

Program Administration Guide

SPECIAL OLYMPICS | MINNESOTA



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SOMN.ORG

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Structure of SOMN

Special Olympics Minnesota (SOMN) is an accredited state Program of Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) based in Washington, D.C. Special Olympics Minnesota is governed by a Board of Directors whose essential functions are policy making, assuring sound management of the organization, increasing public awareness and actively participating in fundraising. Special Olympics Minnesota staff are responsible for carrying out the daily activities and operations of the organization on a statewide level and providing support and direction to volunteers.

Mission of SOMN

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics' athletic, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world.

Values of SOMN

Respect: Valuing and accepting human differences and the unique abilities of all people in our communities.

Accomplishment: Celebrating the fulfillment of individual potential.

Choice: Providing opportunities for self-determination.

Quality: Striving for excellence in all we do.

Partnership: Achieving more than we can alone by collaborating with others.

Integrity: Fostering a culture based on the highest standards of personal and professional principles.

Special Olympics Oath

"Let me win.
But if I cannot win,
Let me be brave in the attempt."

Purpose of Our Program Guide

The following information is intended to serve as a guide for SOMN leadership volunteers, particularly Area and Local Sports Management Team members, Head of Delegations and head coaches. This guide provides general information and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

CALENDAR OF PROGRAM EVENTS

Special Olympics Minnesota Competition Schedules

The following are recommended dates for training and competition based upon the projected state competition schedule. Areas should use this schedule when planning their calendar events for the year. While these dates are projected windows, we realize there may occasionally be exceptions on both levels dependent upon facilities, etc.

WINTER GAMES SPORTS: Alpine, Poly Hockey, Powerlifting, Snowboarding

	Poly Hockey, Powerlifting	Alpine, Snowboarding	Athlete Placement/ Referral Deadline*
AREA	Mid-Jan. to Mid-Feb.	Mid-Jan. to Mid-Feb.	December 1
STATE	Mid to Late Feb.	Early March	

SUMMER GAMES SPORTS: Track & Field, Basketball, Swimming, Gymnastics

	Basketball, Swimming	Track & Field, Gymnas- tics	Athlete Placement/ Referral Deadline*
AREA	March/April	April/May	February 1
REGIONAL BASKETBALL	Dates TBD		
STATE	June	June	

FALL GAMES SPORTS: Bocce, Equestrian, Golf, Softball, Tennis

	Bocce, Equestrian, Golf, Soft- ball	Athlete Placement/ Referral Deadline*
AREA	July/August	June 1
REGIONAL SOFTBALL	Late August for Softball Only	
STATE	September	

UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL

	Unified Flag Football	Athlete Placement/ Referral Deadline*
AREA	September/October	July 15
STATE	Late October	

BOWLING

	Bowling	Athlete Placement/Referral Deadline*
STATE only	November	August 15

*This is the date by which medicals must be complete and referrals made for athletes going through the athlete placement process with the state office.

AREA SPORTS MANAGEMENT

To provide assistance in facilitating local training and providing Area level competition, the state is divided into 13 Area Programs. Each of these areas is managed by a volunteer Area Coordinator and their Area Sports Management Team (ASMT), whose general direction and support is provided by the Program Managers/Associates on staff. Each member of the ASMT, as well as their committee members, assists the Area Coordinators by providing specific functions necessary to the administration and growth of SOMN within their geographical area.

The Area Coordinators, their Area Sports Management Team and Program Managers/Associates act as a first point of contact for local volunteers. For more complete information about Delegations and counties in each Area, please visit the website at somn.org.

Area Map

AREA MAP 2018

AREAS 1, 2 & 3 DANI DRUSE

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE
dani.druse@somn.org | 701.721.5635

Kittson, Mahanomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis

AREAS 7 & 13 EMILY GARNES

PROGRAM MANAGER
emily.garnes@somn.org | 763.270.7179

Benton, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright, Anoka, Chisago, Washington, Ramsey

AREAS 4, 5, 6 & 8 LEAH WOLKOW

PROGRAM MANAGER
leah.wolkow@somn.org | 320.760.7053

Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin, Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, Wadena, Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, Swift, Yellow Medicine, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock

AREAS 9 & 10 ZAK ARMSTRONG

PROGRAM MANAGER
zak.armstrong@somn.org | 763.270.7173

Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan, Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona

AREA 11 SAM LEIDHOLT

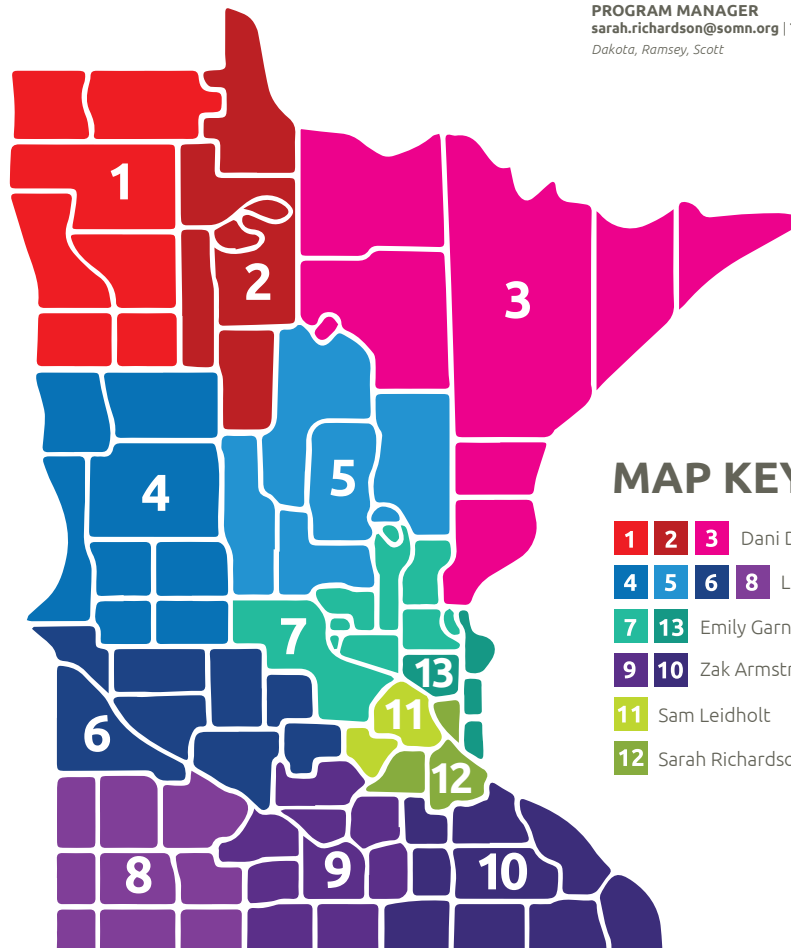
PROGRAM MANAGER
sam.leidholt@somn.org | 763.270.7178

Carver, Hennepin

AREA 12 SARAH RICHARDSON

PROGRAM MANAGER
sarah.richardson@somn.org | 763.270.7175

Dakota, Ramsey, Scott



MAP KEY

1	2	3	Dani Druse	
4	5	6	8	Leah Wolkow
7	13	Emily Garness		
9	10	Zak Armstrong		
11	Sam Leidholt			
12	Sarah Richardson			

AREA COORDINATORS

Area	Administrative Coordinator	Sports Coordinator	
1	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau Large cities include: Badger, Crookston, East Grand Forks, Roseau, Warren
2	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods Large cities include: Bagley, Bemidji
3	Open	Bert Wachlin (C) 218.260.9299 Email: coachbert3@gmail.com	Serving the counties of: Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis Large cities include: Chiselm, Cloquet, Duluth, Grand Rapids
4	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Pope, Otter Tail, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin Large cities include: Alexandria, Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls
5	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, Wadena Large cities include: Brainerd, Cass Lake
6	Cathy Morris (C) 507.430.7804 Email: cmorris@redwoodareaschools.com	Open	Serving the counties of: Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, Swift, Lac Qui Parle, Yellow Medicine Large cities include: Willmar, Montevideo, Litchfield, Hutchinson
7	Audie Gutzwiller (W) 763.441.4616 Email: bagutz@charter.net	Open	Serving the counties of: Benton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Sherburne, Stearns, Wright Large cities include: Elk River, St. Cloud, Buffalo, Cambridge, Mora, Milaca
8	Cathy Morris (C) 507.430.7804 Email: cmorris@redwoodareaschools.com	Rod Saulsgiver Email: Saulsgiver2001@yahoo.com	Serving the counties of: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Rock, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood Large cities include: Marshall, Pipestone, Redwood Falls, Worthington
9	Open	Mike Gottberg (W) 507.245.3027 ext.231 VM: 800.620.9620 Email: mgottberg@stclaircyclones.org	Serving the counties of: Blue Earth, Faribault, Le Sueur, Brown, Martin, Nicollet, Scott, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan Large cities include: Mankato, Waseca, Fairmont, St. Peter, New Ulm
10	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Winona Large cities include: Albert Lea, Austin, Faribault, Northfield, Owatonna, Red Wing, Rochester, Winona
11	Jim Zavodny Email: msp2jmz@aol.com	Open	Serving the counties of: Anoka, Carver, Hennepin Large cities include: Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Chaska, Chanhassen, Eden Prairie, Minneapolis
12	Jason Ehrenberg Email: jtehrenberg@gmail.com	Open	Serving the counties of: Dakota, Ramsey, Washington Large cities include: Apple Valley, Burnsville, Forest Lake, St. Paul, White Bear Lake, Woodbury
13	Open	Open	Serving the counties of: Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis Large cities include: Stillwater, North Branch, Anoka

DELEGATION MANAGEMENT AND COACHING

Special Olympics Minnesota is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose existence and expansion depends upon the dedication of thousands of volunteers who help to promote the program through their schools, social service agencies, recreational programs, corporations, service organizations and community-based programs. Volunteers act as coaches, Unified Partners and chaperones for SOMN athletes, Heads of Delegations, organizers of competitions and special events, sports officials and fundraisers to coordinate various aspects of the program.

A Class A volunteer is a person who has regular, close physical contact with athletes; has a position of authority or supervision (real or apparent); is in a position of trust with athletes; or handles substantial amounts of cash or other assets of the organization. In accordance with SOI's Participant Screening Policy, mandatory background checks will be conducted on all incoming Class A volunteers. Upon entering the Program, all Class A volunteers for SOMN must complete Level I Certification, which includes a Volunteer Application Form, general SOMN orientation, protective behaviors training, concussion awareness training and other important information. Current Class A volunteers will be re-screened every 3 years and will need updated certifications in order to register for competition.

A full copy of the Participant Screening Policy can be found at sommn.org/programguide

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Each volunteer is responsible to know the following information before volunteering in any capacity:

- It is expected that all volunteers engage in conduct which conscientiously maintains respect for **1) the dignity and safety of athletes and other staff/volunteer members; 2) personal and agency owned/designated property/sites; and 3) the laws and standards by which a facility is governed.**
- Athletes older than age 18 are considered to be vulnerable adults protected under the Vulnerable Adult Act by the State of Minnesota. Vulnerable adults are people who because of chemical dependency, intellectual disabilities, mental illness or physical disability cannot help themselves if they are hurt or misused by others. For athletes under age 18, refer to page 25.

