

*Special
Olympics*



Athlete Representative Participant Workbook

June 2021



**ATHLETE
LEADERSHIP**

Lesson 1: Preparing for Meetings

? Instructions

1

Read the information provided in each Lesson.

2

Answer the reflective questions at the end.

3

For the activities, do *one* of the following:

- Print out and complete by hand.
- Complete on your computer and print.



Lesson 1: Preparing for meetings

✓ What is a meeting?

A **meeting** is when two or more people come together to discuss one or more topics, often in a formal or business setting, but meetings also occur in a variety of other environments.

✓ Before a meeting...

You need to prepare for a meeting to make sure you will have successful participation.



ACTIVITY

In groups, practice setting up a meeting.

Together decide on a topic and review the checklist together:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Topic (*what are we talking about*): _____

How many people are in the meeting? _____

Who is invited to attend? _____

How are they invited?

please circle one

Email

Phone call

Announcement

The agenda

please circle one

Items from the last meeting

New items

Facilitator checklist

_____ who will take notes?

_____ *if online or phone, confirm dial-in number, zoom link, etc.*

_____ minutes of previous meeting (should be sent in advance)

_____ do we need a flip chart, markers, projector, presentation or materials?

_____ meeting agenda

_____ *if in person, meeting room reserved and set-up*

_____ are any special guests invited?

 **During a meeting...**

A successful meeting:

- Starts on time
- Has enough participants
- Has an agenda
- Discussion stays on topic and is productive
- Has a welcoming environment where people feel safe to share their opinions
- The group discusses topics and makes a decision
- Everybody understands the decisions
- All agree on an action plan or next steps after the meeting

ACTIVITY

The same groups will meet again and start the meeting they planned before remembering everything they need to do during a meeting. One of the participants should take minutes. When someone is responsible for taking minutes, that means they write down notes or a summary of the meeting:

Date: _____

Location: _____

Participants: _____

Facilitator: _____

Special Guests: _____

Notes:

Time the meeting started: _____ *Time the meeting ended:* _____

Read minutes from last meeting. *Anyone have any questions or comments?*

Old business, discuss items pending from last meeting: _____

New business, discuss new items: _____

Next steps: _____

Note taker: _____



After a meeting...

What to do after a meeting?

- 1 Pass the meeting notes to all participants (through WhatsApp, email, calls, etc.).
- 2 Follow up with team members (through WhatsApp, email, calls, etc.).
- 3 Organize your tasks and complete them.
- 4 Stay in touch: ask questions, help others.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Think about what you have learned and how you can put it into practice:

1 Share something you have learned in this lesson:

2 Think about your role during a meeting. Write an X under Yes or No:

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Would you like to be a facilitator? | | |
| Would you like to write the minutes? | | |
| Would you like to follow up with team members and their tasks? | | |
| Would you like to have follow-up discussions with others? | | |

3 What is something you will do every time you prepare for a meeting?

Lesson 2:

Meeting behavior

Lesson 2: Meeting behaviors

✓ Meeting behaviors



A behavior is the way in which one acts, especially toward others.

- A meeting gathers a group of people with different personalities, experiences, ideas and expertise.
- For a meeting to be successful (**see Lesson 1**) everyone needs to contribute. Their behaviors during the meeting matter.
- People are different and so they will act in different ways during a meeting. Here are some examples of common behaviors you will see during a meeting:



Listen



**Remove
distractions**



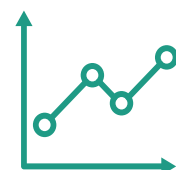
**Respect
timing**



**Speak
clearly**



**Take turns
to speak**



**Make
progress**

ACTIVITY

Look through each of the behaviors on the left and the definitions listed on the right.

Draw a line to connect each behavior to the correct definition.



Overly talkative

Combative personality. Regularly creates a discussion.



Easily distracted

Likes to be the center of attention, may know a lot about the topic and wants to tell everyone, or likes to talk a lot.



Uninterested

Gets distracted easily, distracts other members and you with side conversations.



Argues a lot

Seems bored, as if they do not care. Or can come across shy.

ACTIVITY

Here are some **tips on how to address the behavior** we discussed previously.

Divide into groups, each group must have a facilitator that can role play one of the behaviors and ask the other to follow the tips on how to react and improve the situation. After that, ask other members of the group to role play other behaviors.

Behavior

What to do?



