

# General Orientation

***Special Olympics***  
*Washington*

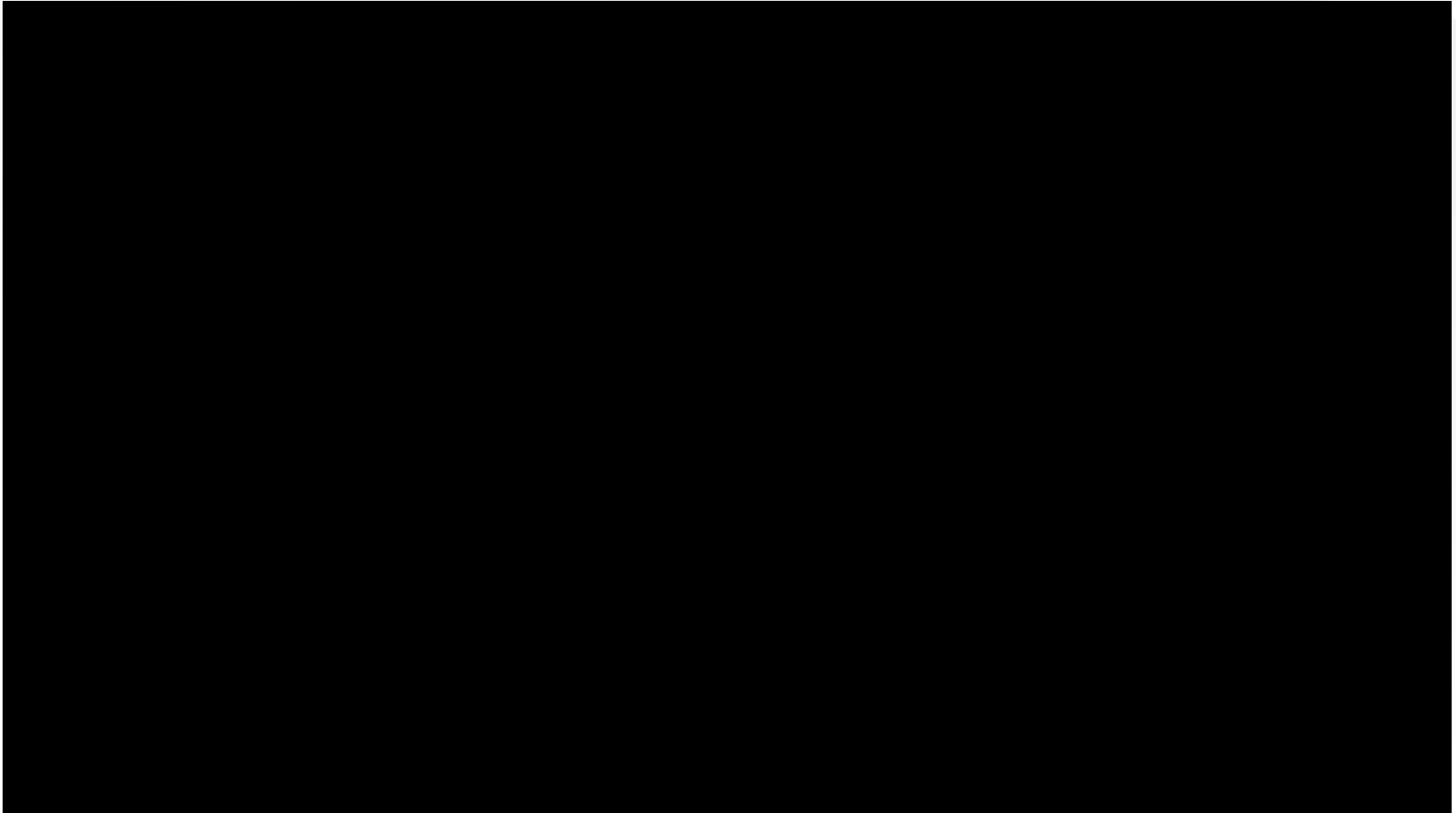


# General Orientation Goals



- Describe the mission, philosophy, vision, and structure of Special Olympics International and Special Olympics Washington
- Cite importance of sports & physical activity
- Identify Special Olympics opportunities & challenges
- Become a dedicated, passionate volunteer and advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities

# Changing the World Through Sport



# History of Special Olympics



- Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in the 1960s
- First International Summer Games held in 1968 in Chicago; 1000 athletes from 26 states and Canada competed
- SOI Mission 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 sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.
- Special Olympics Washington incorporated in 1975, following several years of program presentation by local community volunteer groups



# Mission and Reach

**MISSION:** SOWA BUILDS Communities and LEADS in Wellness through Sports and Inclusion.

Build Community;  
Change Lives

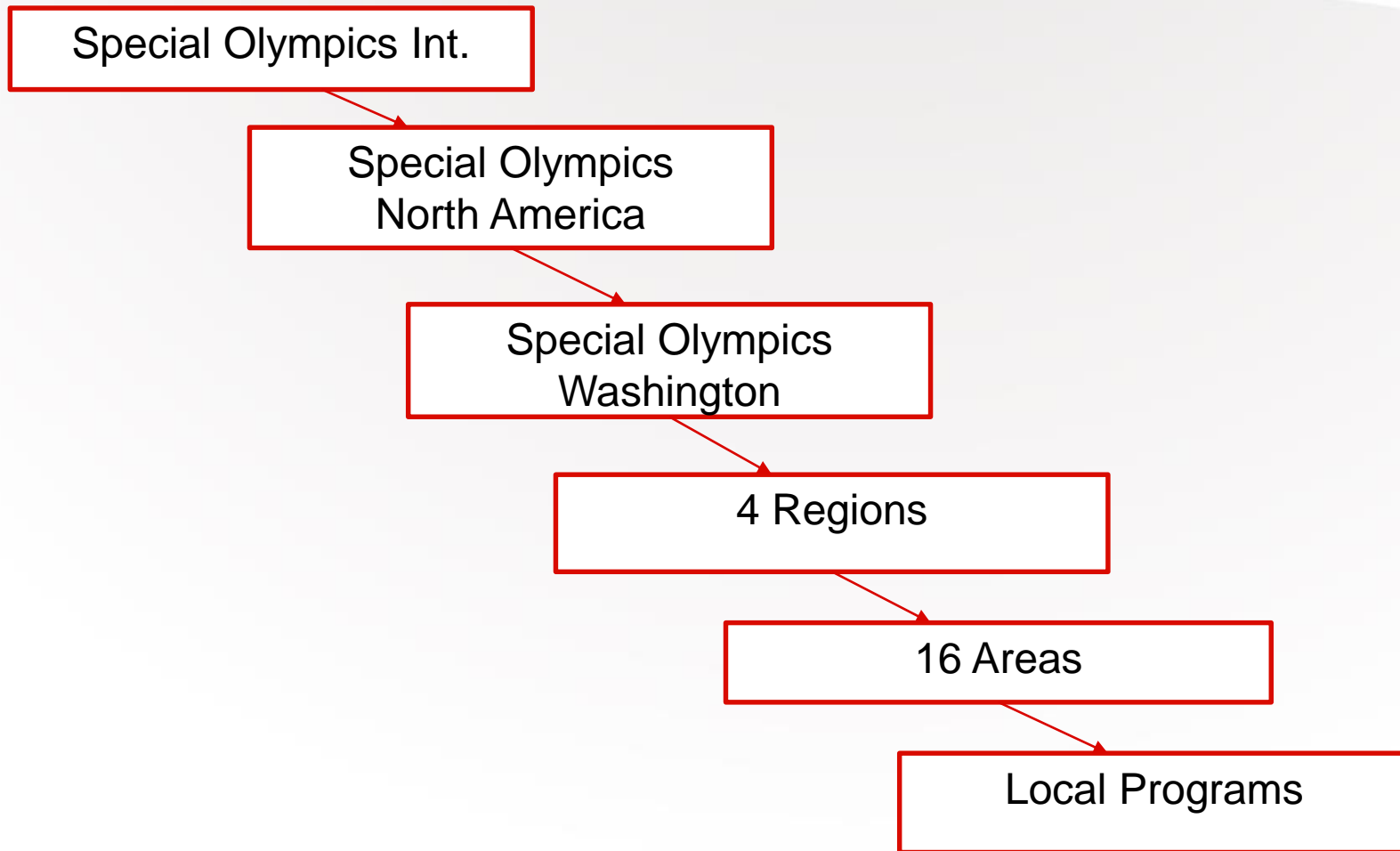
Lead Wellness &  
Fitness

Drive Inclusion &  
Awareness

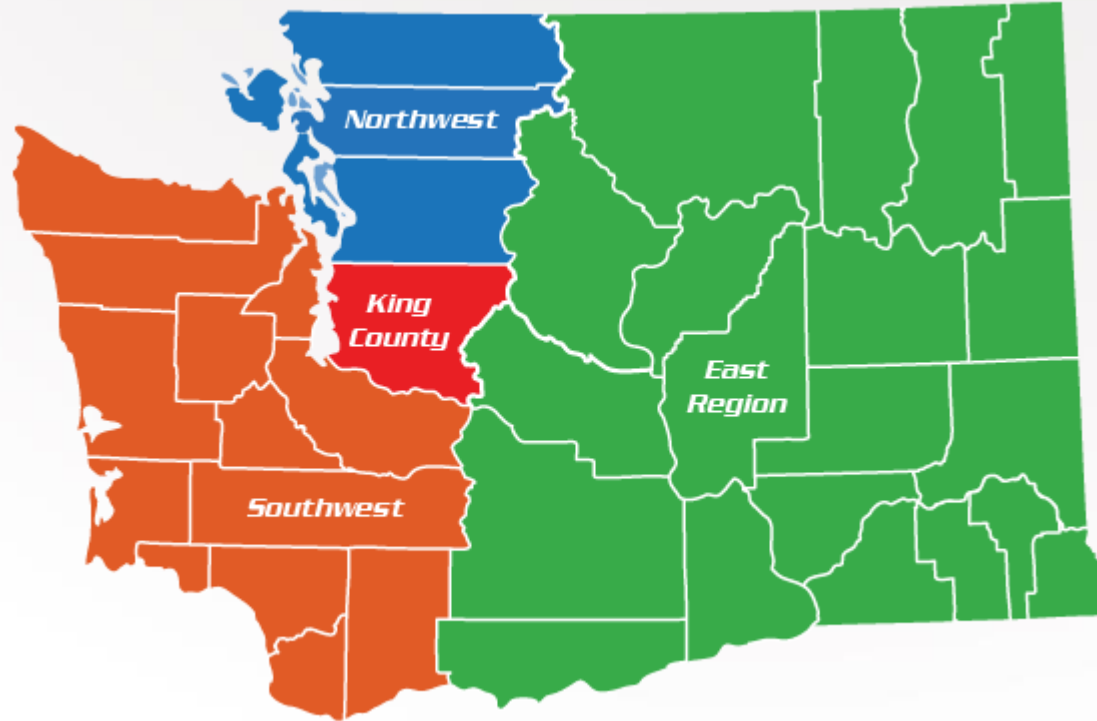
Be a leading  
Sports  
Organization

- 14,000+ athletes in Washington state
- Through sports and training, Special Olympics athletes develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image. Special Olympics athletes are five times more likely to be employed than their peers who do not participate in our athletic training programs.

