types that suit the needs of their members. Walking is appropriate for all levels of fitness and is easy to access. Other fitness activities could include hiking, yoga, dancing, cycling and strength training. Participants are motivated to stay active throughout the week by tracking progress on goals, typically with a pedometer or fitness tracker. There is also a discussion component around healthy lifestyle/behaviors. Clubs and participants are recognized and rewarded for reaching certain milestones in steps/distance goals or other fitness accomplishments.



## Walking Club:

### **Best in home, school and community settings:**

Start a Walking Club with your team to stay fit! Challenge yourself and your teammates to be more active and log more miles. The more miles you walk, the more rewards you earn for yourself and your team! Walking Clubs can be lead or co-lead by SOWA coaches, athletes, and Unified Partners. Walking Clubs can take place during a traditional sports season or as a standalone club!

To sign up for a Healthy Communities program, contact: Della Norton / [dnorton@sowa.org](mailto:dnorton@sowa.org)

Or fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/PimLebrV87nMQsTj8>

# Fit 5



Fit 5 provides athletes with the resources, education, and motivation to improve and maintain their health. Once a week for 8 weeks, teams will spend 10-15 minutes discussing the Fit 5 topic of the week.

## Goals of Fit 5:



Drink 5 bottles of water a day



Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day



Exercise 5 times a week

In the state of Washington, over 50% of both youth and adults in Special Olympics are overweight or obese. Fit 5 builds the skills an athlete needs to not only perform at their best on the competition field, but more importantly improve their health and increase their quality of life. Special Olympics Washington athletes will participate in Fit 5 with their team, and the program can be led by a head coach, assistant coach, Team Trainer, or an Athlete Leader. Athletes will track their goals throughout their participation, which Special Olympics Washington will use to recognize athletes for their accomplishments and better understand the needs and strengths of SOWA athletes.

Program Leaders will receive the following documents:

- *Fit 5 Athlete Guides* – (1 per athlete)
- *Lifestyle Surveys* – (one per participant) to be completed by each athlete during the first session of Fit 5 (week 1), and the last session of Fit 5 (week 8)
- *Personal Health Goal Worksheet* – (one per participant) to be completed by athletes during the first session of Fit 5 (week 1)
- *Fit 5 Coaches Guide* – (1 per team)
- *Fit 5 Manual* – (1 per team)

As a Wellness Coordinator, you will also receive hard copies of these documents and they are included in the Google Drive folder.

Program Leaders will be encouraged to reach out to you for any support, questions, ideas, or resources they may need. You have the freedom to be creative with these programs and individualize them to the team's needs, especially because our Healthy Communities Programs are still very new. We are still learning the most effective ways to implement these programs, and we won't know until we try it!

You should read through the Fit 5 Manual to understand how Program Leaders are instructed to implement the program, what data they will be collecting, and the incentives available for participating. You will be the program leader/coach's point of contact and support throughout the Fit 5 program. You will also support the collection of Lifestyle Survey data and prize distribution as applicable.

SOfit is a Unified approach to wellness, with the primary goal of the program being to guide, educate and encourage athletes and partners to maintain a healthy lifestyle through increased physical activity and improved daily nutrition.

SOfit is designed with four pillars of wellness in mind:



**EMOTIONAL**



**PHYSICAL**



**SOCIAL**



**NUTRITIONAL**

Special Olympics Washington athletes will participate in SOfit with their team or class, and the program can be led by a head coach, assistant coach, teacher, or a Unified Pair. Athletes will track their goals throughout their participation, which Special Olympics Washington will use to recognize athletes for their accomplishments and better understand the needs and strengths of SOWA athletes.

Program Leaders will receive the following documents:

- *SOfit Program Leader's Manual – (one per leader)*
- *SOfit Curriculum Content – (one per leader)*
- *SOfit Athlete Playbook – (one per participant) athletes and Unified Partners should bring their playbooks to each session*
- *Lifestyle Surveys – (one per participant) to be completed by each athlete and Unified Partner during the first session of SOfit (week 1), and the last session of SOfit (week 8)*
- *Personal Health Goal Worksheet – (one per participant) to be completed by athletes and Unified Partners during the first session of SOfit (week 1)*

As a Wellness Coordinator, you will also receive hard copies of these documents and they are included in the Google Drive folder.

Program Leaders will be encouraged to reach out to you for any support, questions, ideas, or resources they may need. You have the freedom to be creative with these programs and individualize them to the team's needs, especially because our Healthy Communities Programs are still very new. We are still learning the most effective ways to implement these programs, and we won't know until we try it!