Overly talkative

- **Slow them down with questions that make them think.**
- **Interrupt with: “That’s an interesting point... now let’s see what the group thinks of it.”**



Easily distracted

- **Engage them by asking a question or call on them by name to get their attention.**
- **If it persists you can nicely ask them to join the group discussion.**



Uninterested

- **Remind everyone this is a safe space and that everyone is free to share their thoughts in a respectful way.**
- **Ask their opinion. Learn about their interests.**
- **Be sure to compliment them the first time they share – and be sincere about it.**



Argues a lot

- **Manage your own emotions. Don’t let group get excited either.**
- **Review their points to understand their opinion, express your agreement and then move on to something else.**
- **As a last resort, talk to them privately during a break. Try to find out what’s bothering them. See if you can promote cooperation.**

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Think about what you have learned and how you can put it into practice:

1 Share something you have learned in this lesson:

2 Think about the behavior you show during a meeting. Remember your past experiences in meetings and think about what you usually do. **Be honest!**

In the activity below, anything that you put an X next for a negative behavior just means you have something to work on in the future.

Mark an X under Yes or No for each question. Then, ***review these answers with a mentor, friend, family member or Special Olympics staff to identify your behaviors during meetings.***

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| You tend to talk more than others | | |
| You arrive on time | | |
| You express your ideas briefly and clearly | | |
| You do not participate during discussions | | |
| You tend to feel angry or upset when you do not agree with others | | |
| You speak loudly and over other people in discussions | | |
| You stop participating in the meeting when someone interrupts you | | |
| You motivate everyone to participate | | |
| You get distracted easily | | |
| When you disagree with someone you remain calm | | |

3 What is something you will do every time you prepare for a meeting?

4 After reviewing your behaviors in meetings, is there something you want to change or improve? Why?

Lesson 3: Athlete Leadership Councils

Lesson 3:

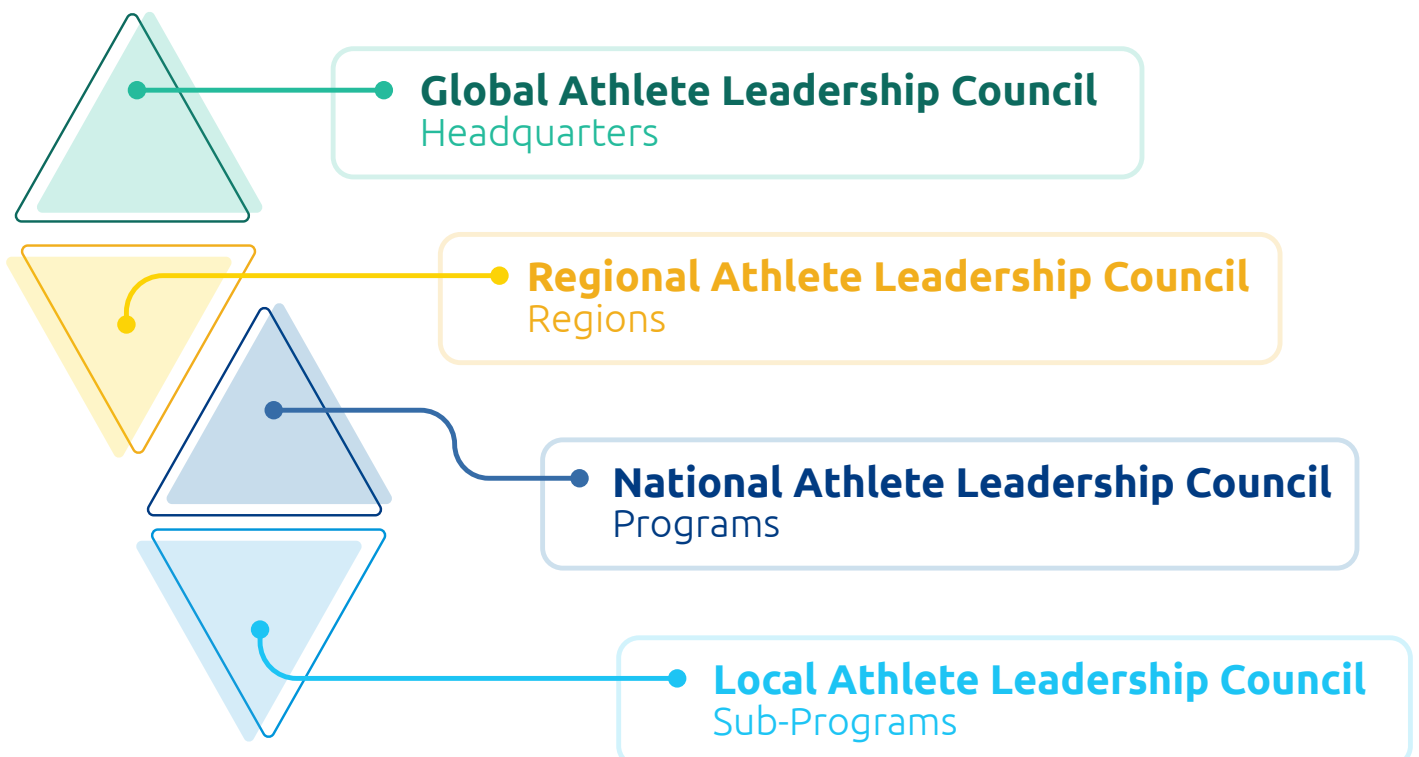
Athlete Leadership Councils

✔ What is an Athlete Leadership Council?

Previously known as an Athlete Input Council. The name was changed to better reflect the role this group has in the organization. Providing input is still an important piece but not the only one. The council is a structure created for athletes to:

- Report to other athletes and Program leaders what is happening in their areas.
- Voice their peers' opinions about important issues related to Special Olympics.
- Develop, plan, and implement projects.
- Serves as a liaison in different areas of the organization providing support and expertise.
- Gain leadership training and experience.

This structure exists at a global, regional, national, and local level.



ACTIVITY

As you learn what an Athlete Leadership Council is, let's reflect on the role. You will be divided into smaller groups so you can discuss the following questions.

1 Why is it important for Programs to have an Athlete Leadership Council?

2 How can a Special Olympics Program benefit from having an Athlete Leadership Council?

3 What are characteristics an athlete needs to be successful in this role?



Athlete Leadership Council: Responsibilities

Now we will learn about three important responsibilities of Athlete Leadership Council members and the associated actions.

Athlete Leadership Council

What they do

How they do it



LEAD
their Special
Olympics Program

- Know issues related to the Special Olympics Program.
- Represent other athletes' ideas and concerns.
- Contribute to event planning and implementation.
- Serve as liaison between athletes and staff in different programmatic areas.



EMPOWER
athletes

- Organize Leadership trainings and events in their Special Olympics Program.



ADVOCATE

- Communicate important issues related to athletes.
- Model Unified Leadership
- Know Special Olympics organization strategic plan and priorities.

ACTIVITY

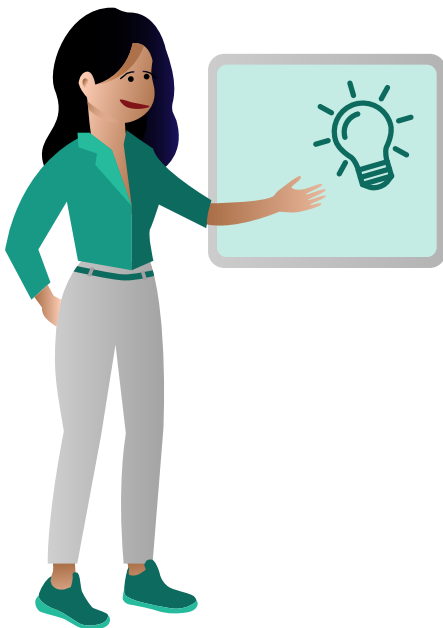
After reviewing the ALC member responsibilities let us read the following scenarios and think of which actions can help these athletes be successful in their role.



Jenna is a Special Olympics bocce athlete and an ALC member.

She heard two athletes express their concerns about not having a lot of opportunities to compete. Jenna would like to share this with the rest of the Council, but she is not sure if everyone feels this way.

What would you advise Jenna to do?



The Special Olympics Macau team is planning their National Games.

Wang, an ALC member, has participated in some of the planning discussion. She has many ideas on how to engage athlete leaders during the Games.

What would you advise Wang to do?



Athlete Leadership Council: Operations

Members



The number of athletes on the council will vary depending on the size and needs of the Special Olympics Program. It is important to have enough athletes to get a variety of input and perspectives.

Suggested members: Minimum 2-3 athletes.

Selection of Members

Each Special Olympics Program will ultimately develop the criteria, requirements, and process to select athletes to serve in this role.