Special Olympics Minnesota is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all volunteers to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics volunteers agree to observe the following code:

- I will provide for the general welfare, health and safety of all Special Olympics athletes and volunteers
- I will dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times
- I will follow the established rules and guidelines of Special Olympics and/or agency involved with Special Olympics
- I will not promote religious or political beliefs or preferences while volunteering
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants
- I will not smoke in restricted areas, take illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs while involved with any Special Olympics event, competition or training school
- I will not engage in any inappropriate contact or relationship with athletes, volunteers or other participants of Special Olympics
- I will be respectful when using social media and all other forms of correspondence related to Special Olympics

I understand that the relationship between Special Olympics and volunteers is an “at will” arrangement and it may be terminated at any time without cause by either the volunteer or Special Olympics. Behaviors that conflict with the volunteer code of conduct may result in SOMN declining further participation with SOMN. An Incident Report Form (sommn.org/programguide) should be completed and kept on file for any athlete, volunteer, staff or spectator with whom there are ongoing behavioral or safety concerns, and the form must be completed immediately if it is suspected further disciplinary action may be needed. Copies of Incident Report Forms should be forwarded as soon as completed to the Program Manager/Associate for your Area, and SOMN staff must be involved prior to suspension or release of a volunteer or athlete.

DATING POLICY

Among the Special Olympics movement's highest priorities is the well-being of, and respect for the dignity of, Special Olympics athletes*. The purpose of this document is to make clear Special Olympics policy on volunteers* and staff dating Special Olympics athletes and to protect all participants in the Special Olympics movement, including athletes, coaches and staff, as well as Special Olympics organizations around the world.

Policy

Special Olympics Minnesota prohibits any Special Olympics staff member or volunteer (excluding spouses of athletes and athletes who are Class B volunteers, formerly known as Class C volunteers) from dating or having a sexual relationship with any Special Olympics athlete. In the event that Special Olympics learns of any dating or sexual relationship, we will immediately require either:

1. The staff member or volunteer end his or her association with Special Olympics; or
2. Special Olympics will terminate the association between the staff member or volunteer.

In the case of a Special Olympics athlete who is also a staff member or volunteer, the Special Olympics staff will evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the competing athlete, and if it is determined that there is such a relationship, then apply the above policy in the same manner as the policy is applied to non-athlete staff or volunteers.

Special Olympics respects the right of athletes to have the full range of human relationships available to all human beings. This policy shall not be interpreted as limitation on the rights of athletes, but only as a restriction on Special Olympics staff and volunteers.

*The terms "Special Olympics athlete" and "athlete" refer to persons with intellectual disabilities. The term "volunteer" includes coaches and Unified Partners.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO A LOCAL DELEGATION

Though it is possible to run a Delegation on your own, most soon find they can use some help managing aspects of the team. Special Olympics Minnesota recommends a management approach to coordinating the activities required to ensure a successful local Program. Although details of individual job functions may be determined by each Delegation, the following are general responsibilities of the key volunteers and a sample of how you might divide the workload of managing a Special Olympics Delegation. The following information is designed as a resource to assist SOMN Delegations.

The goal of every local Delegation is to provide quality training and competition opportunities to Special Olympics athletes. The structure through which this is provided varies from Delegation to Delegation. The two common models are a traditional Delegation structure and a Local Sports Management Team (LSMT).

MODEL ONE: TRADITIONAL DELEGATION STRUCTURE

A traditional Delegation structure involves a Head of Delegation and sports-specific head and assistant coaches organizing a Program built around the athletes' interests. This is commonly the structure for Delegations in smaller communities with fewer athletes and sports offerings.

Head of Delegation Requirements & Responsibilities

- Primary contact with the ASMT and SOMN
- Is listed on Delegation Information Form with SOMN
- Responsible for administration of the Delegation which may include athlete forms, games registration, training and competition management, budget/financial accounting, fundraising and public relations
- Recruits and selects coaches for the Delegation

Head Coach Requirements & Responsibilities (sports-specific)

- Must be designated for each sport the Delegation offers.
- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Is required to have a minimum of Level 2 certification for the specific sport in which the individual is designated as head coach. (See the Coaches Certification Program on pages 13-17 for additional information.)
- Responsible for the conduct and well-being of athletes and assistant coaches during training and competition
- Recruit athletes and assess skill levels
- Select sports based on athlete input
- Develop training schedule and conduct practice sessions
- Coach and supervise athletes during competitions
- Ensure safety and well-being of athletes
- Provide first aid as necessary
- Attend coaches meetings
- Maintain medical forms for athletes

Assistant Coach Requirements & Responsibilities

In order to provide for the health and safety of our athletes and provide quality sports training, SOMN recommends that all assistant coaches be at least 16 years of age. Exceptions to this recommendation can be granted by a Delegation's Program Manager/Associate for individuals under the age of 16 who have shown exceptional maturity and responsibility. Exceptions will be evaluated on the individuals ability to fulfill the responsibilities of an assistant coach including providing appropriate training to athletes, assisting in providing a safe environment for the athletes at training and

MODEL ONE: TRADITIONAL DELEGATION STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)

competition, and maintaining an appropriate ratio of adult to youth coaches in meeting the coaches ratios. Athletes who are interested in becoming assistant coaches can learn more by visiting somn.org/athletecoaches/

- Is directly responsible to the head coach
- Is required to have a minimum of Level 1 certification. See the Coaches Certification Program on pages 13-17 for additional information
- Assist with coaching of athletes
- Assist with securing equipment and facilities
- Maintain practice records
- Provide first aid as necessary

MODEL TWO: LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE

A LSMT structure involves a greater number of volunteers in the management of a Delegation, each of whom has a specific responsibility. This is commonly the structure used in larger communities with more athletes and sports offerings and with community-based programs.

Local Sports Management Team Coordinator (HOD) Responsibilities

- Primary contact with the ASMT and SOMN
- Recruit, direct and evaluate a LSMT
- Recruit and select coaches for the Delegation
- Conduct effective LSMT meetings to keep all LSMT members current
- Develop and implement a plan of action for the LSMT that includes a budget

Head & Assistant Coaches

See the job responsibilities outlined under the traditional Delegation structure.

Education Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a two-year training plan that meets the needs of coaches and athletes
- Oversee the implementation of coach certification
- Request needed training schools from Area or competition and training manager
- Review and maintain coach rosters and certification records for accuracy
- Respond to interest for new sport(s) offerings

Families Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain families database
- Identify family members to assist with volunteer needs
- Plan and conduct family orientations
- Represent family interests and provide feedback to LSMT members

MODEL TWO: LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)

Financial Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and monitor annual budget
- Meet report deadlines in accordance with applicable accounting policies and procedures
- Maintain accurate revenue and expense records
- Track in-kind receipts
- Centralized accounting:
 - Audit, approve and submit invoices to State Office for payment
 - Record and submit revenue to the State Office

Fundraising Chair Responsibilities

- Develop communication network with individuals, organizations and corporations for financial support
- Identify, coordinate and conduct fundraising projects (SOMN Delegation Raffle Fundraiser, Polar Plunge Shared Revenue Fundraiser and R-word T-shirt Fundraiser)
- Submit Fundraising Application Forms and Fundraising Report Form to SOMN by appropriate deadlines

Outreach Chair Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a recruitment plan to actively reach new audiences
- Actively recruit athletes for the Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) Global Messenger Program
- Implement ALPs Global Messenger training and provide ongoing maintenance
- Develop and maintain a tracking system for athletes transitioning from high school

Public Relations Chair Responsibilities

- Identify media outlets and maintain media directory
- Work with the State Office communications department to develop a year-round public relations plan that includes the local calendar of events, training and competitions
- Develop rapport with local media, in partnership with the State Office communications staff (State Office staff handles all press release writing and distribution for the State, unless special permission has been granted locally)
- Conform to SOMN logo usage and policies (Use of Logo Application found on somn.org/programguide)

Registration Chair Responsibilities

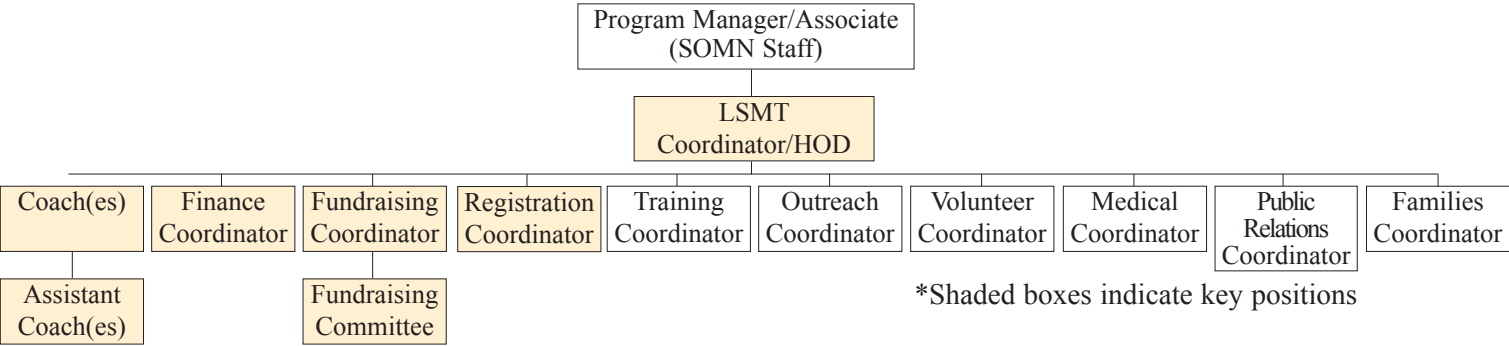
- Provide sports-specific head coach with copies of current medical forms
- Maintain an accurate calendar of deadline dates for competition quotas and completes online registration for Delegations, proof online registrations for accuracy and forward completed registration forms to designated contact by established deadlines
- With finance chair, ensure that the Delegation's centralized account has sufficient funds to cover Tournament Fees for State Competitions
- Work in conjunction with HOD in reviewing online Athlete, Unified Partner and Volunteer rosters ensuring all applications are up to date before competition deadlines.
- Maintain accurate records of competition registrations
- Maintain records of Medical Forms and Delegation Information Forms. Follow up with coaches to ensure all athletes have updated Medical Forms and that each Delegation has a current Delegation Information Form on file

MODEL TWO: LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE (CONTINUED)

Volunteer Chair Responsibilities

- Develop a plan for recruiting, placing and training all volunteers, including referrals from the SOMN State Office
- Network within the community and organization to establish contacts for volunteers
- Ensure all volunteers are Level 1 certified in coordination with the education chair
- Recruit and train coaches in coordination with education chair
- Develop a recognition system for volunteers

LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

As a volunteer for SOMN, it is our goal to provide you with basic volunteer training, as well as training tailored to your specific role. Volunteer training is essential for our Program to maintain consistency and quality on a statewide level.

COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Level 1 Certification Requirements

A coach with a Level 1 Certification can coach any sport.

Level 1 Certification Requirements

1. Complete the online Volunteer Application found at somn.org/volapp/
2. Complete the online Level 1 Certification & Quiz (training includes information on General Orientation, Protective Behaviors and Concussion Policies)
 - A. This training must be updated every three years

The Volunteer Application and Level 1 Training are found at somn.org/coach

All coaches working with athletes at a practice or competition must be Level 1 certified.