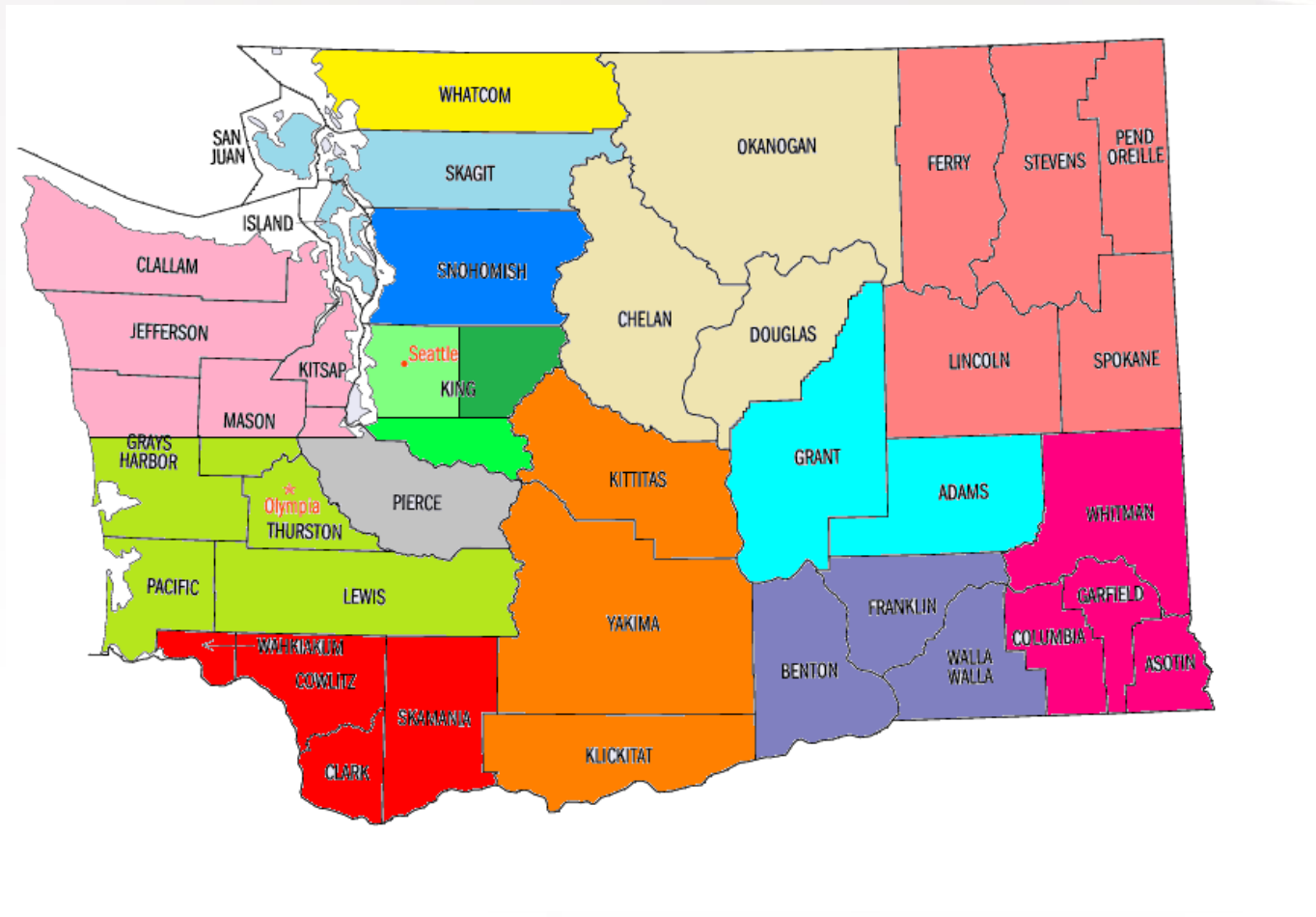
# Special Olympics Structure



# 4 Regions in Washington:



# 16 Areas





# Eligibility



- At least 8 years old (ages 2-7 may participate in Young Athletes program)
- Registered with Special Olympics Washington through completion of Application for Special Olympics Participation (AFP)
- Identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual or a closely related developmental disability