Suggested criteria:

- Leadership and Skills Curriculum Core Modules Completed:
 - 1 Introduction to Athlete Leadership**
 - 2 Understanding Leadership**
- Athlete Representative Module Completed
- Have a minimum of five years of Special Olympics experience
 - 1 Currently registered athlete**
 - 2 Involved in Athlete Leadership**
 - 3 Participated in a sport competition/ program within the last five years**
- Be knowledgeable about Special Olympics
- Have effective communications skills (oral, written or listening – do not need all three)
- Able to contribute to meetings
- Can commit to time, requirements, and expectations of the role

Suggested selection process:

Open call for athletes interested in participating. Create an evaluation committee composed of SO staff, coaches and athletes.

Length

Each Special Olympics Program will determine the term or length of time the members serve on the Council. ***Suggested term: A term of three years minimum.***

Officers

All ALCs must have a:



Chairperson:

The Chairperson provides leadership to the ALC; collaborates with SO Program staff; prepares agendas; facilitate calls/meetings; and attends calls/meetings regularly.

Vice Chair:

The Vice Chair collaborates with the Chairperson and performs Chairperson's responsibilities when Chairperson is unavailable.

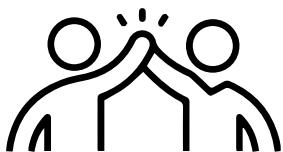
Secretary:

The Secretary takes attendance on calls and at meetings; distributes minutes in a timely manner of all calls/meetings with assistance as needed from facilitator; and distributes agenda for upcoming calls/meetings in a timely manner.

Calls/Meetings

Each Special Olympics Program and ALC will determine the frequency of their calls/meetings. **Suggested term: Monthly or bimonthly calls.**

Mentors



Athletes can choose to be accompanied by a mentor for conference calls and in-person meetings.

The role of the mentor is to provide the support as needed for the ALC member's preparation to successfully participate in meetings and calls.

ACTIVITY

Check your understanding. Read the statement and select the answer you consider to be correct.

- 1** One of the purposes of the Athlete Leadership Council is:
 - a** For Program staff to delegate responsibilities to.
 - b** Serve as a liaison in different areas of the organization providing support and expertise.
 - c** Lead in all leadership events.

- 2** Members of the Athlete Leadership Council are expected to:
 - a** Contribute to event planning and execution.
 - b** Only provide input on specific topics when asked.
 - c** Voice only their own opinions and experiences.

- 3** Members of the Athlete Leadership Council serve in their role:
 - a** Indefinitely.
 - b** For a specific period of time.
 - c** As long as they want to.

- 4** An important requirement for athletes to be part of an ALC is:
 - a** Be able to read and write.
 - b** Be a medal winning athlete.
 - c** Be knowledgeable about Special Olympics.

- 5** Mentor that participates in Athlete Leadership Council calls/meetings must:
 - a** Support the athlete so they are prepared for the calls/meetings.
 - b** Voice the athlete's opinion in the calls/meetings.
 - c** Take notes for the members of the ALC.

Lesson 4:

Committees and Boards of Directors

Lesson 4:

Committees and Boards of Directors

✔ What is a Special Olympics Committee?

The purpose of a **committee** is to solve problems, plan events, make budgets. Really, they can do just about anything when they work together, and everyone does their share.

ACTIVITY

Do you know what it takes to be a good committee member?