Once volunteers have a Volunteer Application on file, have had their background screened, and are Level 1 Certified, they will be eligible to coach with SOMN. Contact your Program Manager or the State Office for more information.

Background Check Information

Once a Volunteer Application has been processed by the State Office, the volunteer will receive an e-mail from eservices@geninfo.com with a link to perform their background check. The link will be active for 5 days, so please watch your e-mail and spam accounts. Special Olympics Minnesota will incur the cost of the background check.

Special Olympics Minnesota has taken a firmer stance in regards to volunteer participation at competitions prior to the completion of a background check. This decision was made in the ongoing interest of providing the safest environment we can for our athletes and volunteers. While we realize this is only one tool our organization uses in screening volunteers, background checks provide us the most immediate way of assessing whether an individual meets the basic qualifications of involvement.

We will take the following stances regarding participation and attendance at competitions:

COACHES

Area Level:

- Coaches who have not initiated the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.
- Coaches who have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline can attend area competitions, but cannot be used to fulfill coach ratios.

State Level:

- Coaches who do not pass a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

UNIFIED PARTNERS

- Unified Partners who have not passed a background check prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.

Background Check Information (continued)

ATHLETES

Area Level:

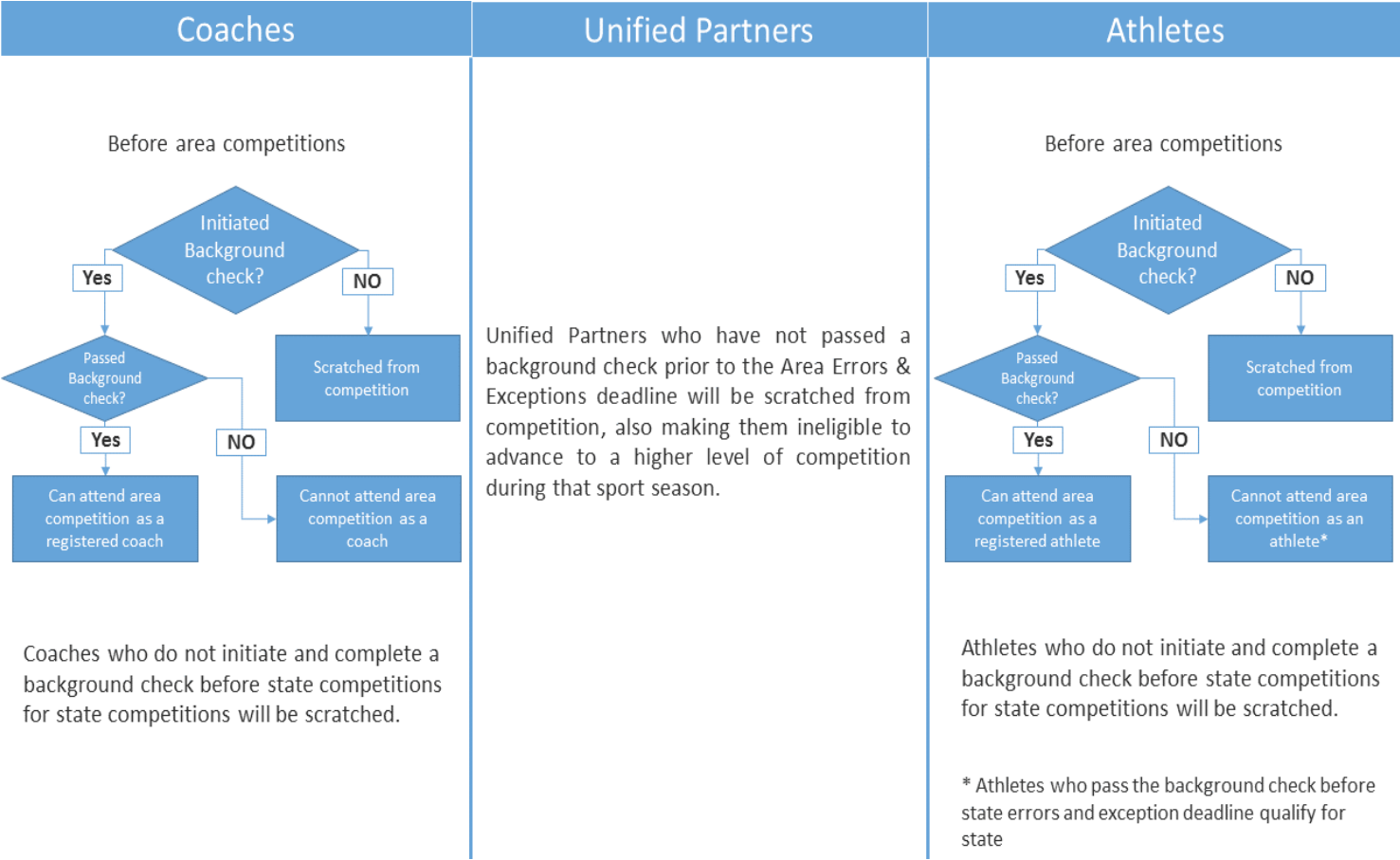
- Athletes who have a criminal history and have not initiated the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition, also making them ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition during that sport season.
- Athletes who have a criminal history and have initiated but not passed the background check process prior to the Area Errors & Exceptions deadline cannot attend Area competitions, but may be eligible to advance to a higher level of competition if results are returned prior to state Errors & Exceptions deadline.

State Level:

- Athletes who have not passed a background check prior to the State Errors & Exceptions deadline will be scratched from competition.

This information can also be found on our website by visiting; somn.org/bgcheckcompliance

Use the Background Check Flowchart below for reference.



Level 2 Training

In an effort to continue to offer quality training opportunities to coaches, SOMN will adhere to the following procedures for holding Level 2 training:

1. Special Olympics Minnesota Sports Academy -

A unique opportunity for coaches to attend a day of in person Level 2 trainings, Positive Coaches Alliance (PCA) workshop focusing on the pursuit of winning while teaching life lesson through sports, and guest speaker sessions to enhance sports knowledge and the coaching experience. This academy is available to any new or returning coach looking to receive Level 2 training or recertification. We encourage coaches to attend this academy to further develop their coaching knowledge and techniques, experience high level training sessions from our SOMN clinicians, receive PCA Double- Goal certification, and build a network of fellow SOMN coaches.

Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) develops BETTER ATHLETES, BETTER PEOPLE through resources for youth and high school sports coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes. PCA has partnered with roughly 3,500 schools and youth sports organizations nationwide to deliver live group workshops, online courses and books by PCA Founder Jim Thompson that help those involved in youth and high school sports create a positive, character-building youth sports culture.

2. Online Level 2 Trainings - available at any time. Coaches and Unified Partners may complete the online trainings at their convenience and complete as many sport specific trainings as they wish.

3. In Person Level 2 Training - these are available by request only.

- A. If a coach or Delegation wishes to have a training they must request what sport they wish to receive training in to **coacheducation@somn.org**
- B. Coaches and Unified Partners that wish to attend the in-person Level 2 Training can email **coacheducation@somn.org** for more information.
- C. Special Olympics Minnesota reserves the right to cancel a training if a minimum of five coaches do not register for that training at least five business days in advance.

COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Continuing Education Courses for Recertification

Attend a course and submit a certificate or card. Recertification courses can be **one of (but are not limited to)** the following:

- CPR
- First Aid
- DAPE Course
- Crisis Prevention
- Unified Sports online
- Principles of Coaching
- Unified Sports Training
- Referee/Officiate a Special Olympics event
- Coaching Special Olympics and Athletes online
- Centers for Disease Control - Online Concussion Training
- Other course that apply to working with Special Olympics
- American Sports Education Program (ASEP) Online Training
- Fall or Spring Coaches Meeting conducted by SOMN State Office
- Leadership and Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) Conference
- Continuing Education Courses online or at the Leadership and LETR Conference

For more information on specific courses please visit **somn.org/coach**

COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Coaches Code of Conduct

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

Respect for Others and the Organization

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, spectators and staff in Special Olympics
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion, ability or sexual orientation
- I will not promote religious or political beliefs or preferences while functioning in the capacity of a volunteer
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach
- I will support and promote actions, opinions and philosophies that are consistent with SOMN's mission and values
- I will not willfully or maliciously damage the property or reputation of SOMN
- I will be respectful when using social media and all other forms of correspondence related to Special Olympics

Ensure a Positive Experience

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience
- 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 and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language
- 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 preliminaries and final heats in accordance with the Official 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 (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, staff, media, etc.)
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities
- I will not smoke in restricted areas, take illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competitions or activities, or while in transit to training sessions, competitions or activities
- I will have knowledge of, and will abide by, the policies of SOMN as outlined in the SOMN Program Administration Guide

COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

- I have specifically read and will abide by the SOMN Alcohol Policy outlined in the SOMN Program Administration Guide
- Depending on my position within each sport, I will alert my head coach, head of delegation or SOMN staff to report actions by athletes or other volunteers contrary to the Codes of Conduct
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical and emotional abuse
- I will not act in a way that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff or spectators
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of coaches dating athletes

Quality Service to the Athletes

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education
- I will be knowledgeable about the sports rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach
- I will provide a plan for a regular training program
- I will keep copies of the medical, training and competition records for each athlete I coach
- I will follow the Special Olympics sports rules for my sport(s)

Health and Safety of the Athletes

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate

COACHES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a match/event: Never quit

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct I will be subject to a range of consequences, up to, and including, being prohibited from coaching Special Olympics.

SPORTS CRITERIA

In fulfilling our mission, SOMN believes athletes should be afforded quality opportunities in a variety of team and individual sports: opportunities which are initially determined by the list of official and demonstration sports outlined by SOI. We believe quality opportunities are further defined by specific goals we wish to achieve through the sports we offer, which include meaningful competition experiences based on participation levels, the availability of resources to sustain and perpetuate growth and a menu of sports that can shift to reflect athlete interest.

In an ongoing effort to provide quality opportunities in a variety of sports, SOMN has developed a list of criteria that will be used in evaluating existing sports as well as adding new sports to the competition schedule.

Criteria for Evaluating a Sport

To continue to be offered at the State level, sports must meet two Level 1 criteria and three Level 2 criteria listed below.

Level 1

- There is a minimum of 30 athletes who participate in an individual sport or eight teams in a team sport
- There is a minimum of five local programs that offer training in the sport
- There is representation from 23 percent (three of 13) of the Area Programs

Level 2

- There is demonstrated positive volunteer involvement within the sport, which includes but is not limited to a management structure which facilitates a quality competition experience and functions as an extension of SOMN through the adherence of registration procedures, sport rules, competition guidelines and the general philosophy and direction of the organization
- There are internal and external resources available to offer adequate opportunities for athlete and coach recruitment, training, sports facilities and promotion
- Competition numbers are comparable to events offered within the same sport by other organizations in the State
- The level of interest within a sport, as reflected by participation criteria above, reflects the level of interest seen throughout the general population
- The sport can be offered within an existing event which offers an appropriate training season

Should a sport fail to meet two of the Level 1 criteria and three of the Level 2 criteria, it will be placed on a two-year evaluation period during which it will continue to be offered at the State level unless there are extenuating circumstances (severe decline in participation; unanticipated change in financial, staff or volunteer resources; etc.). At such time, leadership volunteers and coaches will be notified of the evaluatory status. At the end of the evaluation period, if a sport still does not meet the minimum amount of criteria, it will be discontinued at the State level. A sport may continue to be offered at an Area level with the approval of the respective ASMT.