# What Makes Special Olympics Unique?



- Divisioning for equitable competition
- Awards given to all participants
- Sports and programming available to athletes of all ability levels
- Random draw for advancement to national and international levels of competition
- Sports and programs offered at no cost to athletes or their families

# Proven Benefits to Participation



- Improved strength, stamina, and motor skills
- Improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- Increased health and fitness
- Greater independence and participation in community and employment realms

# Sports



- Aquatics
- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Soccer
- Cycling
- Powerlifting
- Softball
- Golf
- Bowling
- Volleyball (recreational)
- Basketball
- Skiing/Snowboarding
- Cross Country Skiing
- Figure Skating
- Speed Skating

Plus Locally Popular Offerings!

# Program Initiatives



- Inclusive Schools
- Healthy Athletes
- Wellness
- Athlete Leadership
- Young Athletes
- Unified Sports
- Families

# Unified Sports



- An inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition.
- Athletes and partners compete alongside each other, each in a meaningful role on the team.

# Unified Schools



- Uses sports and education programs to activate young people to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for all.



# Healthy Athletes



- Provides health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changes the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities, by providing free health screenings to athletes in the following disciplines: Fit Feet (podiatry); FUNFitness (physical therapy); Health Promotion; Healthy Hearing; MedFest (sports physicals); Opening Eyes; and Special Smiles (dentistry).



# Athlete Leadership



- Special Olympics Washington is an athlete-centered organization. Athletes are invited to take part in every aspect of programming, from coaching and fundraising to public speaking and serving on boards. We provide workshops to train athletes for each of these roles. In addition, Area Athlete Input Councils provide a structure for athlete voice to reach the Area Leadership Teams and state office. For more informal opportunities, all athletes are encouraged to volunteer at local events and help with setup/cleanup, awards, greeting, and more.

# Young Athletes



- Children ages 2-7 with and without disabilities are welcomed to the Special Olympics movement and the world of sports through the Young Athletes program – a multi-week program held at schools, community centers, and homes aimed at developing gross motor and social skills.

# Families Program



- Parents, siblings, and other relatives and guardians play an important part in Special Olympics. Special Olympics Washington provides much-needed resources and referrals to families in a variety of areas, from local advocacy groups to education on trusts, independent living, and more. Resource fairs and networking receptions are also provided at state tournaments.

# SO College



SO College functions as an official club on campus and connects college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities through Unified Sports, Youth Leadership, and opportunities for Full Campus Involvement. Together these components can help students work for and with Special Olympics athletes, while building friendships and helping transform school campuses into communities of acceptance and respect.



# How Can I Get Involved As a Volunteer?





# Athlete-Based Volunteer Roles



- Certified Head Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Unified Partner (play on the same team with athletes)
- Mentor for Athlete Leadership Program athletes
- Fitness mentor
- Healthy Athletes Volunteer Medical Professionals
- Wellness coach

# Competition-Based Volunteer Roles



- Games Management Team member\*
  - Sports Resource Team member\*
  - Official/Referee\*
  - Day-of Event Volunteer
- 
- \* Sport specific experience is required

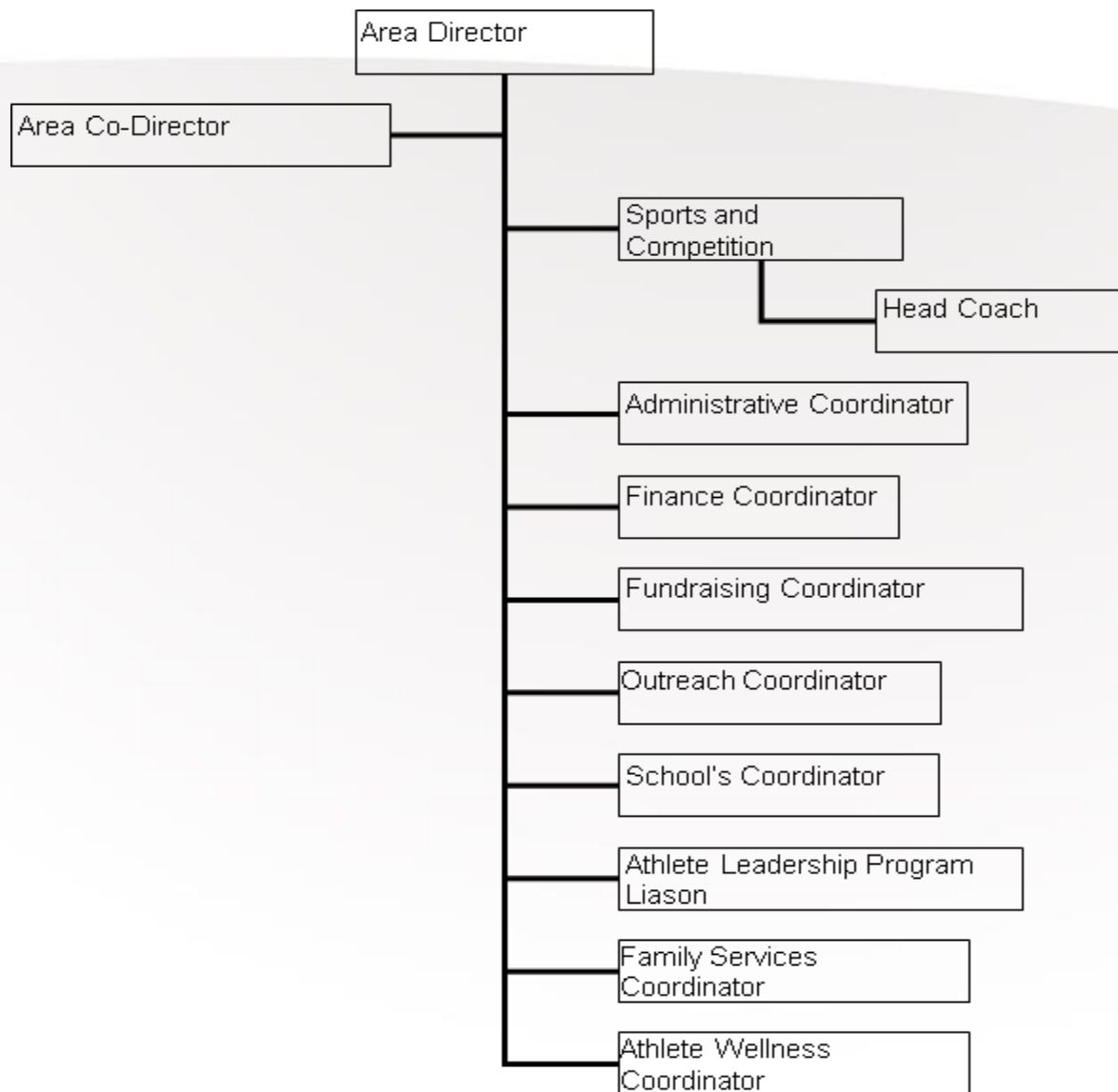
# Organization-Based Volunteer Roles



- Area Leadership Team Member (variety of roles available - see next slide)
- Board Member
- Fund Raising
- Office Support
- Recruit new athletes, families, and volunteers



# Area Leadership Team Positions:



# Putting It All Together...



- TRAINING is the key
- COMPETITION is the means
- Skill, confidence, courage, and joy are the OUTCOMES
- Better preparation for life is the GOAL
- Lifelong skills and increased independence are the RESULTS

This is Your Recruitment Letter...