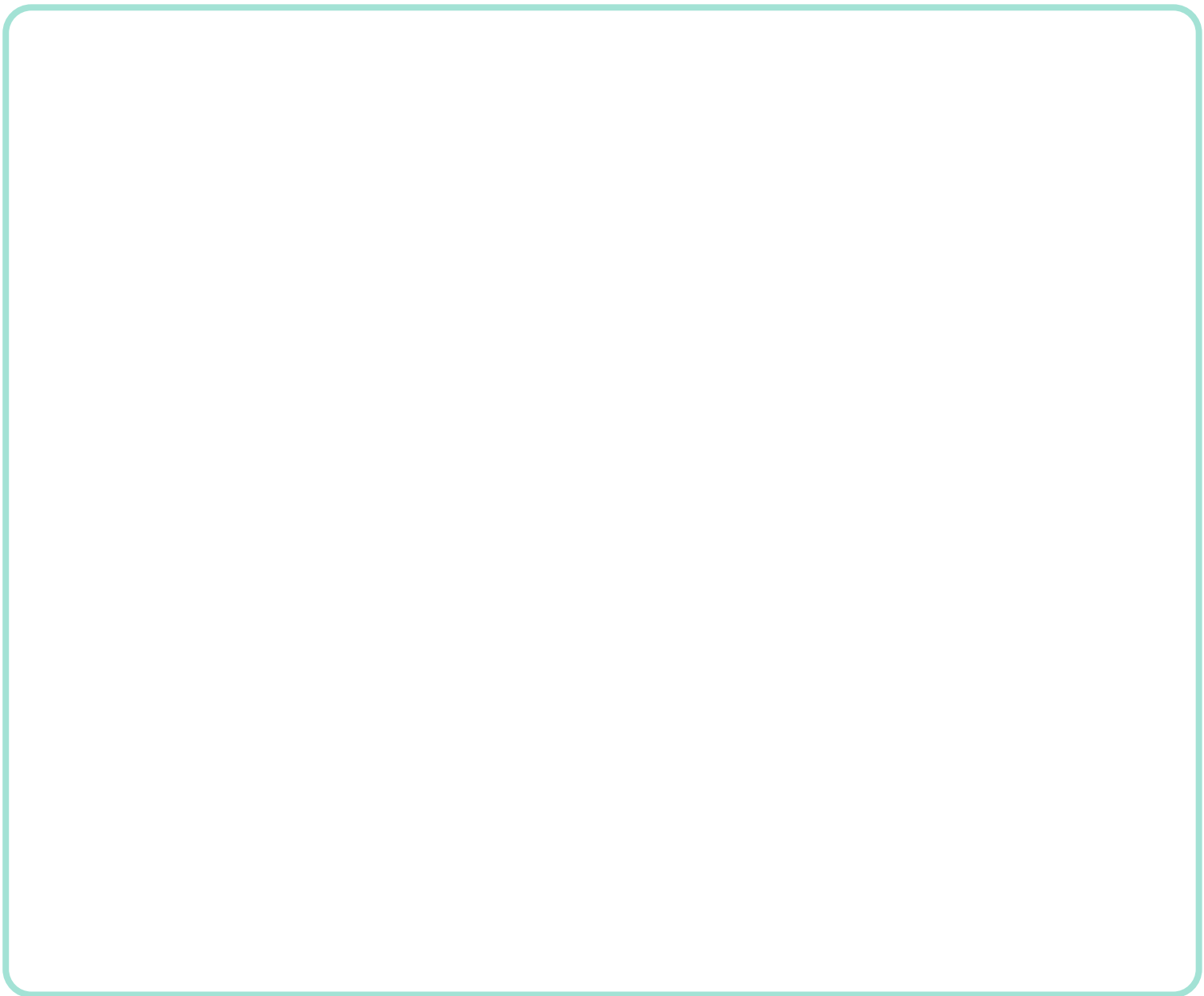
What are responsibilities of all committee members?

We need to come up with at least five things, but let us try for seven! Everybody can write their ideas in the chat box. This is an individual activity but you can draft your idea in the box below.

Once you have a list compare it with these good behaviors from committee member:

- Listens to everyone's ideas
- Research and learn about the issues
- Make a list of what works and what does not work and why
- Get input from others outside the committee (i.e. athletes or volunteers)
- Do not share confidential information with people not on the committee
- Work together for the best solution
- Get consensus from the group
- Act professionally
- Accept the group decision even if you disagree

What else did you come up with that is missing from the list above?



ACTIVITY

Divide into smaller groups of 3-5 athletes.

Each group will be a **Unified Sports committee for a Special Olympics Program**, and they need to decide how to spend \$5,000 USD in the next 6 months to increase the participation of Unified Partners. We suggest you use break out rooms and when finished let one team leader per group describe their decision-making process.

After everyone shares, ask the following questions:

- How did you feel during the committee meeting?
- Did you find it easy or challenging?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?

Notes:

ACTIVITY

Special Olympics has different committees for different purposes. Can you think of some?