Criteria for Adding a Sport

Special Olympics Minnesota will only consider adding sports that are sanctioned by SOI. To add a new sport or reintroduce a discontinued sport at the State level, it must meet the same combination of criteria listed in the previous section for a period of two consecutive years. In addition during that same period, two Area-level competitions, one of which is outside the metropolitan area, must be established and conducted on an annual basis.

COACHES CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLES

Individual Sports and Individual Skills

Athletes	Level II	Level I
1-4	1	0
5-8	1	1
9-12	1	2
13-16	1	3
17-20	2	3
21-24	2	4
25-28	2	5
29-32	2	6
33-36	3	6
37-40	3	7
41-44	3	8
45-48	3	9
49-52	4	9
53-56	4	10
57-60	4	11
61-64	4	12
65-68	5	12
69-72	5	13
73-76	5	14
77-80	5	15
81-84	6	15
85-88	6	16
89-92	6	17
93-96	6	18
97-100	7	18

Team Sports**

Coach ratios for team sports per team, not the total number of athletes registered

Athletes	Level II	Level I
3-4	1	0
5-8	1	1
9-12	1	2
13-16	1	3

Team Sports Roster Size

Sport	Team
Half-Court Basketball	3-7
Full-Court Basketball	5-16
Unified Basketball	5-16
Poly Hockey	6-16
Unified Flag Football	5-16
Traditional & Unified Softball	10-16
Traditional & Unified Volleyball	6-16

*Unified Individual Sports Coach Ratio: Delegations are allowed to count Unified Partners who are Certified Coaches toward their ratios provided that any delegation bringing more than one athlete to a competition has at least one Level Coach (on-site) who is not playing and still meets the appropriate coach ratio. Coach ratios for individual skills must still be met by non-playing coaches.

**Unified Teams Sports ratios are the same as traditional team sports, teams still need one non-playing Level II coach on the bench at all times. Unified Partners will be included in the coach ratio if they are 16 years of age or older. Unified Partners are not included in the athlete count for certification ratios.

ATHLETE TRAINING

In a Special Olympics Program, coaches play a unique and indispensable role. It is the coaches who impart to Special Olympics athletes the sports skills and competitive spirit that define the true athlete. Just as professional, collegiate and scholastic athletes work through a pre-season training program into an in-season maintenance training schedule and on to a post-season conditioning program, so it is important for the Special Olympics athlete to embark upon a training program in preparation for competition.

Sports training is designed to improve the participant's physical fitness and skill in various sports. Training programs are developed and directed by an athlete's coach after an individual assessment of that athlete's skills. Through Special Olympics training, an athlete learns the importance of proper warm-up, cool down, and strength and fitness training. Additionally, an athlete improves in sports skills by progressing toward measurable goals at his/her own pace. Proper training reduces sports injuries and increases safety awareness in sports. Finally, as training is required of all athletes, events will match a trained athlete against another trained athlete, thus creating equitable competition.

It is up to each and every one of us associated with SOMN to be sure that athletes receive the necessary and proper training in order to fully achieve the maximum benefit from participation in sports. Within the training and competition structure, the rules of participation and advancement are as follows:

- Delegations must train for 8-10 weeks prior to competing at a State Competition.
- Delegations must train a minimum of one hour per week, although we encourage two hours. This may be done during one or more training sessions. Each training session should consist of:
 - Warm-ups and stretching 5-10 minutes
 - Review of previously learned skills 10-20 minutes
 - Introduction of new skills 15-20 minutes
 - Game situations 15-20 minutes
 - Strength and conditioning exercises 10-20 minutes
 - Cool-down 5-10 minutes
- When beginning a training program, all participating Delegations, athletes, coaches and Unified Partners must have the required forms on file at the State Office.
- Coaches are encouraged to utilize a SOMN sports handbook for each sport they coach. The handbooks are available at sports-specific training schools or can be downloaded from the SOMN website.
- Special Olympics Minnesota has a Coaches Certification Program which must be followed by all Delegations. See pages 13-17 or go to **somn.org** for more information.
- If planning to participate at the State level, Delegations must attend their Area Competition if one is offered in that particular sport. Events/teams/levels for each participant must stay the same from the Area to the State competition. For sports in which an Area Competition is not offered, we suggest that Area is not a qualifier for State and events/teams/levels stay the same from Area to State. Consider:
 - Attending a competition in another Area;
 - Arranging scrimmages or mini-competitions with other local Delegations; or
 - Setting up a competition atmosphere within one of your training sessions
 - For Poly Hockey, Softball, Basketball and Flag Football, three games are recommended prior to State Competition
 - Regional Games are not State qualifiers; and therefore, cannot take the place of an Area Competition
 - All Area and State registration deadlines must be met. The Area Sports Coordinator or Program Manager/Associate will be able to give you pertinent dates based on the sports in which you are participating and assist you with registration procedures

ATHLETE TRAINING (CONTINUED)

Athlete Safety at Training

Coaches are responsible for the safety and well-being of athletes during Special Olympics training, competitions and events. The coach is required to bring copies of medical and registration materials to all training sessions and competitions and to be familiar with all medical, medication and dietary precautions or conditions related to athletes under their supervision.

Suggested Supplies For a Coach's First Aid Kit

2"x 2" gauze pads (3-4)	4" x 4" gauze pads (3-4)	Tape (1 roll)	Red biohazard bags (3-4)
Hebiclens hand wipes (5-6)	Face shield for CPR (1)	Tampons (1-2)	Latex gloves (8-10 pair)
Small pad of paper and pen	Kling gauze (2)	Ice Packs (2)	Band-Aids (10-12)
			Ace wrap (1)

These are the supplies that are needed for any basic and/or minor situation **if the coach is properly trained**. We recommend coaches take a basic first aid course to receive general knowledge and procedures.

Coach's Injury Treatment Checklist

- Stop play
- Gloves
- Remove the athlete from the competition area, unless neck or back injury is suspected. If such an injury has occurred, do not move the athlete and contact 911
- Treat the wounded area
- Properly dispose of soiled gauze, towel and/or uniform. (Anything that is saturated with blood or body fluid **MUST** be placed in a biohazard bag)
- Remove your gloves. If soiled with blood or body fluid, place in a biohazard bag
- **IMMEDIATELY** wash hands with soap and water or towelette
- If a concussion is suspected, consult the SOMN Concussion Policy for correct protocol and return-to-play procedures

NOTE: The person cleaning the floor or mat **MUST** be gloved. The biohazard bag **MUST** be disposed of in accordance to your institution's biohazard procedures.

ATHLETE SAFETY AT COMPETITIONS

While attending SOMN competitions, a coach is required to ensure that proper identification is worn by athletes at all times (name tags or credentials). In case of emergency, all hearing impaired and visually impaired athletes should be easily identifiable. It is further recommended that prior to the start of each competition, coaches identify an area at which to meet should an athlete become separated from their Delegation. If an athlete is lost or separated from his or her Delegation for more than 15 minutes, the situation should be reported to security, emergency personnel and SOMN staff immediately.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The following are definitions of critical situations:

- **An emergency** is any situation in which immediate action must be taken to avoid injury and/or ensure the safety of those involved in the conduct of practice, transportation or participation in Special Olympics.
- **A serious accident** is any incident in which an athlete, volunteer or staff member has sustained an injury that requires medical attention during conduct of or involvement in Special Olympics.
- **An incident of concern** is any activity or action taken by an individual or individuals, either seen or reported, in which the safety; welfare; or dignity of an athlete, volunteer or staff member is, or appears to be, involved.

With the exception of a public broadcast of an emergency situation such as severe weather or the sounding of a fire alarm, in which coaches are expected to respond according to established safety procedures or instructions provided, the following steps should be taken regarding emergencies, accidents or incidents:

Step One: Take all steps necessary to secure medical assistance and limit additional injury, damage or threat to safety.

Step Two: Notify SOMN staff and Area Coordinator, Administrative Coordinator and State Office.

Step Three: Gather the facts from everyone involved, especially all witnesses. Prepare everyone involved to assist in providing additional information, if necessary, by obtaining names, addresses and phone numbers.

Step Four: Do not assume that anything is minor or insignificant. Respond to the concerns, fears or reactions of athletes, families and/or volunteers with reassurance and control, but not with assumption or reaction.

Step Five: Do not respond to media or non-involved individuals requesting information or evaluation of the situation. Such actions will be the responsibility of SOMN staff and/or your agency's administration.

Step Six: Keep in constant contact with SOMN staff, Area Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator in order to give updates about the situation.

The coach is the athlete's first link to safety and security. The coach must respond with sensitivity and reassurance. All reports of fear, concern or personal safety must be responded to as real.

The proper procedure is to report the incident to the local Delegation's administrative personnel and SOMN staff.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

What are Some of the Reporting Issues to Consider?

Confidentiality vs. Good Faith – Some people are reluctant to get involved in reporting issues, while others are too quick to get involved. Laws protect victims from both of these extremes. Any report made is confidential. Under Minnesota law, the good faith clause protects the reporter when the report may not be valid, as long as the report appears to be made in good faith and not maliciously.

Child Removed From Home – In cases of suspected/reported child sexual abuse, the child may be moved from the home to a safe setting. This is not done to punish the child, nor to blame the child, but to protect him/her from a possible recurrence of abuse. In physical abuse cases, children may also be removed when it is believed their lives might be in danger. Usually children remain with their parent or families and other treatments or therapies are used.

Resources – Check your Area schools, Red Cross, county welfare departments and libraries for materials or training events about child abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child by an older person. It includes three categories defined by the law: **1) child neglect; 2) child abuse; 3) child sexual abuse.**

Two distinctions are made within these categories: acts of omission and acts of commission.

Acts of omission include the withholding of those things deemed necessary for normal accommodation, i.e. food, shelter, affection, clothing, etc. Child neglect is an act of omission. Children may experience both physical and/or emotional neglect. Examples of neglect might include children who consistently wear clothes inappropriate for weather (i.e., sandals in the winter, no mittens or coat, etc.); a child who may obviously need medical attention but has been given none; a child who receives medication inconsistently; or a child who is left unsupervised at home for long hours. **When examining for neglect, look at the overall quality of care of the child.**

Acts of commission are overt acts which injure or assault the child and may even result in death. Child abuse (both physical and emotional) and child sexual abuse are acts of commission. They include the intentional, and sometimes unintentional, bruising, burning, breaking of bones, name calling, bullying or degrading of a child by an older person.

When Reporting Child Abuse

Suspected child abuse is a confidential matter and those reporting must not discuss their suspicions with anyone except the appropriate agency or individual. Any coach, volunteer or adult involved with Special Olympics who has reason to believe that a Special Olympics athlete is being neglected, physically or sexually abused, shall immediately report that information to the appropriate law enforcement or local protection agency, then to a SOMN staff member. Reporters should not discuss their suspicions with their neighbors, the local nurse, schoolteacher, a relative or anyone other than the designated source. The law is designed to protect the child, the family and the reporter. When you report to the designated source, you are covered by the good faith clause; when you discuss the information inappropriately, you are not protected.