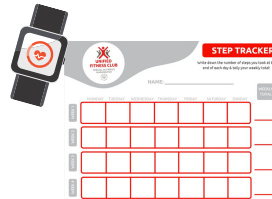
You should read through the SOfit Manual to understand how Program Leaders are instructed to implement the program, what data they will be collecting, and the incentives available for participating. You will be the program leader/coach's point of contact and support throughout the SOfit program. You will also support the collection of Lifestyle Survey data and prize distribution as applicable.

# Unified Fitness Club



Unified Fitness Clubs are year-round physical-activity-based programs that utilize activity trackers and incentives to engage participants of all abilities and activity levels in healthy lifestyles. Clubs typically meet weekly and select activity types that suit the needs of their members. Walking is appropriate for all levels of fitness and is easy to access. Clubs can take place at a Unified School or in a Community setting.

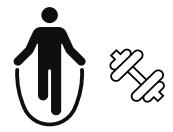
## Unified Fitness Clubs include:



**ACTIVITY TRACKING**



**LESSONS FOR LIFE**



**FITNESS ACTIVITIES**

Special Olympics Washington athletes will participate in Unified Fitness Clubs with their team or class, and the program can be led by a head coach, assistant coach, teacher, or a Unified Pair. Athletes will track their goals throughout their participation, which Special Olympics Washington will use to recognize athletes for their accomplishments and better understand the needs and strengths of SOWA athletes.

Program Leaders will receive the following documents:

- *UFC Program Overview – (one per leader)*
- *Step Trackers – (one per participant)*
- *Wrist Pedometers – (one per participant as requested)*
- *Unified Fitness Kit - (school participants only)*
- *Lifestyle Surveys – (one per participant) To be completed by each athlete and Unified Partner during the first UFC session (week 1), and the last UFC session (week 8).*
- *Personal Health Goal Worksheet – (one per participant) To be completed by athletes and Unified Partners during the first UFC Session (week 1).*

As a Wellness Coordinator, you will also receive hard copies of these documents and they are included in the Google Drive folder.

Program Leaders will be encouraged to reach out to you for any support, questions, ideas, or resources they may need. You have the freedom to be creative with these programs and individualize them to the team's needs, especially because our Healthy Communities Programs are still very new. We are still learning the most effective ways to implement these programs, and we won't know until we try it!

You should read through the Unified Fitness Club Manual to understand how Program Leaders are instructed to implement the program, what data they will be collecting, and the incentives available for participating. You will be the program leader/coach's point of contact and support throughout the Unified Fitness Club program. You will also support the collection of Lifestyle Survey data, step count and prize distribution as applicable.

Unified Fitness Club Registration and Training Form: <https://forms.gle/9tFjBqa1qjLcCSf77>

## Communicating with Program Leaders

Program leaders can be Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Trainers, or Athlete Leaders. More often than not, the Head Coach will be the Program Leader.

One of the most important parts of your role as a Wellness Coordinator will be developing relationships with the Program Leaders in your area. This organization could not be what it is without the dedication of our Program Leaders, and many of them are volunteering their time on top of their own jobs, families, and everything else that pops up in life (just like you!).

At minimum you should be contacting Program Leaders:

- **When you are initially connected!** The Director of Health Programs or your Area Director will connect you to Program Leaders, and you should follow that email with your own introduction. This can be short and sweet, but it will help to reaffirm that you are there to provide support.
- **At Week 4 of the Healthy Communities programs.** The Director of Health Programs will send a check in email to all coaches/program coordinators who are facilitating Healthy Communities Programs across the state. You will be included in this email and can provide support as needed.
- **At Week 8 of the Healthy Communities program.** Program Leaders will be required to submit all data and complete their End of Session Evaluation form at the conclusion of the program and complete a program evaluation.
  - Although we will always suggest teams follow the 8 week timeline for Healthy Communities programs, sometimes that will simply not fit that team's schedule. If program is on an alternative timeline, you will check in with the Program Leader at the conclusion of their program to collect data and evaluations.

### End of Session Evaluation Forms and Lifestyle Survey Submission:

Program Coordinators are required to submit their team's lifestyle survey data and answer some additional questions as part of their End of Session Evaluation. Submission of this form is required before the team can receive their incentives.

- [Fit 5 End of Session Evaluation](#)
- [SOfit End of Session Evaluation](#)
- [Unified Fitness Club End of Session Evaluation](#)

Always make yourself available for feedback, questions, or resources. We are still learning the most effective ways to implement these programs, and we want to be sure Program Leaders have the support they need to do just that.