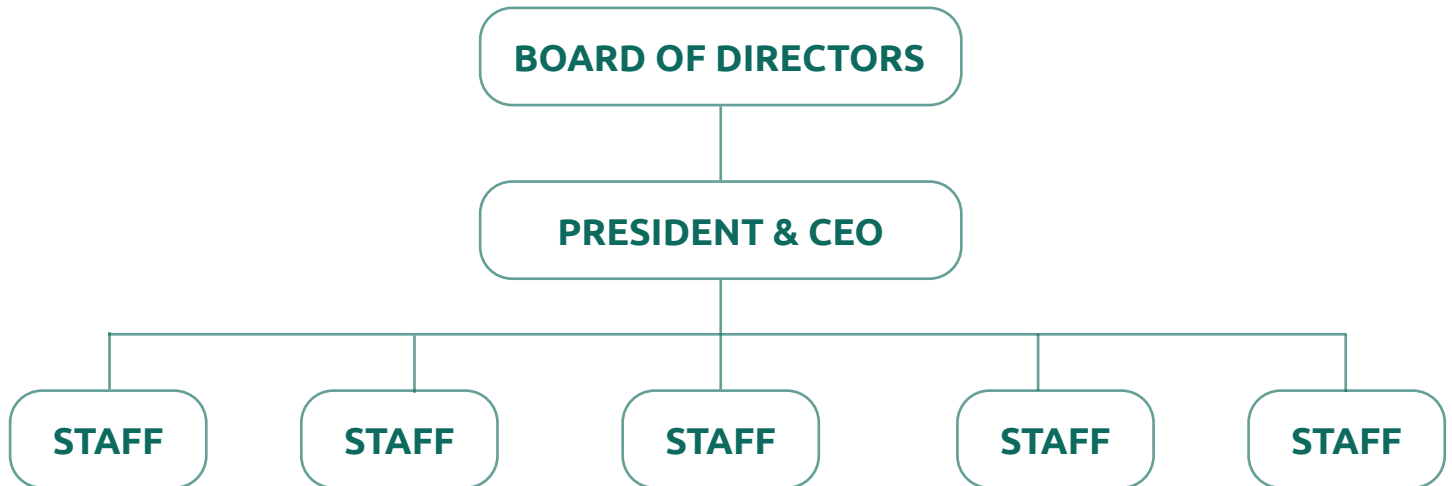
Please write them down here and, when appropriate, share with the group.



Here are some examples of Special Olympics committees:

- Athlete Leadership Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Opening Ceremonies Committee
- Family Committee
- Volunteer Recruitment Committee

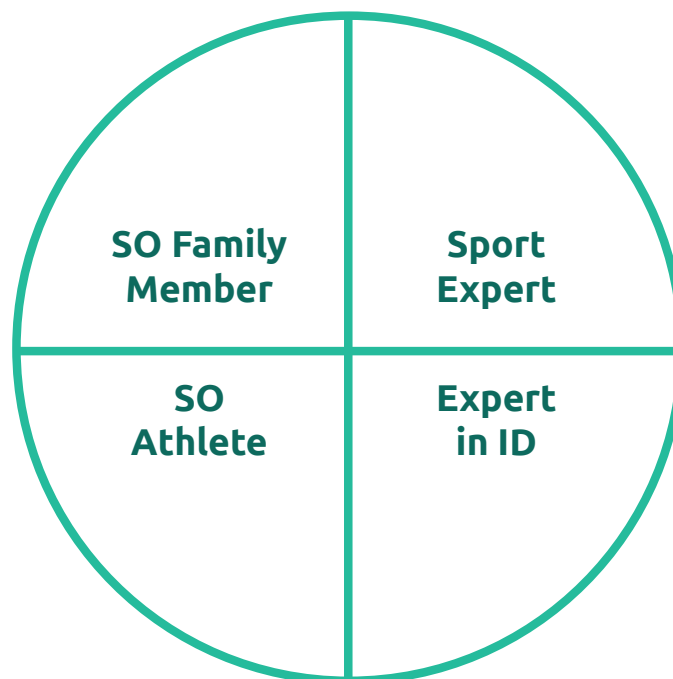
✓ What is a Special Olympics Boards of Directors?



The Board of Directors sets the policy for the Program and supervises the CEO. They also oversee the budget for the program.

The Board of Directors needs to have enough members so they can supervise and make decisions in time. They should include members from different locations and different professions who have experience in Special Olympics or with intellectual disabilities, or an interest in developing and expanding Special Olympics.

As a requirement all Board of Directors must include at least one:



ACTIVITY

Let us reflect on what we have learned so far. You will be divided into smaller groups so you can answer and discuss the following questions.

1 How can a Special Olympics Program benefit from having athletes participating as a board of director and a committee member?

2 What are some of the challenges for an athlete serving on a Board of Directors? How would you manage them if you were on a Board?

3 Think about yourself in these roles. What strengths do you already have that will help you succeed? What would you need to improve?

4 What kind of support does an athlete leader need to be successful in these roles?

Please complete the [Training Evaluation Form](https://bit.ly/3x08Phi):
<https://bit.ly/3x08Phi>
(please note: link is case sensitive)