The local protection agency is not required to tell you the outcome of the case. Because of confidentiality and privacy laws, Child Protection is limited in what information it can tell you or others working with the child. Be assured that each county has experience in these areas and will notify everyone they need to inform.

Adult athletes are protected by the **Vulnerable Adult Act of the State of Minnesota**. Suspected abuse or neglect is to be reported immediately. Please contact your local county social services agency.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

All incidents and accidents/injuries require a completed Accident or Incident Report Form (sogn.org/programguideresources)

If you are reporting an accident or injury for insurance purposes, please complete the Accident Report Form found at sogn.org/programguideresources. Please follow listed instructions on this form carefully.

If you are reporting a violation of the athlete, coach, volunteer or parent and spectator code of conduct please complete the Incident Report Form found on sogn.org/programguideresources. Please follow listed instructions on this form carefully.

Should there be a **serious or fatal** accident or injury, call the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week 800 number: **American Specialty Insurance Group, Inc., Special Olympics Claims Service at 800.566.7941 and notify the SOMN Vice President of Operations at 800.783.7732, ext. 128.**

The following are crisis scenarios which require immediate notification of SOMN. If one or more of the following occurs, please contact your Program Manager/Associate:

- Athlete, family member, volunteer, visitor staff, etc. severely injured or killed
- Severe weather damage or injury (tornadoes, flooding, lightning strikes, etc.)
- Food poisoning as a result of food from a SOMN event
- Car/vehicle accident while in transit to SOMN event
- Athlete or child lost/abducted while at a SOMN event
- Major facilities problem (flooding, loss of electricity, etc.)
- Accusation of mistreatment/crime to/by an athlete from/to a non-athlete
- Crime perpetrated against SOMN or its participants, staff, volunteers
- Scandal involving partner, venue or sponsor
- Crime/improper behavior alleged at SOMN event
- Financial impropriety alleged
- Lawsuit threatened or filed

When contacting your Program Manager/ Associate, be prepared to provide the following information when speaking to a staff member or leaving a message:

- Your name
- Your phone number with area code and extension, if applicable
- Name of accident victim
- Name of delegation
- Accident victim phone number with area code and extension, if applicable
- Nature of the accident
- Current status of incident

CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS

Only SOMN staff members are authorized to sign written contracts on behalf of SOMN. All written contracts for facilities and/or services at the local or area level that are entered into on behalf of SOMN, no matter how large or small, including agreements between Delegations or Areas and third parties, must be forwarded to the appropriate SOMN Program Manager/Associate for approval. As part of our approval process, we also include our insurance carrier when appropriate. This process is designed to ensure no one in our organization enters into a contract that is not in the best interest of SOMN, allows appropriate transfers of risk to be negotiated and removes you as a volunteer from any contractual liability.

A contract is an agreement between two or more legally competent parties, enforceable by law, to supply goods or perform work. The agreement must contain an exchange of value (consideration), which is usually money. For example, in exchange for the use of a facility, the facility owner requests certain consideration, often monetary in nature. A contract differs from a reservation in that a contract will often contain provisions containing one or more of the following phrases: proof or certificate of insurance, cancellation policy, hold harmless, indemnification or negligence.

If you are in doubt of whether a document constitutes a contract, please send it to the State Office for review. Most contracts entered into at the local and Area level will be program-related and should be directed to the Vice President of Program.

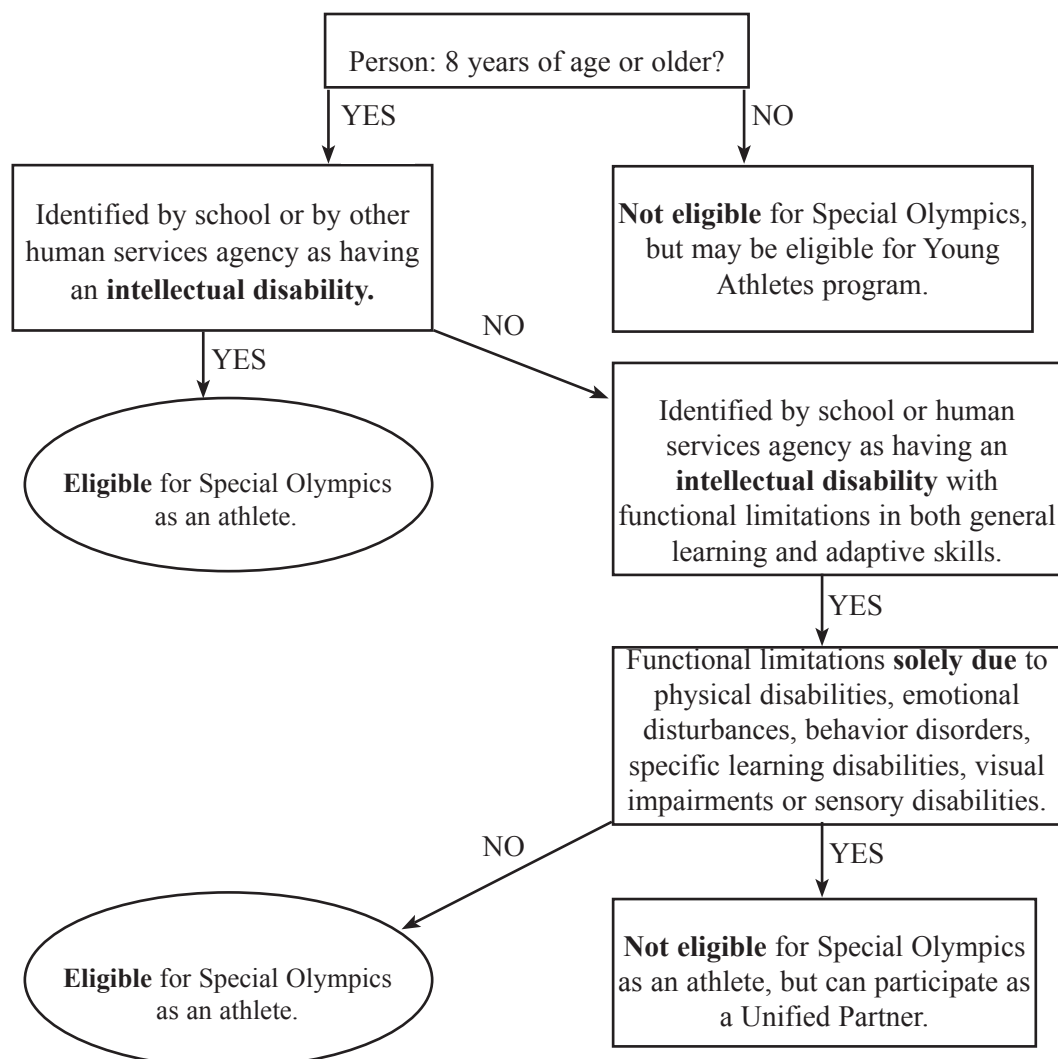
SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

Special Olympics athletes are adults and children with intellectual disabilities, and they are the focus of the work of everyone who is involved in SOMN.

ELIGIBILITY

Participation in SOMN training and competition is open to all persons with an intellectual disability who meets the age requirements, regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has physical disabilities, so long as that person registers to participate in SOMN. There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics competitions is eight years of age. Children who are ages 2-7 years old may be permitted to participate in Special Olympics Young Athletes Program and/or specific cultural or social activities (age appropriate) offered during the course of SOMN or Young Athletes events.

ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY FLOWCHART



ELIGIBILITY (CONTINUED)

Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability for purposes of determining eligibility in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any 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; or
- The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligence quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures that are generally accepted within the professional community as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
- The person has a closely related developmental disability, defined as functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (see AAIDD definition below). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAID) Definition

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities definition refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by:

- Significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with:
- Related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas:
 - Communication
 - Community use
 - Social skills
 - Leisure
 - Health and safety
 - Work
 - Self direction
 - Functional academics
 - Home living
 - Self care
- Intellectual disabilities manifest before age 18. In addition, some athletes may qualify due to traumatic brain injury after age 18

Application of the Definition

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has developed four assumptions that are viewed as essential as professionals and consumers begin to use the definition in practice:

- Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity and differences in communication and behavioral factors
- The existence of limitations in adaptive skills occurs within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and is indexed to the person's individualized needs support
- Specific adaptive limitations often coexist with strengths in other adaptive skills or other personal capabilities

With appropriate supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disabilities will generally improve.

ELIGIBILITY (CONTINUED)

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

There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participants in Special Olympics competition is eight years of age. Children who are at least six years old may participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programs where offered or in specific (and age-appropriate) cultural or social activities offered during the course of a Special Olympics event such as the Young Athletes program which is offered to children between the ages of two to seven. Such children may be recognized for their participation, or through other types of recognition approved by SOI, which are not associated with participation in Special Olympics competition. However, no child may participate in a Special Olympics competition (or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition) before his or her eighth birthday.

Participation in Special Olympics is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has other mental or physical disabilities.

To receive an informational packet please e-mail Kelly Monicatti: kelly.monicatti@somn.org and put **“Informational Packet”** in the subject line.

You may also visit somn.org/allforms for more information.

ATHLETE REGISTRATION

Each athlete involved in SOMN must be registered at the State Office prior to participating in training or competition. Athlete registration is accomplished through the forms listed below.

Athlete Application for Participation in Special Olympics: Also known as an "Athlete Medical," each athlete participating in SOMN must have a current medical form on file at the State Office. **To satisfy insurance requirements, this form must be submitted to the State Office before an athlete begins training.** Once submitted, this form needs to be resubmitted every three years from the medical exam date.

Special Olympics Athlete Consent Form: Another form needed on file for each athlete. This form only needs to be completed once, unless the athlete enters SOMN under the age of 18. Athletes younger than 18 should complete a new form once they reach the age of 18. **This form must be submitted to the State Office, along with the Athlete Application, before an athlete begins practicing with the team.**

An updated Special Olympics Athlete Application and Consent form can always be found here somn.org/programguideresources

Each Head Coach is responsible for keeping a complete set of athlete medical forms.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Minnesota prides itself in sponsoring high-quality physical fitness training and sports competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior which will ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and standards of behavior as established by SOMN. While representing or participating in Special Olympics, all Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports® Partners will obey the Athlete Code of Conduct. This includes while participating or attending any Special Olympics activity, including transportation to and from the activity.

If there is reason to believe any athlete has a criminal history, a background check will be issued by SOMN, at which time the individual must submit their full name, social security number and birth date. The athlete must have a completed background check and be cleared to play before the competition registration deadline. Each situation will be assessed case by case and the appropriate decision regarding participation will be made by SOMN. Results of all athlete background checks will follow the Participant Screening Policy.

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 say mean things about other persons.
- I will not fight (either with a loud voice or hitting) with other athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers or staff.

Training and Competition

- I will train regularly and attend as many practices as I can.
- I will let my coach know when I will not be at practice.
- 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 preliminaries just to get into an easier final heat.

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT (CONTINUED)

Responsibility for My Actions

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances toward others.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke in restricted areas or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will follow the rules that are in place for my delegation.
- I will not bring any harmful weapons to any Special Olympics activity.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- I will be respectful when using social media and all other forms of correspondence related to Special Olympics

I understand that it is a privilege to participate in Special Olympics and not a right. I also understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my Delegation, U.S. Program or Games Organizing Committee may not allow me to participate.

Disciplinary Actions for Not Following the Athlete Code of Conduct

The following progressive disciplinary actions may be taken by a coach. Depending upon the nature of the incident, any actions may be bypassed in the disciplinary process. Physical aggression toward another athlete, coach, volunteer or staff will result in accelerated disciplinary action. **An Incident Report Form (somn.org/programguideresources) should be completed and kept on file for any athlete or volunteer with whom there are ongoing behavioral or safety concerns, and must be completed immediately if it is suspected further disciplinary action may be needed.** Copies of Incident Report Forms should be forwarded as soon as completed to the Program Manager/Associate for your Area. Area coordinators and Heads of Delegation must involve the SOMN State Office staff prior to suspension or release of a volunteer or athlete.

Action One: Verbal warning given to the athlete.

Action Two: Prior to this action being taken, an Incident Report Form (somn.org/programguideresources) must be completed and sent to the appropriate Program Manager/Associate. Subsequent to its receipt, a written warning will be given to the athlete with a copy to the appropriate individuals.

Action Three: Personal meeting with the athlete to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for improvement.

If the athlete is under age 18, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the athlete is over age 18, a third person selected by the athlete will attend the meeting. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the athlete, Head of Delegation, State Office, coaches file, parent/guardian or caseworker.

Action Four: Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season. The Program Manager/Associate must be contacted before a coach suspends an athlete. The Program Manager/Associate will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete, parent/guardian and a copy will be filed at the State Office.

Any further action must be referred to the Head of Delegation and the Program Manager/Associate assigned to the Area. The Program Manager/Associate must approve further action. Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- Suspension or dismissal from SOMN

ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT (CONTINUED)

Appeal Process

Appeal Process for disciplinary decisions concerning violations of the athlete, coach, volunteer or spectator Code of Conduct:

The Special Olympics Minnesota athlete, coach, volunteer and spectator appeal process is for Code of Conduct disciplinary decisions. This appeal process is **NOT** for appeals for background checks. Please see the Participant Screening Policy located at somn.org/programguideresources

Special Olympics Minnesota athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators have the right to appeal disciplinary actions with the appropriate Program Manager/Associate or SOMN staff representative. The athlete or athlete representative, coach, volunteer or spectator must submit a written appeal request within 30 days of the disciplinary action. This written request must specifically outline why SOMN should reverse or amend the disciplinary decision. The appeal will be heard by a SOMN Incident Committee composed of appropriate SOMN staff and volunteers. This committee will communicate the final decision within 30 business days to the individual who filed the appeal and/or their representative.

Special Olympics Minnesota will consider the following framework when reviewing Athlete Code of Conduct disciplinary decisions and appeals:

Evaluating Severity of Incident

Special Olympics Minnesota will take into account several factors when determining the severity of an incident or cases of incidents pending, and what, if any, action needs to be taken.

The disciplinary action taken by SOMN shall be based upon the severity of the infraction, any prior disciplinary action taken against the individual, and the overriding need to further the mission of SOMN and provide for the safety of the coaches, athletes, volunteers and members of the public.

Criteria:

- 1) **Type of offense/incident:** Violent behavior that damages property, will not be the same as the serious behavior that injures or is intended to injure a person, such as a physical or sexual assault
- 2) **Timing of the offense/incident:** A recent offense/incident is of greater concern than one that has taken place many years ago
- 3) **Number of offenses/incidents:** Is there multiple offenses/incidences involved of a similar nature or a few isolated incidences
- 4) **Environment:** Was the athlete influenced by variables outside of their control such as a change in the medication, housing, staffing, illness, counseling or a serious life altering occasion

Please note as outlined in the Special Olympics Minnesota Athlete and Volunteer Application:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND THE ATHLETE/VOLUNTEER IS AN "AT WILL" ARRANGEMENT AND SUCH A RELATIONSHIP CAN BE TERMINATED AT ANY TIME WITHOUT CAUSE BY EITHER SPECIAL OLYMPICS OR THE ATHLETE/VOLUNTEER.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Special Olympics defines Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) as:

- Allowing athletes to choose how and in what role they participate in Special Olympics, such as athlete, coach, volunteer and/or leader
- Encouraging athletes to take meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and set direction
- Providing additional training for athletes as they develop their leadership skills in new roles
- Allowing athletes to explore opportunities for participation in roles previously considered “non-traditional.”

One of the key things to remember when considering getting involved with ALPs is that each athlete needs a Unified Partner who can attend the ALPs training session. Unified Partners can be a friend, teacher, co-worker, coach or family member who would work with the athlete during and after the training to ensure that the skills learned are implemented.

Special Olympics Minnesota offers the Athlete Leadership Program through ALPs University. During the weekend long session, athletes and Unified Partners will be able to select a specific leadership course related to an area of interest. Athletes and Unified Partners will learn, develop skills and apply their knowledge in their teams and communities. General sessions will include guest speakers, learning how to be an athlete representative, the history of ALPs and other pertinent information. ALPs University will be offered annually at a Minnesota college or university.

ALPs courses include the following (additional courses are added on an as needed basis):

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Beginning Global Messenger | • Governance & Leadership 101 |
| • Graduate Global Messenger | • Challenges Through Choice |
| • Athletes as Ambassadors | • Athletes as Coaches |
| • Health & Wellness Ambassadors | • Athletes as Volunteers |
| • Athletes as Coaches II | • DIFFERbilities in Youth Leadership |
| • Life Skills | |

For more information on specific ALPs initiatives, visit somn.org/alps or contact the State Office.

YOUTH & SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Young Athletes

Young Athletes is an innovative sports play Program that introduces children ages two to seven years old, with and without intellectual disabilities to the world of sports. We believe there is no better way to bring these athletes into the Special Olympics family than through a Program like Young Athletes - fostering inclusion in a fun and engaging setting for all. Young Athletes can be run in a community setting or the school day. The Program is run by trained volunteers.

Unified Juniors

Unified Juniors is an extension of the Young Athletes Program that focuses on a variety of sport specific skills that children can use in future sports team participation. Unified Juniors is for children ages 8-12 years old with and without intellectual disabilities. Children can attend this Program if there is not a Special Olympics team in their Area or they can join Unified Juniors in conjunction with a team. Unified Juniors is meant to introduce children with or without intellectual disabilities to the world of competitive sports in a gradual, fun and non-intimidating manner. Young Athletes can be run in a community setting or during the school day. The Program is run by trained volunteers.

YOUTH & SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

Unified Schools

Purpose of Unified Schools:

Special Olympics Unified Schools Program is an education and sports based strategy powered by an engaged youth community that increases athletic and leadership opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities, while creating communities of acceptance for all.

It is a strategy to **activate** youth, **engage** educators and **promote** school communities of acceptance and inclusion where **all young people are agents of change**.

Utilizing the sports and education initiatives of Special Olympics, Unified Schools:

- **Fosters respect and dignity** for people with intellectual disabilities
- **Changes actions and attitudes** among their peers without intellectual disabilities

Components of Unified Schools:

The three components of a Unified School include Unified Sports, Inclusive Student Leadership and Whole School Engagement. All three areas are crucial to change the culture of a school towards inclusion.

- 1. Inclusive Youth Leadership:** An opportunity for student voices to be heard through engaging together in an inclusive school-recognized club.
- 2. Unified Sports:** Special education students and general education students participate in inclusive sporting opportunities
- 3. Whole School Engagement:** Bullying Prevention and inclusive promotion initiatives that reach entire school populations through engaging, inspiring and optimistic events.

Programs Offered Through Unified Schools:

- Unified Clubs
- Unified Sports
 - Recreation, development and competitive
- Unified Physical Education
- Bullying Prevention campaigns
- Youth Summit
- Education Leaders Network
- Student leadership
- Health & Wellness Programs
- Volunteering opportunities
- Respect curriculum
- Polar Plunge
- Unified Dance Marathon
- Youth speaking engagements
- Crossover opportunities with other service organizations
- Person First campaign
- Unified Wellness

Visit somn.org/unifiedschools to learn more about Unified Schools.

HEALTH PROGRAMS

Special Olympics Minnesota's Health Programs aims to improve athletes' health and wellness, access to care and empowers athletes to live their healthiest life possible.

SOMN Health Programs are comprised of three initiatives:

1. Healthy Athletes®
2. SOfit
3. Wellness Expo

Healthy Athletes®

The mission of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, developed in 1996, is to improve athletes' ability to train and compete in Special Olympics. Healthy Athletes is designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to enhanced sports experience and improved well-being.

The Healthy Athletes initiatives include these disciplines:

- Special Smiles® - dental
- Opening Eyes® - vision
- Healthy Hearing - hearing
- FUNfitness - exercise, stretching, flexibility and balance
- Health Promotion - nutrition, smoking cessation and sun care
- Fit Feet - podiatry
- MedFest - general sports physical exam

During a Healthy Athletes® event, Special Olympics athletes receive a variety of free health screenings and services in a series of clinics conducted in a welcoming, fun environment. Health care professionals and students are trained to provide the screenings in an effort to educate the professional community about the health needs and abilities of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The key objectives of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® are:

The success of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® events depends on partnerships. Special Olympics Minnesota program staff support the work of trained Healthy Athletes volunteers to provide free health opportunities for athletes.

- Improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes at event-based health screenings
- Make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate
- Train health care professionals and students in the health professions about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities
- Collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities
- Advocate for improved health policies and programs for persons with intellectual disabilities

Event managers create an environment for positive interaction between health care professionals, other volunteers, SOMN athletes, their families, and caregivers. Products, equipment and cash donations from local, national and international companies help to support the Program. Financial support of governmental and philanthropic sponsors helps the Program grow. Support of the volunteer opportunities offered by Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® provides an ongoing community network for improved access to health care for people with intellectual disabilities, creating a legacy of care.

Athletes, or a designated parent or guardian, must complete a SOMN Healthy Athletes® Consent Form in order to participate in a Healthy Athletes® screening (**the Consent Form is a part of the general Athlete Application**). Athletes can either mail this completed form into the State Office or they can turn it in at the Healthy Athletes® screening. To learn more about Healthy Athletes®, visit somn.org/healthyathletes

HEALTH PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

SOfit

Special Olympics Minnesota's SOfit health promotion program is a Unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. SOfit offers participants a comprehensive, 360 degree look at wellness and the human spirit. Together, athletes and Unified partners are empowered to challenge and change the way they look at diet, daily exercise and lifestyle choices.

SOfit Aims To:

1. Guide athletes and Unified Partners to healthier lifestyles through increased physical activity and improves daily nutrition.
2. Increase participants' knowledge about physical exercise and food nutrition (including food value, shopping best practices and meal preparation) from pre-program to post-program.
3. Allow participants to experience heightened social engagement and better emotional wellbeing as a by-product of the inclusive nature of the Program.

Learn more about the SOfit Program at somn.org/sofit

Wellness Expo

Special Olympics Minnesota's Wellness Expo Program aims to introduce new, engaging health and wellness activities to athletes. Wellness Expo allows athletes to try new activities, fitness classes, and be educated on varying health topics in a fun, upbeat, engaging environment.

Wellness Expo takes place at select State Competitions throughout the year.

PARENT & SPECTATOR INFORMATION

Special Olympics Minnesota, at all levels, constantly strives to involve families, extended families and care providers of Special Olympics athletes to participate and share in the joys of the Special Olympics Program. Families are SOMN's most powerful and valuable resource. Families help us coach, transport, raise funds, plan and conduct competitions, chaperone and train other volunteers. Family members are also highly motivated and enthusiastic goodwill ambassadors.

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all parents and spectators to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics parents and spectators should observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the game's outcome
- Focus on the athletes' effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence
- Never ridicule or yell at people for any reason
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants
- Respect the decisions of officials and teach athletes to do the same
- Show appreciation for volunteer coaches, officials, teachers and administrators. (Remember, without them there would be no participation)
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players
- Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them, there would be no game
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials' decisions
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at SOMN events
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion
- Show respect when using social media and all other forms of correspondence related to Special Olympics

Special Olympics Minnesota reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SOMN event if the Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct is violated.

1ST VIOLATION: parent and/or spectator is given a verbal warning

2ND VIOLATION: removal from SOMN event for the remainder of the day

3RD VIOLATION: indefinite removal from SOMN events and required meeting with SOMN staff before allowed to attend future SOMN activities

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Special Olympics competitions provide a meaningful opportunity for athletes of all ability levels to test their sports skills and measure progress throughout a training period. They also provide an environment through which athletes are challenged and their achievements can be recognized. Adherence to Special Olympics sports rules is critical at all levels of competition so the performance of each athlete is compared to the same standards. Through a process called "divisioning," athletes at all levels of competition are afforded fair competition.

Within Special Olympics, several types of competition are offered, although not all types are offered at each event.

Traditional Sports

Special Olympics began with our traditional sports model and to this day the majority of Special Olympics athletes participate in this type of Special Olympics Program. What most people think of when they hear Special Olympics is our traditional sports program, which is comprised of athletes with intellectual disabilities competing in Olympic-style sporting events.

Unified Sports®

Unified Sports® creates an opportunity for people without intellectual disabilities to join in the sports experience by playing on a team with athletes with intellectual disabilities. Unified Sports® combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (called Unified Partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability matching of athletes and Unified Partners is defined on a sport-by-sport basis.

Individual Skills

Individual Skills are designed for athletes who may not have the readiness to participate in a team sport in a meaningful way. Athletes in this Program are learning basic sports skills and the competition is based on completing a series of skills stations which contribute to developing skills within an otherwise team sport.

PROCEDURES FOR DIVISIONING

An athlete's ability is the primary factor in divisioning Special Olympics competition. The ability of an athlete or team is determined by an entry score from a prior competition or is the result of a seeding round or preliminary event at the competition itself. Other factors which are significant in establishing competitive divisions are age and gender.

Ideally, competition is enhanced when all divisions accommodate at least three and no more than eight competitors or teams of similar ability. In some cases, however, the number of athletes or teams within a competition will be insufficient to achieve this goal. The following procedures describe the sequential process for creating equitable divisions by event and also provide guidance for managing athlete participation when factors preclude ideal divisioning. Based upon athlete recommendations from the 1997 Special Olympics Athlete Congress and a 1997 coaches survey, we division by ability first, age second and gender third, when appropriate.

INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

Step One: Divide Athletes by Ability

Follow the guidelines listed below based on the event you are divisioning.

- In events that are measured in time, distance or points:
 - Rank athletes in descending order based upon submitted entry scores
 - Group as many of these ranked athletes into divisions where the highest and lowest scores are as similar as possible and the number of competitors does not exceed eight
- In events that are judged and where preliminary events will be conducted during the competition:
 - For all athletes within a performance level, rank the athletes in descending order based upon preliminary scores
 - Group as many of these ranked athletes into divisions where the highest and lowest scores are as similar as possible and the number of competitors does not exceed eight
- In events that are judged and where preliminary events will not be conducted during the competition:
 - The nature of judging precludes the use of scores from competition(s) in divisioning. Without scores from preliminary competition, performance level remains as the only criterion of athlete ability
 - For all athletes, identify athletes within each performance level. If more than eight athletes are in the same gender and age group of a performance level, group athletes into divisions of no less than three and no more than eight competitors

Step Two: Divide Athletes by Age

- An athlete's age group shall be determined by the athlete's age on the opening date of competition
- Divide the athletes into the following age groups: ages 8-11, 12-15, 16-21, 22-29, and ages 30 and older. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of competitors in the 30 years and older age group
 - Unless there are less than three competitors within an age group. These athletes shall compete in the next oldest age group. That age group shall then be renamed to accurately reflect the entire range of competitors within that age group
 - Age groups may be broadened and/or individual athletes reassigned to other age groups to improve the similarity of scores between athletes within a division
- Athletes shall compete against other athletes within the same age group

Step Three: Divide Athletes by Gender

To complete the divisioning process, divide athletes into groups based upon gender. Female athletes shall compete against other female athletes and male athletes shall compete against other male athletes whenever possible while maintaining a minimum of three athletes in a division. A relay team which consists of both male and female athletes shall compete in the male division of the competition.

TEAM SPORTS

Step One: Divide Teams by Ability

All SOMN team sport competitions shall utilize the sports-specific skill assessments, coach rankings and a team's previous tournament results. Special Olympics Minnesota staff use this information to determine a team's division. Refer to the current SOMN sports handbooks for skill assessment and coach ranking forms:

somn.org/sporthandbooks

Step Two: Divide Teams by Age

- The age group of a team is determined by the age of the oldest athlete on that team on the opening date of competition
 - Divide male and female teams into the following age groups: ages 15 and under, 16-21, and 22 and older. An additional age group may be established if there are a sufficient number of teams in the "22 and older" age group
 - Teams should compete against other teams within the same age group whenever possible while maintaining a minimum of three teams per division
-

Step Three: Divide Teams by Gender

Divide teams into groups based upon gender. Female teams shall compete against other female teams and male teams shall compete against other male teams only when the team has already been appropriately divisioned for ability and age.

COMPETITION REGISTRATION

Steps to Register for Area, Regional (if Applicable) and State Competition

Complete registration forms via the on-line registration system at <https://services.specialolympicsminnesota.org>. This site requires a user-name and pass code. Please contact your Program Manager/Associate if you have questions about utilizing this site.

Train 8-10 weeks at least one to two hours per week prior to a State Competition.

Compete in one Area Competition prior to State Competition. Athletes **must** compete in the same event/team/level at Area and State Competitions. Athletes advancing to State Competitions **must** compete at an Area event if one is offered in their Area. If the Area or surrounding Areas do not offer an event, we encourage a competition-type demonstration be offered prior to State Competition registration for an athlete to participate at State Competitions. Please note: Regional Games is not a qualifier for State; and therefore, cannot take the place of an Area Competition. It is simply an extra competition opportunity.

In individual sports, athletes must compete in the same events and/or levels at Area and State Competitions. In team sports, rosters must stay the same between Area and State Competitions. In any sport, athletes who do not have completed paperwork on file at the State Office by the designated Area deadline are not eligible to compete at a State Competition.

Declare intent to participate at a State Competition by requesting quota by designated deadline for each competition and send into the State Office. Quota will be sent to the Head of Delegation by the State Office.

Registration information for State Competitions will be sent to the Head of Delegation by the State Office. Registrations must be completed through the online registration website by the outlined deadlines. To ensure that all athletes who want to participate are entered correctly, the registration process needs to be completed properly by all Delegations and Areas.

Timeline for Paperwork

All registrations and paperwork must be completed by the competition deadlines outlined by the State Office. If your meal counts or tournament fees change after submitting your registration, please be sure to let the State Office know by the deadline communicated in the confirmation e-mail.

Four weeks prior to State Competition, a quota request is due to the State Office. The State Office will send a quota request to the Head of Delegation prior to the deadline.

After your Area Competition is complete, you will need to advance your athletes to State through the online registration website. This will be due at the registration deadline approximately three weeks prior to the competition.

Approximately two weeks before the State Competition, the final confirmation registration information will be e-mailed to Heads of Delegations and head coaches for each sport.

One week out, scratches will be due.

Athletes and unified partners whose **medicals are not submitted by the Area deadline** cannot advance to State Competitions.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION POLICIES

AREA COMPETITION CANCELLATION POLICY

In support of the Special Olympics mission to provide year-round sports training and competition opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, SOMN strongly advocates the development and implementation of a comprehensive, year-round competition calendar which provides competitive opportunities to athletes at the Area and State levels in all sports. It is our belief that each competitive experience offers athletes the opportunity to improve sport skills, gain confidence in their abilities and showcase the results of their training. In addition to these benefits, SOMN also believes competitive experiences at the area level are critical in physically and mentally preparing athletes for advancement to State Competitions.

Therefore, it is the policy of SOMN that all Area Competitions be conducted as scheduled, with the primary exception being the presence of weather-related conditions that pose risks to the safety and health of athletes and volunteers, such as heavy rain, lightning, extreme cold or extreme heat. In these instances, it will be at the discretion and best judgment of Area organizers to delay, postpone or cancel competition.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the inability of athletes registered at the Area level to advance to State Competitions.

HOUSING POLICY

While in attendance at SOMN events that require an overnight stay, SOMN strongly encourages Delegations to secure housing arrangements that provide one bed per person. It will be the responsibility of each coach to make housing reservations directly with the hotels for members of their delegation. When making housing reservations, coaches and parents must keep in mind a high level of safety and security of the athletes.

Unless otherwise stated in the tournament registration material, SOMN shall be responsible for housing reservations at such time a competition or tournament is held on the campus of a university or college and the residence halls of that institution are being utilized.

TOBACCO POLICY

Smoking, second-hand smoke and use of tobacco products are known health hazards, therefore SOMN abides by a no tobacco use policy during all SOMN sports training, practices, competitions, events for all athletes, coaches, family members, chaperones, volunteers and staff. This policy includes e-cigarettes.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

All SOMN officials, delegates, coaches, volunteers and athletes will adhere to the following policy concerning drugs, alcohol and other performance enhancing substances:

"In Special Olympics Minnesota, any medication or drug prescribed by a licensed physician for use by a SOMN official, delegate, coach, volunteer or athlete under his or her medical care to deal with a diagnosed condition is permitted, provided that such medication or drug is used for the specific treatment of that condition. In the absence of any medical prescription, local law shall prevail and be strictly enforced.

In the case of SOMN athletes, any medication or drug which is used solely or primarily for improving the performance of an athlete in Special Olympics competition is strictly prohibited.

Under no circumstances may a SOMN official, delegate, coach, volunteer or athlete consume alcoholic beverages within the confines of a Special Olympics venue, stadium, competition, training site or event before or during any Special Olympics competition or training.

A coach or chaperone must be available to supervise athletes from the time of departure until the time of return from training, competitions and events regardless of the competition or housing site. Athletes need to be informed as to who the responsible person is at any given time. All coaches and chaperones are subject to, at least, an eight-hour abstinence from drinking prior to the time they are responsible for athletes at training, competitions and events. At no time or under any circumstances shall coaches and chaperones consume alcohol in the presence of athletes.

Violation of this policy may result in the exclusion of the individual or Delegation from the official event, games or training session."

FIFTEEN-PASSENGER VAN TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

Special Olympics Programs are prohibited from using 15-passenger vans to transport athletes or other individuals to and from Special Olympics events, and Special Olympics strongly discourages other organizations from using 15-passenger vans to transport people to or from Special Olympics events.

Special Olympics recognizes that it is up to each non-Special Olympics organization to determine whether to use 15-passenger vans. By using 15-passenger vans, a non-Special Olympics organization understands that:

1. Anyone operating a 15-passenger van owned by a non-Special Olympics organization for the purpose of transporting Special Olympics athletes or other persons to or from Special Olympics activities is acting as the employee or volunteer of the organization and not on behalf of Special Olympics
2. The driver's operation of the 15-passenger van will be considered to be in the course and scope of the driver's employment for or volunteer responsibilities for the non-Special Olympics organization, and not for or on behalf of Special Olympics
3. Non-Special Olympics organizations that operate 15-passenger vans should comply with the applicable safety standards promulgated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

PARTICIPANT SCREENING POLICY

In 2005, Special Olympics Inc. instituted a volunteer screening process and policy for all U.S. programs. Special Olympics Minnesota has elected to adopt a more stringent screening process, driven by our obligation to not only protect the organization but also, and most importantly, to provide the safest environment possible for all participants while they are involved in Special Olympics activities. This Screening Policy includes all Class A volunteers as defined below, as well as Special Olympics athletes with a criminal history.

Please review the Background Check Compliance information on **Page 13 for further information on this process.*

Special Olympics Minnesota Participant Screening Policy

***All Class A Volunteers** must have a criminal background check that includes a check against a national vendor database and the sex offender registry for each State in which the sex offender registry is available. Only athletes with a criminal history need to be screened. In addition, SOMN will conduct any available and additional searches as warranted by the initial background check.

***Class A Volunteers Include:**

- Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes such as coaches, chaperones, Unified Partners, Area and Local Sports Management Team members, Heads of Delegation, ALPs mentors, drivers for athletes and volunteers who have administrative or fiscal authority
- Staff, fundraising committee and games management team members, finance officers and law enforcement volunteers
- Parents and siblings of athletes are subject to a criminal background check when they are serving in a Class A volunteer capacity. Please note that a parent who serves as a Special Olympics coach for his/her child will be considered a Class A volunteer and is subject to the required criminal background check – even if the only child who is being coached is the parent’s own child

Types of Screening

Adult Class A Volunteers – Completed Volunteer Application form, and screen for criminal record, which will include sex offender registry.

Minor Class A Volunteers (Ages 17 and under) – Completed Volunteer Application form, two references (one from applicant’s school).

Athletes with a Criminal History - Completed Application for Participation form, and screen for criminal record, which will include sex offender registry.

Frequency of the Background Checks:

- All new Class A volunteers will be screened and only athletes with a criminal history will be screened upon receipt and entry of their respective application for participation in the program.
- All previously screened participants will be re-screened every three years

Results of a Background Check using National Vendor:

A. Automatic disqualifiers from participation with no appeals process

1 (one) Conviction for crime of:

- a) Child abuse
- b) Sexual abuse of a minor/adult
- c) Causing a child’s death
- d) Neglect of child or any other individual for whom the potential participant had/has responsibility
- e) Kidnapping
- f) Murder
- g) Manslaughter

PARTICIPANT SCREENING POLICY (CONTINUED)

- h) Felony assault or battery
- i) Misdemeanor assault or battery (Class A Volunteers)
- j) Arson
- k) Criminal sexual conduct
- l) Identity theft

B. Automatic disqualifier for driving on behalf of Special Olympics (for offenses that have occurred within a specified time frame)

1. DWI, DUI, or comparable offenses within seven years of application
2. Three or more moving violations within the past three years of application

C. Other potential disqualifiers from participation

1. Adverse judgment for damages or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor
2. Conviction for:
 - a) Theft of funds
 - b) Burglary
 - c) Misdemeanor assault or battery (athletes only)
 - d) Fraud
 - e) Larceny or other financial crime
 - f) Prostitution-related crime
 - g) Controlled substance crime
3. Being the subject of any court order involving sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor that restricts contact with a minor
4. Special Olympics has the authority to make the final decision regarding any participant in the potential disqualifier category

D. Appeals Process

1. Participants with Automatic Disqualifiers: The only appeals that will be considered by SOMN are those based on inaccurate data from the background check. Such appeals will be handled on a case-by-case basis within 30 days of receipt
2. Participants with Other Potential Disqualifiers: Participant must complete a Consumer Report Individualized Evaluation and return to SOMN. Such appeals will be handled on a case-by-case basis within 30 days of receipt

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA FORMS

Frequently used forms can be found online at somn.org/programguideresources

FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING

Authorizing Persons

- A **Financial Responsibility Form** must be completed for all Delegations.
- The Financial Responsibility Form will also be required for documenting **all** changes in Area/Delegation financial responsibility. It can be found on our website at somn.org/otherforms
- Financial Responsibility forms should be signed both by the person responsible for Area/Delegation finances, as well as the Area Coordinator/Head of Delegation.
- For internal control purposes, the Head of Delegation/Area Coordinator should not be the same person handling the Area/Delegation finances. (*This may not be possible for small Delegations with no Local Sports Management Team structure in place.*)
- Payment requests and funds transfers **must** be approved by the Finance Chair - the person responsible for keeping the Area/Delegation's financial information.

Payment Requests

Areas/Delegations may have purchases paid for out of their centralized account by submitting an invoice to the State Office accompanied by a **Check Requests/Expense Reports Form**. This can be found on our website at somn.org/otherforms (*This form may also be used to request reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the Area/Delegation.*)

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- Fill out the vendor name and address, the invoice date, total amount of the purchase, the description and who is making the request.
- Check the appropriate box on the top right.
- All payment requests should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Attach **originals** of all relevant documentation to the payment request.
- Requests for expense reimbursement must be submitted within **60 days** of the actual expense.
- Requests that have not been completed correctly or approved by the authorized person will not be processed.
- Payment of requests is subject to availability of funds in the Area/Delegation central account.
- Payments are made by the State Office every Wednesday.
- Payment requests should reach the State Office by Tuesday to be included in the week's check run.

FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING (CONTINUED)

Cash Advances

An Area/Delegations may request for a Cash Advance when a number of expenses are expected to occur in a short period of time and/or when there is not enough notice as to the pending expense for the State Office to make payment directly to the vendor. All advance requests should be submitted on a **Check Requests/Expense Reports Form** at least two weeks prior to the date needed. This form can be found on our website at somn.org/otherforms

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- Fill out the vendor name and address, the invoice date, total amount of the purchase, the description and who is making the request.
- Check the appropriate box on the top right i.e. Cash Advance.
- All cash advances must be accounted for within **30 days** of the request. Checking the "No Check Required" box on the top right, list all payments made using the funds and attach all the relevant receipts and/or invoices. Any balance should be returned to the central account.
- Areas/Delegations will be allowed only one outstanding advance at any time. Advance requests received from an Area/Delegation with a previously issued outstanding advance will be denied.
- Requests for cash advances should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Incomplete advance requests will not be processed.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date you are forwarding it to the State Office.

Revenue Deposits

Use the Revenue Report Form to record all funds to the State Office for deposit into your central account. This form can be found on our website at somn.org/otherforms

- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- The revenue should be classified by the specific sources on the revenue report, i.e. Individual Donations, Corporate Donations, Civic Service Donations, etc.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date that you are forwarding it to the State Office.

FINANCES/CENTRALIZED ACCOUNTING (CONTINUED)

Mileage Reimbursement

If Area/Delegation reimburse mileage, please use and full complete the **Mileage Reimbursement Form** for documentation. This can be found on our website at somn.org/otherforms

- It is up to each individual delegation to determine if they are in a position to offer mileage reimbursement to volunteers as this reimbursement is expensed to the delegations account.
- Insert your five-character Delegation code on the top left box, e.g. 01XYZ
- The reimbursement rate to be used is the IRS standard rate for persons providing services to charitable organizations. The current rate is **14 cents per mile**. This rate can be found at www.irs.gov and may change from year to year.
- Mileage reimbursement requests **must** have beginning and ending odometer readings.
- Reimbursements can **not** be made for volunteer gas purchases. Volunteers should use the **Mileage Reimbursement Form** instead.
- Requests should be approved by the authorizing person recognized by the State Office.
- Incomplete advance requests will not be processed.
- Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form for your records, noting the date that you are forwarding it to the State Office.

Tournament Fees

Tournament fees will be recovered from the Delegation central account based on the delegation's registration numbers at the scratch deadline. Any cash/checks received towards these fees will be deposited into the central account.

All fundraising projects must be submitted for review and must adhere to the following timeline:

- **Up to 45 days before project:** The project coordinator (person conducting the fundraiser) submits application to his/her Program Manager/Associate for approval.
- **Within five (5) working days:** the Program Manager/Associate will review the application for accuracy*. If approved, the Program Manager/Associate will submit signed application to the Vice President of Development for approval.
- **Within five (5) working days:** The Vice President of Development approves/disapproves* request and remits copy of application to Program Manager/Associate and project coordinator.
- **Within 45 days after Project:** The project coordinator submits their "Fundraising Report" to the Program Manager/Associate.

***Note: it is recommended that only 30 percent or less of income generated annually should be spent for costs incurred to raise funds. All 501(c)(3) nonprofits must adhere to this revenue/expenditure ratio.**

*The State Office will review the application and work with the Area and/or local Program to ensure the development of an effective and profitable fundraising project. In compliance with state, federal and Special Olympics, Inc. rules and regulations, any use of the Special Olympics name and logo must have prior approval from Special Olympics Minnesota (Special Olympics Minnesota Use of Logo Application can be found on the next page). The intent of the application is to cultivate a coordinated fundraising effort between the local, Area and state programs as well as to ensure the proposed project is productive, legal and safe.

The Fundraising Project Application can be found at somn.org/programguideresources

LOGO USAGE GUIDELINES

Please adhere to the following guidelines when using the Special Olympics Minnesota logo on any item (including printed materials and apparel.)

- Any use of the SOMN logo on printed materials must be approved. (Proofs can be e-mailed or faxed.) Fill out the Use of Logo Application (found on sogn.org/programguide) and submit to your Program Manager/Associate.
- The SOMN logo must include both the circular seal and the text. The seal **cannot** be separated and used alone.
- The SOMN logo can only be reproduced in the following color schemes: all traditional red, all white, all black, all grey, black and red or grey and red.
- The State Office will create a Delegation and/or Area logo for you. It will be the full Special Olympics Minnesota logo with the Delegation or Area name included below. As with the SOMN logo, it cannot be used in pieces.
- Delegations/Areas cannot create their own logos. Though they can have fun fonts and designs for things such as T-shirts, their actual logo is the full official logo.
- Any Delegation/Area apparel designs must be approved. (Proofs can be e-mailed or faxed.) Send inquiries to info@sogn.org.

One line SOMN logo examples:



Two line SOMN logo examples:

