

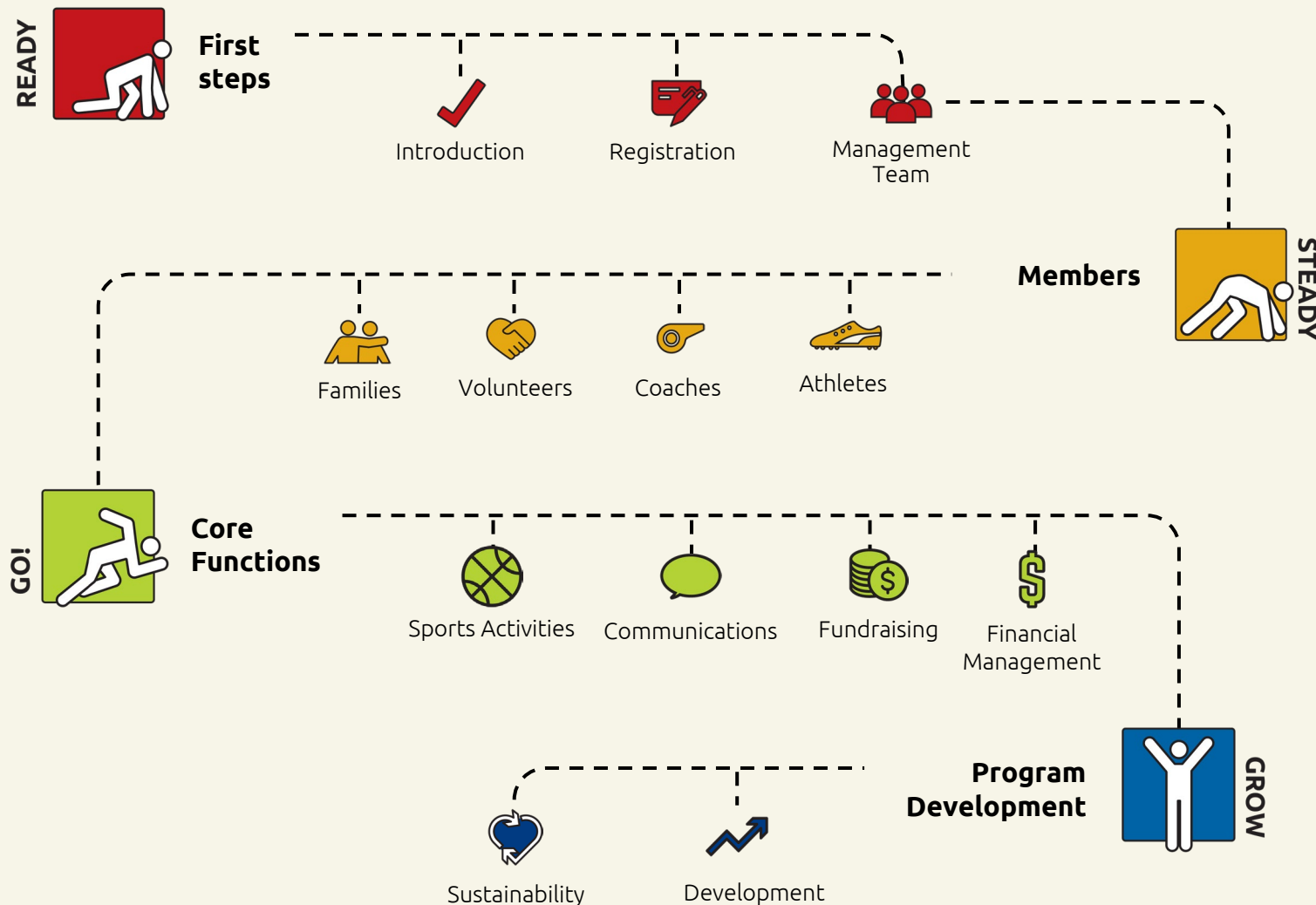
Local Program Development Roadmap



What is a Local Program?

A local program offers Special Olympics sports and non-sport activities within a community. It is a local branch of the Special Olympics National/State Program.

Special Olympics local programs are open for anyone to become a member – people with and without intellectual disabilities, their families, and volunteers from all backgrounds. It is at the local grassroots level of the movement where communities of inclusion are built, and everyone's abilities are appreciated.





What is Special Olympics?

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, promotes social inclusion and builds inclusive communities for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) around the world. Through programming in **SPORTS, HEALTH, EDUCATION, and LEADERSHIP**, Special Olympics promotes equal rights and opportunities for people with ID.



Mission

To provide year-round sports training & athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. This gives them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.



Vision

Through sport, Special Olympics opens hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and creates inclusive communities all over the world.



Goals

Goal 1: to improve local sports participation and wellbeing of athletes to strengthen communities.

Goal 2: to remove barriers to inclusion and expand our reach through digital technology.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE OATH

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

Levels of Special Olympics Operations

LOCAL CLUB

- ☐ Organizes Special Olympics in a local community
- ☐ Engages athletes, families and siblings, coaches and volunteers
- ☐ Is organized according to National/State Program rules and this guide

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ACCREDITED NATIONAL/STATE PROGRAM

- ☒ Organizes events and games at national, state and local levels
- ☒ Often is divided into sub-Programs (by province, county or similar geographic area within Country/State)
- ☒ Provides Local Clubs with guidance, support, information, resources, policies and procedures

SPECIAL OLYMPICS REGION

- ☒ Supports implementation of SOI rules & policies regionally
- ☒ Supports development and roll-out of Special Olympics resources
- ☒ Provides support to National and State Programs in the Region
- ☒ Organizes Regional events and Games

SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL (SOI)

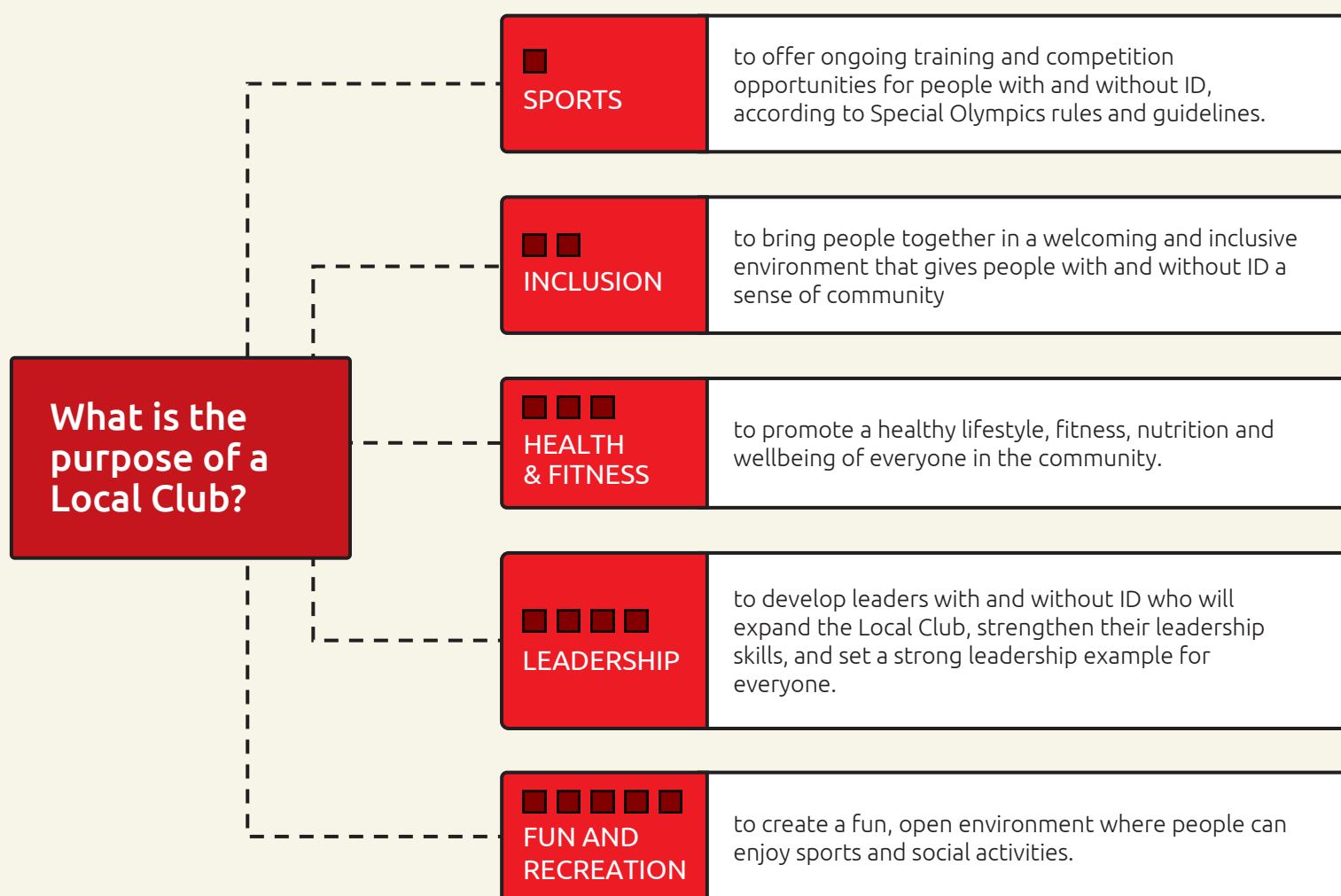
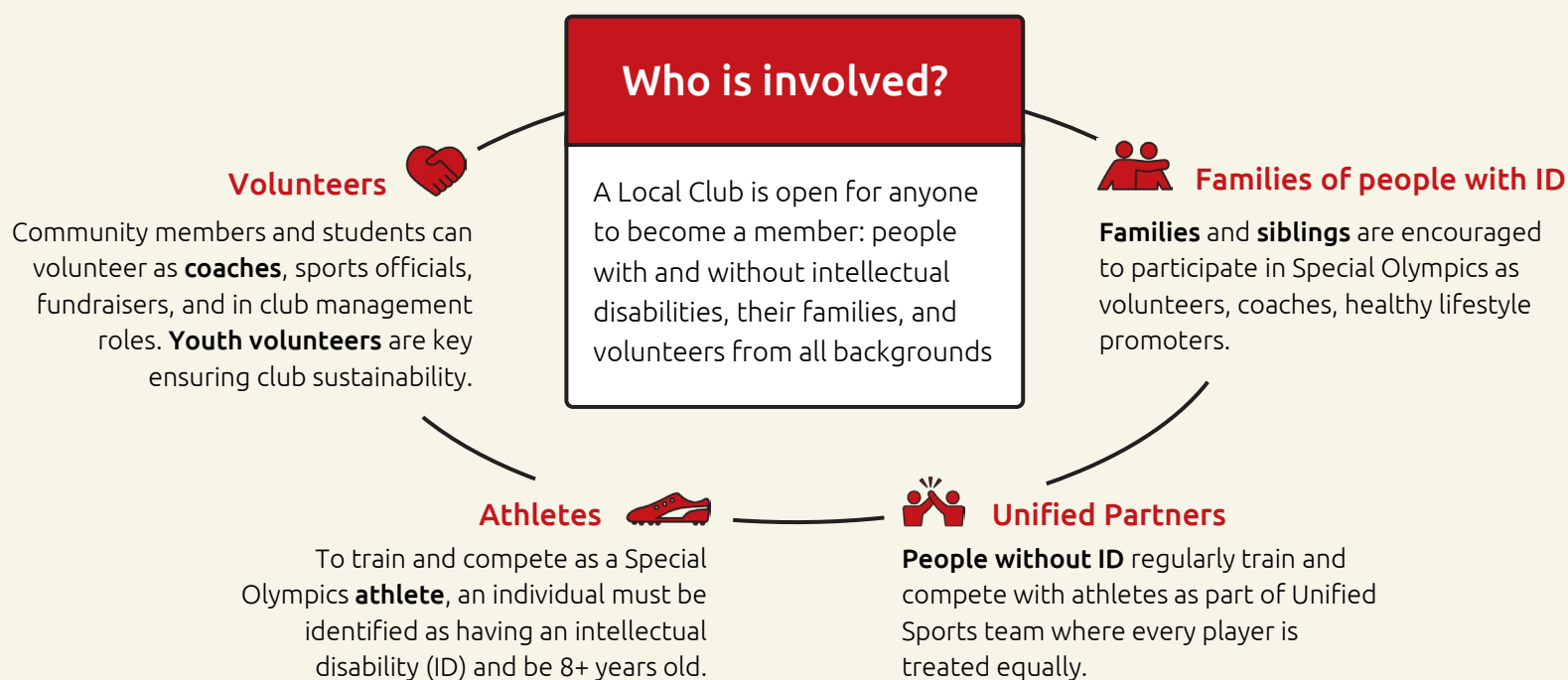
- ☒ Provides global resources
- ☒ Guides overall strategic direction
- ☒ Accredits National and State level Special Olympics Programs
- ☒ Organizes global events and Games



FIRST STEPS Local Clubs



A Local Club is a local branch of the Special Olympics National/State Program that offers sport and non-sport activities. The importance of the Local Club level of the organization cannot be emphasized enough. It is at the grassroots Local Club level where communities of inclusion are built, and everyone's abilities are appreciated.





FIRST STEPS Registering a club



Before forming a new club...

Determine whether there is a **NEED**:

- What (if any) Special Olympics activities are already taking place in or near your geographical area?
- What specific sport and community needs the new Special Olympics club should help meet?

An **ALTERNATIVE** to consider:

- Can existing clubs expand their programming to fulfill these additional needs instead (e.g., an existing club offering additional sports)?

Once the decision to establish a new club is made,
FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

STEP 1



Get support from the National/State Program

Contact Special Olympics
Program office in your
country/state.

National/State **Program staff** will
be happy to work with you
through the first steps of building
your local club and will **guide you**
through the registration process.

STEP 2



Choose the right location

Choosing the right location of a
Special Olympics club is critical
to its success.

Athlete demand, availability of
financial and human resources,
and access to facilities need to
be considered as part of the
broader planning process.

STEP 3



Register the club

A local **club must be registered**
with Special Olympics National or
State Program. Once registered,
a local club becomes part of the
national or state delivery
network. Registration gives the
Club the right to use the Special
Olympics logo, brand, and to
participate in competitions.

A club may be based in a



Community
Sports Club



Existing community
organization



Geographic
community



School, University,
College



Independent
living facility



Find a Special Olympics Program in your country or state



FIRST STEPS

Registering a club



Putting it into practice...



Get support from the National/State Program

Some Programs may have dedicated volunteers or staff who support local clubs (e.g., local sports coordinator).



Contact these people to discuss your plan and get guidance and advice. There may be additional requirements for registering a school-based club



Communication is the key. Invest time to learn about club registration requirements and process and collect all required material



Choose the right location

With the help of Special Olympics National or State Program consider the following questions when determining the location for a new club



? Needs

- Is there data on the people with ID in your geographical area?

? Resources

- Are there enough potential volunteers to start and sustain the club?
- Are there sufficient resources to offer Special Olympics activities? If not, will it be possible to find them?
- Are there suitable sports facilities to host training in the sport(s) selected?

? Accessibility

- Is the proposed location of club activities convenient/safe for athletes/ volunteers to access?
- Are the proposed sporting facilities easily accessible for all members?
- Are they accessible to people with different physical abilities?



Connect with existing Special Olympics clubs and sports clubs in your geographical area to get support and help you build community connections.

Start Special Olympics
Camp Shriver Club



RESOURCES



Start a School-based
Special Olympics Club



What happens in a Club directly impacts safety and security of the athletes; it can either enhance or hurt the experience of the members and the Special Olympics brand overall. Make sure you build a strong management team of volunteers who share the Special Olympics commitment to safety and security of its members and quality of club operations.



Club Management Team Roles

Establish contact with the National/State Program

- Ensure the club meets its goals and obligations to the National/State Program.

Govern

- Manage risks to the club operations.
- Ensure the long-term financial and organizational well-being of the club.

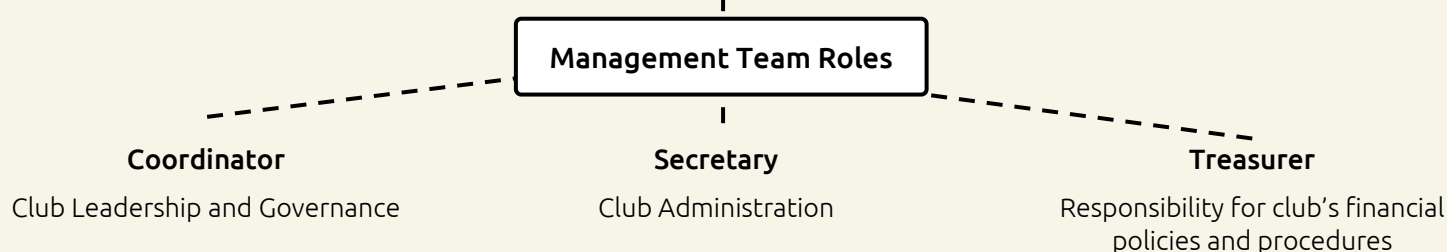
Drive day-to-day operations

- Secure people and resources to achieve club goals.
- Plan and implement club activities to achieve its goals.
- Monitor and evaluate club activities for quality and impact.



Suggested Team Management Structure

The performance of a club is greatly dependent on the performance of its three main club officers - Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer



Management Team Responsibilities

 Governance	lead club's activities and members, oversee finances and ensure good club standing
 Sports	recruit coaches, support coach registration and education; ensure delivery of high-quality sport training and competition, secure facilities and equipment; ensure athletes are eligible to train and compete
 Volunteers	recruit, train, assign roles
 Fundraising	secure funds for club operations
 Communication	lead internal & external communication, manage social media



At the early stages of club development team members may need to handle multiple functions. As the club grows, ideally there is a dedicated person for each club management role and function



FIRST STEPS Club Management Team



Your club is only as good as the people who run it. Support the people involved by clearly defining their roles and responsibilities. The role of the management team is to provide leadership, drive day-to-day operations of the club, and deliver high quality experiences for its members.



Make the time to define

For some people being part of the club management role will be their first volunteer experience. Clearly defined roles & responsibilities are the key. **Be specific and keep it simple.** It might just be a few bullet points to start with.

Some club roles may be too big for one person to effectively manage, especially as the club grows and expands. **Consider splitting a role** to make sure the time commitment required doesn't put people off. This is where a core team helps share the load.



Figure out who

People are busy and could be difficult to recruit committed people into management roles. **Athlete family members**, including siblings, are great supporters. But think wider. Who else in do you know who has the right skills and experiences to support club operations? **Spread the word** through your club network and social or traditional media.



Think of the Future: Support & Develop your Team

Clubs should think of the future when it comes to their management team. **Succession planning** may not seem like a priority, but it takes one change of circumstance, and a club may lose a key volunteer. Does your club have a plan if this happens?

Providing support, positive and rewarding experiences for your core team is also critical for sustainability of the club. Are there any free or low-cost **professional development opportunities** you can access through National/State Program or by partnering with community organizations?

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

It's not really. That's why we've provided some more ideas in the next pages...



FIRST STEPS Club Management Team



Putting it into practice...

Each club is different and has different needs base on the needs of its members.



Make the time to define!

- Does your club have a clear picture of what roles are needed to serve your members?
- What are the areas where leaders in your club can make the biggest difference?

- Clearly define team roles and provide job descriptions
- Ensure the roles are meaningful
- Smaller, more manageable roles might be easier to fill
- The more a role fits individual skills and availability, the more likely they are to stay engaged

Create a simple bullet point list of the key areas and roles that a small leadership team could be responsible for.



Figure out who

- What leaders do you need to recruit into your club?
- How can your club attract and retain the best people in management roles?

- Identify leadership gaps
- Promote leadership opportunities to recruit new leaders
- Assess experience, skills and expertise of volunteers willing to engage in a club
- Identify people with the right skillsets and gauge their interest in providing support to the club

- Write down your club leadership team structure.
- Identify if there are gaps and identify potential recruits.



Think of the future: Support and develop the team

- How would your club manage if one or more of the key volunteers had to step away from their role?
- How does your club support leaders?
- Are there development opportunities for your club leaders?

- Provide your management team support to do a great job in their roles
- Give your team new responsibilities and learning opportunities to develop new skills
- Listen to the team feedback about workload

- Make a simple plan on how you will provide leadership support & development.
- Identify who in the community can help with this.



FIRST STEPS Club Management Team



Start a School-based Special
Olympics Unified Club



RESOURCES

Club management roles
& job descriptions

Think about involving **athletes** in club management roles or create a specific athlete advisor role. Make sure all team members are supported with the right info & help.

Have a look at other successful clubs and the roles they have for management team members. Borrow their best ideas!

Educate team members about Special Olympics. **Meet regularly** to plan activities and guide club development.

Invest the time to make sure everyone is pulling together in the same direction.



IDEAS

When forming your management team, consider:

- Parents, siblings, family members, caregivers of people with ID
- Special education teachers
- Community groups or business
- Successful leaders in your community

Many clubs rely on parents for key roles. Have a **succession plan** ready when these parents no longer have their children involved in the club.

Talk to your current leaders – find out why they have committed to the role & their thoughts on getting more leaders

Find a Special Olympics National /
State Program Near You



LINKS

About Special Olympics

Click on the resource and links boxes to access further information.



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Athletes

To start functioning as a club, you need to promote the club in the community to ensure potential athletes (people with ID) and their families are aware of the available opportunities. Start by identify ways to recruit **ATHLETES**.

STEP 1



Athlete Recruitment

To find and recruit **ATHLETES**

Partnerships	Media	Local Schools
Connect with local government, sports clubs, organizations and community groups working with people with ID outside of school and disability support systems.	Use locally popular social and traditional media to communicate club activities, events and ways to join, e.g., radio, newspaper, places of worship, grocery stores, community newsletters and notice boards.	■ Speak at parent meetings, teacher training days. ■ Advertise club activities to attract athletes, Unified partners and volunteers. ■ Collaborate to introduce Special Olympics programs.

STEP 2



Athlete Registration

Per Special Olympics General Rules, an athlete must:

- Be at least 8 years old and have an intellectual disability or a closely related developmental delay
- Submit an **Athlete Registration Form** for participation in Special Olympics
- Submit a signed **Athlete Release Form**
- Submit a **Medical Form** signed by a licensed medical professional



IMPORTANT:

Athlete registration should be done according to your **National/ State Program's** registration procedures. Contact their office to get guidance.

STEP 3



Athlete Empowerment

A club should seek athlete opinions and involve athletes in everything that the Club does. Over time, the Club should offer athletes skills training to be able to take on leadership roles in the club.



Guidance on Athlete Registration Forms



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Coaches

Your club relies on **COACHES** to deliver programming and activities. Coaches are role models and revealers of character. Special Olympics coaches go even further, they help athletes with intellectual disabilities find their strengths, develop sports skills, improve abilities and sports performance. A potential **COACH** doesn't have to have previous experience working with Special Olympics or people with intellectual disabilities.

STEP 1



Coach Recruitment

Find motivated people willing to devote time to training and developing athletes in your club.

A coach may be:

- a teacher
- a family member
- a general Special Olympics volunteer
- someone with previous coaching experience
- someone passionate about inclusion & empowering others

While previous coaching and sport experience is a plus, it is NOT a requirement

COACH RECRUITMENT IDEAS



Partner with youth sports organizations and professional sports clubs.



Target special and physical education, kinesiology of sport programs students.



Recruit current or former school coaches.



Recruit family members.



Reach out to special education and physical education teachers.

STEP 2



Coach Registration

STEP 3



Coach Training and Development

Check with your National/State Program for guidance on minimum coach training requirement. Think about ways to provide ongoing coach education, training and development. The better the coach, the better the athlete sport experience, the more impact your club will have.

Minimum coach training should include:

Sports-specific training

Intro to Special Olympics

Working with people with ID

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Coaches

Special Olympics Coaches are the heartbeat of our movement. Without coaches, we have no sports programs. Recruiting and training a team of quality coaches is the best thing you can do to attract and retain club members - here are the top 3 things to help your club make this happen.



Always look to recruit more coaches

Constantly be on the lookout for coaches. They can 'sub' into sessions or even pair or team-coach with others, so you have a group of involved people developing together.



Provide support and development opportunities

Provide coaches with equipment, resources, and uniforms. Invite head coaches to join club meetings to share updates on specific programs or initiatives and seek their input into club operations

Provide regular learning and development opportunities. Ongoing coach education is important for retention, athlete experiences and sustainability of your club. .



Recognize them and show your appreciation

Make sure to recognize the vital importance of coaches' role on your club and Special Olympics movement. Expressing your gratitude and showing the impact coaches make on athletes in your club will go the long way. It will hopefully encourage them to further develop their knowledge and skills.

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Coaches

Putting it into practice...



Always look to recruit more coaches

- What kind of coach are you looking for?
- Where does the club start to look?



- Make sure your requirements are clear before starting.
- The starting point may be people who are already in your club or coaching in a mainstream club.
- Connect with other clubs and sport federations.



Look at schools, universities, and mainstream sport clubs. Advertising positions on social media is also a good way to source coaches.



Provide development opportunities

- What are the goals of your club coaches?
- How can your club help their development?



- Formal development: help them access Special Olympics or national sport federation modules, courses, and qualifications.
- Informal development: mentoring, on-the-field training opportunities.



There are many development options to suit coaches of all aspirations. Ask your coaches and design a development plan with them.



Recognize them and show your appreciation

How can the club recognize the effort of coaches?



- Highlight and celebrate coaches in the club newsletters and on social media.
- Thank the coaches for their effort and share stories of impact they are making.
- Hold fun team building activities.



Recognize the difference your coaches make regularly. Make a plan to consistently thank them through the year.



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Coaches

Where to find more help



Connect with other Special Olympics clubs for advice, support and help.



Connect with mainstream sports clubs in your community for support and guidance.



IDEAS

Talk to your current coaches and use them as a resource to retain and grow your club coaches.



Encourage your coaches to stay up-to-date on their specific sport trends and latest developments in addition to Special Olympics resources.



Click on the resource and links boxes to access further information.



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Volunteers

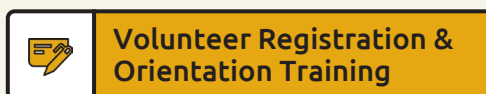
GENERAL VOLUNTEERS play a key role in helping deliver Special Olympics opportunities, activities and experiences for athletes in local communities. Proper volunteer registration is important to ensure the safety and well-being of athletes and other volunteers. Check with your National/State Program to clarify background check/references requirements.

STEP 1



- People connected to people with ID (family members, friends) may be unaware of volunteer opportunities and club roles. Contact them first.
- High schools, colleges students, community volunteer centers.
- National/State Program or local volunteer agencies referrals

STEP 2



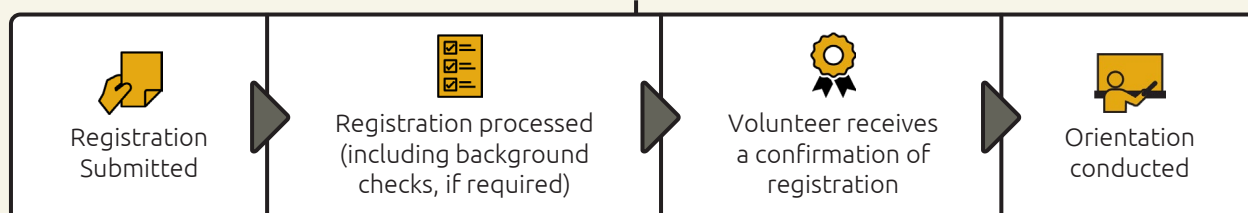
Check with National/ State office to:

- Get guidance on volunteer registration requirements, and orientation process.
- Learn how you should record and store volunteer information
- Get support with volunteer data protection requirements

STEP 3



- Develop volunteer schedules and communicate them well in advance of events.
- Provide adequate supervision and support to volunteers based on their level of experience and confidence
- Rotate volunteers between roles to give variety of experiences.



WHAT IS EXPECTED OF VOLUNTEERS?

- Comply with all registration and safeguarding requirements
- Fulfill assigned responsibilities
- Model good behavior
- Be vigilant and aware of the safety of athletes
- Be committed to volunteering for the club
- Bring new people and ideas to the movement



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Volunteers

Here are the top 3 things to help your club find and keep great volunteers.



Start with Why

Why would someone want to volunteer for your club? Great question! Being able to list all the benefits volunteering enables you to promote the opportunity and spark people's interest. You need to grab people's attention, get them excited about volunteering and then inspire them to make a commitment. Yes – it is a sales job - you need to sell your volunteer opportunity.



Make it easy!

People are busy! If you can sell them on the opportunity to volunteer – then you need to make it as easy as possible for them to be involved. This means being organized, having all the information for your volunteers, ensuring they understand their role and providing any support or training that they need to be successful. Volunteers want to make a difference - they don't want to waste their time.



ACE the Volunteer Experience

Ensuring your volunteers have a positive & rewarding experience is critical. Key to this is ACE – **Appreciated, Connected & Energized!**

Think about how you can thank your volunteers in a meaningful way. Communicate and connect your volunteers to provide a sense of community. Inspire your volunteers and make the experience fun and something they look forward to.

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Volunteers



Putting it into practice...



Start with Why

- Why is volunteering at your club a great opportunity?
- Why would someone commit their time to support your club?



- It's a fun, social & positive experience.
- It is rewarding – you get to make a real difference.
- It looks great on their resume / CV!
- They get to use their skills and qualifications to make a difference



- Write down the key benefits for volunteering at your club.
- Use these to promote the opportunity.



Make it easy!

- How does your club make volunteering as easy as possible?
- What ways can you advertise volunteering opportunities?



- Develop volunteer job descriptions including training requirements. Be clear that some volunteer roles do require experience and qualifications (e.g., first aiders, coaches)
- Advertise volunteer needs (e.g., social media)
- Hold informational meetings for potential volunteers to identify their interests and skills



Create a basic volunteer recruitment plan. Develop a list of roles, qualifications, volunteer time needed for activities



ACE the Volunteer Experience

- How does your club appreciate your volunteers?
- How does your club connect with your volunteers?
- How does your club energize your volunteers?



- Regularly express gratitude and thank volunteers for their engagement. Consider giving small tokens of appreciation.
- Provide volunteers with regular updates and keep them informed on special opportunities
- Ask volunteers for regular feedback about their experience



Make a simple plan on how you will provide an ACE experience This doesn't need to be expensive – it's the thought that counts!

Check the links in the next page for practical examples



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS Volunteers

Where to find more help

Check out the links below for further external and Special Olympics resources.

Special Olympics
Safeguarding Training



RESOURCES

Recruiting and Managing
Volunteers (Sport New
Zealand example)

Consider community volunteer groups, businesses, law enforcement, educational institutions to partner with to access a larger pool of volunteers.

Contact other successful clubs in your community to grab a coffee and learn about volunteers



IDEAS

Research local businesses offering employee volunteer hours. Offer club sponsors' staff volunteer roles.

Talk to your current volunteers – find out why they volunteer & their thoughts on getting more volunteers & improving their experience.

Find a Special Olympics
National/State Program Near You



LINKS

About Special Olympics

Click on the resource and links boxes to access further information.



RECRUIT CLUB MEMBERS

Families

FAMILIES (parents, siblings, caregivers) of people with ID are a vital component of the Special Olympics movement. Contact your National/State office to check on the process of registering families.

There are 3 types of family involvement



ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Take on volunteer and leadership club roles



SUPPORTIVE

Attend practices & competitions



NON-PARTICIPATORY

Ensure athletes participate in practices



Family members can engage in multiple roles in a club:

- As volunteers
- As coaches
- As club management team members
- As fundraisers

Many clubs rely on parents for key roles. While parents are typically very dedicated volunteers, be cautious not to over rely on their support. Have a succession plan ready when these parents no longer have their children involved in the club.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

- Create a Family coordinator role on the management team to oversee family recruitment and engagement.
- Create a welcome letter for new athletes and their families with a list of volunteer opportunities and activities.
- Host a new family orientation session.
- Invite families to all events with sign-in to capture contact information.
- Organize family townhall meetings to get their feedback.
- Create a Club newsletter or social media group for families.
- Engage siblings to organize fundraisers or awareness raising campaigns at their schools.



CORE FUNCTIONS Sports Activities



Special Olympics' primary goal is to provide high-quality year-round training and competition opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities directed by qualified coaches. Through sports, our athletes become confident and empowered by their accomplishments. There are a range of Olympic-style winter and summer sports to suit every age or skill level. To get the athletes ready for training and competition, a Local Club needs to:



Provide frequent opportunities to **TRAIN AND COMPETE**

SPORTS TRAINING

The core Club activity: regular (at least twice a week) **training opportunities** for athletes in the chosen sport(s). The Club should explore ways to promote fitness and a healthy lifestyle during and between training sessions.

SPORTS COMPETITION

The Club should focus on providing athletes with regular competition opportunities. This may include official Special Olympics competitions as well as less formal competitions with local clubs and intra-club competitions within the club community.

Minimum requirements for athletes to take part in competition:

- Athletes, Unified partners, and volunteers must be **REGISTERED** in accordance with National/State Program procedures.
- Athletes must undergo **REGULAR TRAINING** conducted by qualified coaches.
- Athletes must **COMPETE REGULARLY**

Note that some competitions will have additional entry requirements (e.g., within an advancement cycle)



FITNESS

People with ID face health challenges (obesity, high blood pressure, low cardiovascular endurance) that affect their sports performance and overall wellbeing. Embedding fitness into sports training and competition will improve athlete health and sports performance, reduce their risk for injury and prepare them for competition.

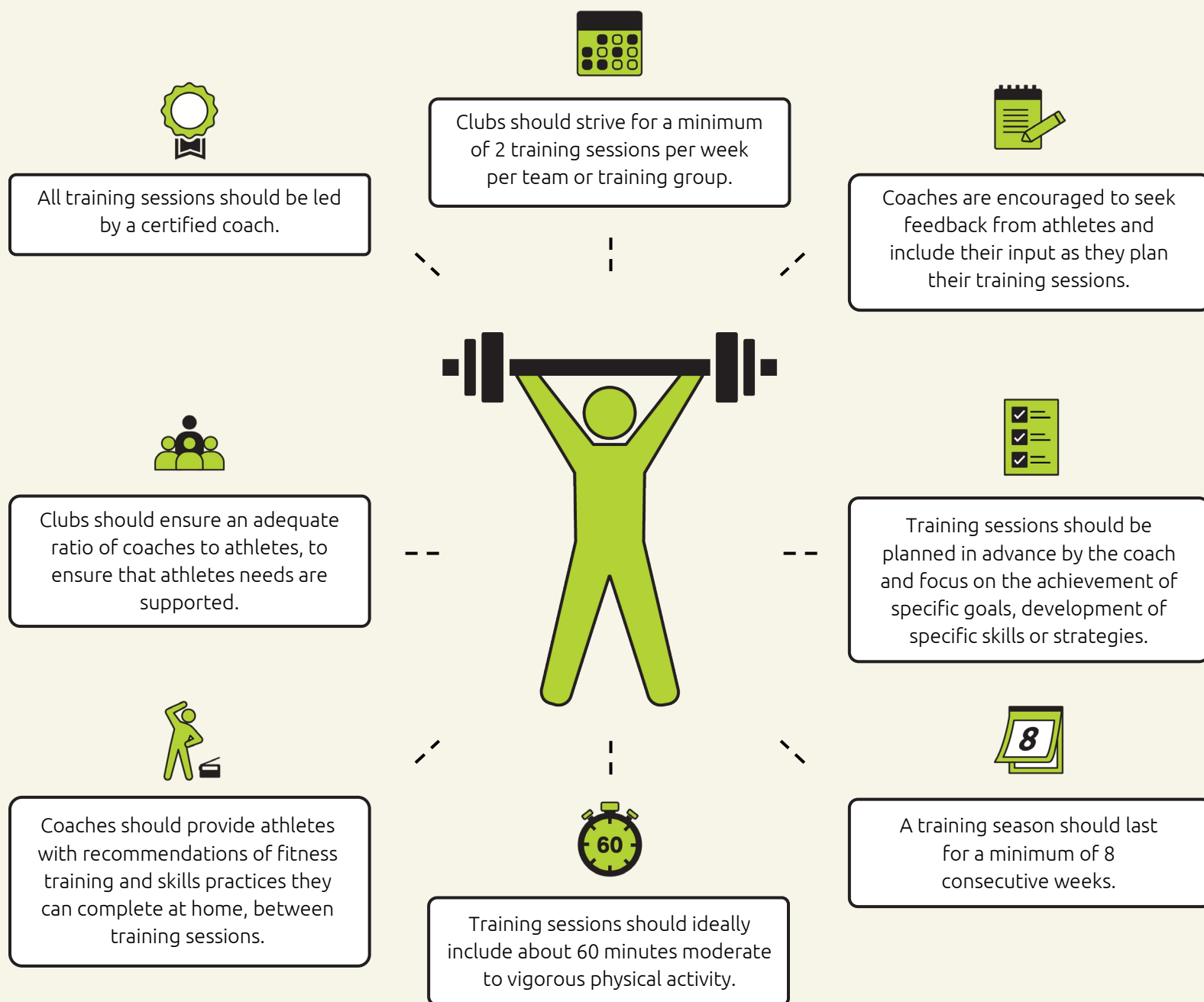
If a club forms part of a mainstream sports club, it's important to ensure inclusion of athletes in the training activities. Discuss in advance the schedule for Special Olympics practices and explore opportunities for Unified activities. Similarly, if your club takes part in mainstream sport competitions, ensure meaningful inclusion of athletes and application of SO sport rules.



CORE FUNCTIONS Sports Activities



Offering Quality Sports Training



- Remember, a 60-minute training session **may not result in 60 minutes of activity**. Including water breaks, team briefings, socializing time can all result in reduced activity time.
- The WHO recommends all adults should have a minimum of 150-300 mins moderate intensity physical activity per week (**30-60 minutes per day on 5 days of the week**), for children, this is **60 mins** of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day.
- If athletes are not training at a moderate to vigorous level of intensity – this training session *does not count* towards their minimum physical activity minutes per week/day.
- Use the Active Practice Organizer template to plan your training session and help you maximize your activity minutes.



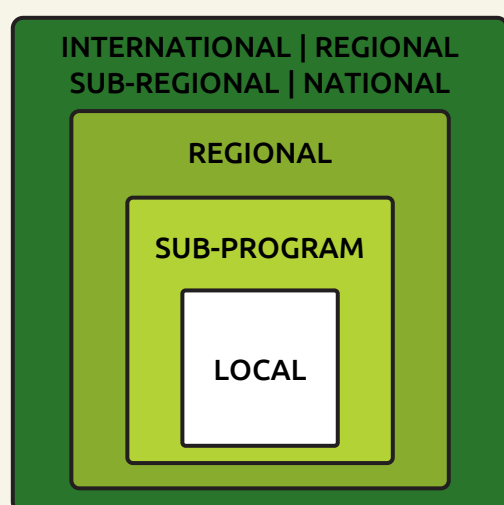
CORE FUNCTIONS Sports Activities



Running Quality Sports Events

Games and competitions drive the Special Olympics movement forward. Every day, all around the world, athletes and coaches are training for their next competition. Providing quality experiences for everyone is important to achieving success. Quality events mean that athletes have enjoyed themselves and feel included in the activities that have been held.

There are 4 levels of events within Special Olympics. By participating in a competition at one level, athletes earn the right to be considered for advancement to higher levels of competition



- **International, Regional, Sub-Regional & National competitions:** contact National/State Program to learn about competition opportunities and schedules.
- **Sub-Program** sports competitions are organized for athletes within a geographic region/sub-region. Could be a single sport/single-day or multi-sport and multi-day event.
- Clubs are responsible for the planning and delivery of **local** events or setting-up a league. Engaging with sport leagues offers additional sport and training opportunities for athletes and helps build inclusive communities

Resources

Special Olympics International has developed **SPORTS RULES** for each official sport to govern competitions conducted at any level. **ARTICLE 1** of the Sports Rules is another essential resource. It includes information about the code of conduct, training standards, medical and safety requirements, *divisioning* (when athletes are grouped according to age, gender and ability level), awards, criteria for advancement to higher levels of competition, and other important information.

[Sports Rules: Article 1](#)



RESOURCES



[Sports Rules by Sport](#)

When organizing local events or setting-up a league, make sure it follows Special Olympics official sports rules.



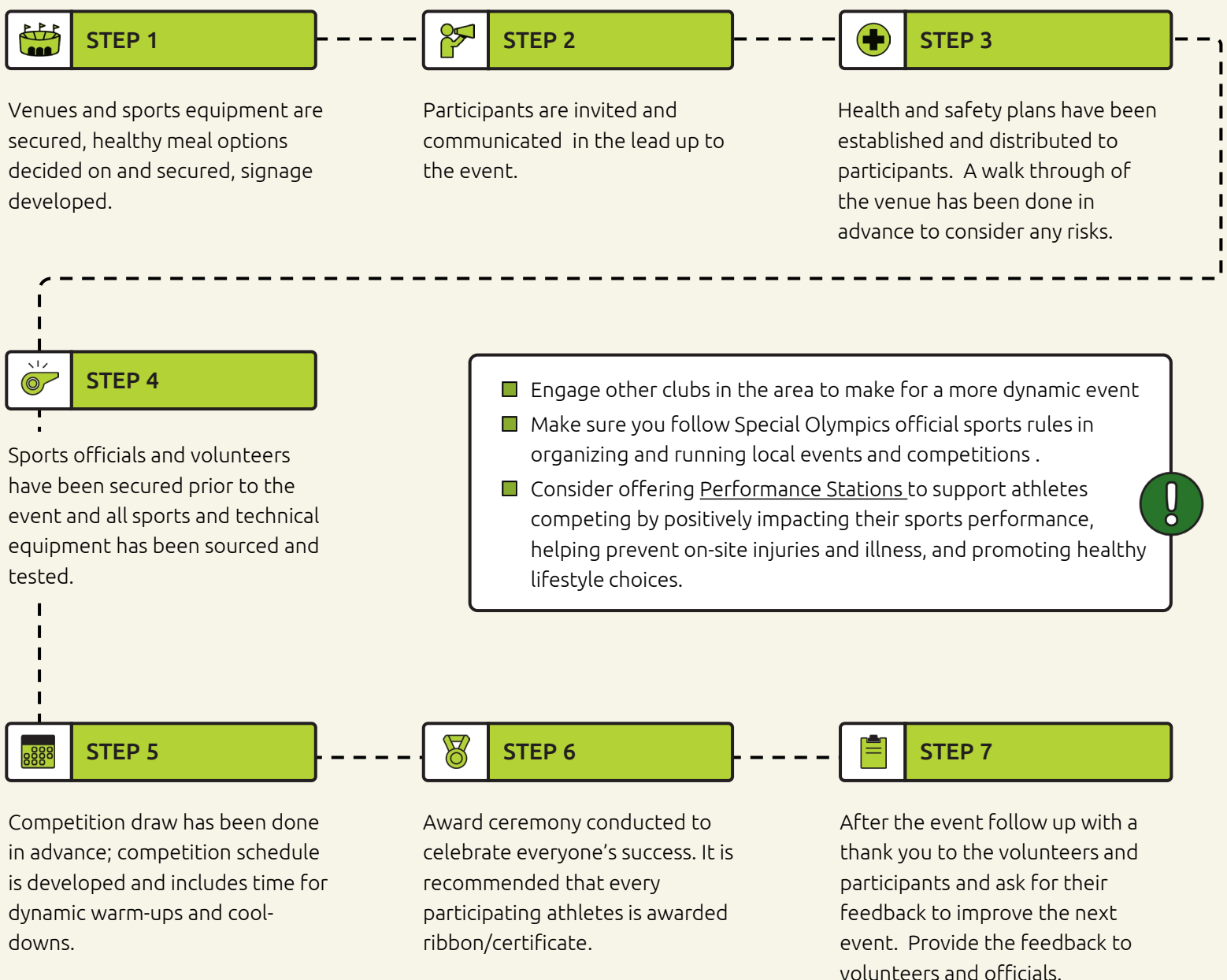
CORE FUNCTIONS Sports Activities



Running Quality Sports Events

Local level competitions usually take place on a single day. Strong planning involves considering the big picture of what you want to achieve at the event and then focusing on the key aspects that will support a quality event within your budget:

LOCAL EVENTS



SPORTS RULES ARTICLE 1



CORE FUNCTIONS Communications



It is important to establish and keep consistent COMMUNICATION with local club members, National/State Program staff and external supporters to ensure sustainability of the club. Make sure to follow [the Special Olympics logo and brand guidelines](#) and establish connections with other local clubs to learn from their experiences.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS



- Communicate regular, clear messages about club events
- Make sure your communication is consistent with National/State Program communications.
- Everyone has different access and interests. Adjust communication style and frequency to each group.
- Do not rely solely on social media. Diversify your communication channels. Be mindful of content posted to social media. Some information is only appropriate for closed groups, not the public.
- Keep the list of contacts current. Add new people and remove those who moved on.

BASIC COMMUNICATION GRID

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	WHY?	HOW?
National/State Program	▪ Questions ▪ Issues ▪ Successes ▪ Stories	Regularly, ongoing	▪ Get support ▪ Clarify questions ▪ Get approval	▪ Email ▪ Phone ▪ WhatsApp
Club Members	▪ Training and competition schedules ▪ Meetings	Weekly, With news and reminders	Keep engaged, mobilize	▪ Social media ▪ Email, ▪ Newsletter ▪ WhatsApp
Fans and public	▪ Club events ▪ News ▪ Volunteer needs and roles	Regularly, Before and after events	▪ Outreach ▪ Raise awareness	Social and traditional media
Other Special Olympics Clubs	▪ Best practices ▪ Events ▪ Questions	Regularly and as needed	▪ Grow and develop club ▪ Create for athletes	▪ Email ▪ Phone ▪ In-person meetings



COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Identify and train individuals qualified to speak to the media and public about the club and its activities.
- Engage youth and athlete leaders in all types of communication.
- Athletes are your club's best ambassadors!
- Have a look at other successful clubs and how they communicate and connect with their community. Borrow their best ideas!
- Check out other Special Olympics Clubs across New Zealand and connect with them for advice, support and help.



Special Olympics Style Guide



CORE FUNCTIONS

Communications



It is important to establish and keep consistent communication with local club members, your community and external supporters to ensure sustainability of the club. Make sure to follow the guidelines for how to use the Special Olympics logo and brand, and establish connections with other local coordinators to learn from their experiences.



What do you want to communicate?

Create relevant messages using targeted methods for different audiences. In simple terms – it's about telling your story. As a club you are making a difference in your community, and you have many stories to tell. So, make sure you set up systems to capture your club stories in an easy way to share them with the wider community.



Who are you communicating with?

Have you asked yourself this question? A club's target audience generally involves anyone who does or can have any affiliation with that club. This includes: current and former athletes, coaches, volunteers, supporters, prospective members, general public living near your club location, local media, local schools, local authorities, sports organizations.



How can you communicate best?

Communication is a two-way engagement – it's not only about telling your story, it's about connecting with people and getting their feedback and involvement. You can communicate using social media, internal communications, and engaging with stakeholders through newsletters, meetings, open days, forums and email updates. With today's technology there is such a wide range of options to reach out and connect with people in your community.

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!
It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



CORE FUNCTIONS Communications



Putting it into practice...



What do you want to communicate?

- What are the most important messages for your club to share?
- What stories will resonate most with your community?
- What do you want people to know about your club?

- Success stories and recent activities
- Training, competitions, events and sport-based content
- Club news, volunteer opportunities and recognition
- Partnerships and fundraising events

A simple communication plan can be a big help in setting out what you'll communicate and when. This makes it easier to achieve success.



Who are you communicating with?

- Who are your members? Can you easily reach them for regular communications?
- Who would be interested in your club's communication?

Make sure you have an easy-to-use communications database that includes all the relevant info of your members, stakeholders, supporters, funders and media.

Also think about how people in your community can opt in and access communications and information from your club.



How can you communicate best?

- How can you reach the most amount of people in the easiest possible way?
- How do you key different audiences with different messages?

- Social media is free and easy. It enables direct communication and keeps your community informed.
- Test other types of communication (e.g., newspapers or radio)

Keep your communication lively, concise and professional. Remember – you represent the Special Olympics brand!

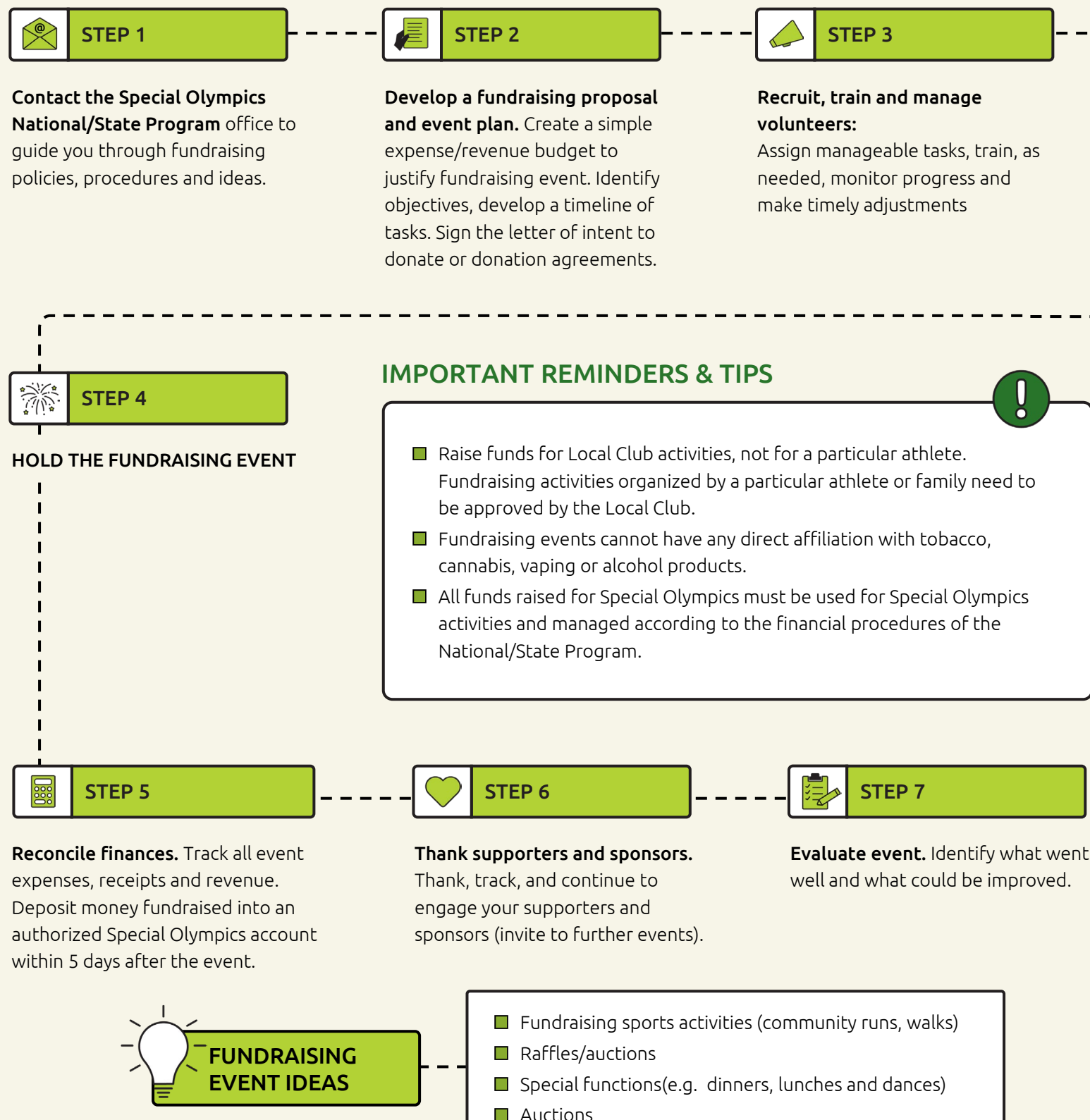


CORE FUNCTIONS Fundraising



Securing adequate resources is vital to the success of a Local Club. Clubs are encouraged to fundraise in order to create sustainable programs and improve the quality of sports training and competition opportunities for athletes. There are many ways to raise funds: sponsorships, grants, letter writing campaigns, special events, etc.

Below are steps to follow in organizing a fundraising event.



Before organizing any fundraising events using Special Olympics logo and brand, ensure all local legal requirements are met (e.g. if a club has charitable status and/or accreditation)



CORE FUNCTIONS

Fundraising



The more funds your club has the more it can do in your community! Fundraising is the process that your club undertakes to secure additional funds for special activities such as events, regional/overseas trips, and new programs or projects. Here are the top 3 things to help your Club achieve its fundraising goals.



Form a Fundraising Committee

The fundraising committee serves two purposes:

1. It ensures an ongoing focus on fundraising (the clubs that are most successful in fundraising are those that plan at least 12 months in advance), and
2. It shares the load in terms of who is doing the work.



Develop & Maintain Relationships with Local Businesses

Potential individual and peer-to-peer funders are everywhere in your community – but you need to connect and form a relationship if you want them to support your club. Think about your club management team network, community groups or small local businesses that you could reach out to or partner with for fundraising.



Get Help from National/ State Program

There is a wide range of government or philanthropic agencies that provide grants to support the work of community service organizations such as Special Olympics clubs. You need to understand funder needs and their criteria for providing funding. Coordinate with your National/State Program for support in research and applying for grants.

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!
It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



CORE FUNCTIONS Fundraising



Putting it into practice...

Below is further information on the three important aspects of managing your club's finances.



Form a Fundraising Committee

- What expertise, experience and connections do you need on your fundraising committee?
- Who do you know that would be a real asset to your club's fundraising committee?



- Be clear & specific on what the fundraising committee will do and how they'll do it.
- Create a fundraising committee of people who have great skills & networks.



Develop a fundraising plan & regularly review fundraising activities to ensure you are getting the best value for your time and effort.



Develop & Maintain Relationships with Local Businesses

- Who are the funders in your community?
- How can you connect with them?
- What's your club's story to inspire funders to give support?



- Make a list of all the potential funders in your community.
- Solicit small donations (gift cards, products)
- Explain Special Olympics mission, share personal stories and testimonies.
- Provide periodic updates to donors to show value added from their support.



Even at an early stage, start to invite people to your events, thank them, and keep them informed on club work. Fundraising is all about relationships.



Get Help from National/ State Program

- Who can fund your club?
- What would a funder want in return for funding your club?
- Do you have all the info you need to engage with a potential funder?



- National/State Program staff can support with identifying potential grant opportunities and funders and understanding their needs, restrictions and timelines
- There might be an existing partnership at national or international level with a company in your community



Connect with National/State Program to get help developing a fundraising plan, researching and matching funders' needs

Check the links in the next page for practical examples



CORE FUNCTIONS Fundraising



Fundraising Fundamentals
Guide by Good Sports



RESOURCES

Australian Sports Foundation
Grassroots Fundraising Tool Kit

Never be afraid to ask. Potential donors will not give until they are asked. Invite an athlete to assist with the “ask”, or someone who knows the potential donor well.

Consider mainstream sports organizations, local businesses, other non-profit & inter-governmental organizations (e.g. Lions Club, Red Cross), community groups and schools as potential supporters.

Consider participating in already established fundraising organized by your National/State Program. Check with them to learn about national or international partnerships with global companies represented in your community.



IDEAS

Ask your National/State Program for help with putting together grant applications, fundraising submissions or presentations for potential funders.

Organize a silent auction, Special Olympics festival to raise awareness and fundraise for your local club.

Target small local businesses (restaurants, coffee shops, hardware stores, etc.) that can give small donations or raffle/auction items, like gift cards and benefit from the visibility.

Find a Special Olympics National /
State Program Near You



LINKS

About Special Olympics

Click on the resource and links boxes to access further information.



CORE FUNCTIONS

Financial Management



To keep your club in good standing, work closely with your National/State Program on financial management of your club income and expenses. Accounting for all funds raised and used by your club is very important for protecting the credibility of your club and the Special Olympics brand as a whole. Once you connect with your National/State Program to receive guidance on its financial management policies, follow these steps to ensure that Local Club financial resources are managed properly:

STEP 1

Identify a volunteer to manage finance

Recruit a trustworthy person capable of helping to budget, manage and report finances as required by the National / State Program, preferably with experience in budgeting or a financial background.

STEP 2

Create annual revenue and expense budgets

Create annual revenue and expense budgets to track activities, training and competitions planned by your local club. Consult with National / State Program leadership when budgeting expenses and revenue.

STEP 3

Reconcile expenses and revenue

Reconcile expenses and revenue with receipts against the budget on a monthly basis. All receipts, including in-kind contributions, must be kept on file. The National/ State Program will require regular reports to ensure everything is accounted for and balanced.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IDEAS

- Think about people within your network that have specific financial expertise & experience. Buy them a coffee & get their advice.
- Check out other Special Olympics Clubs across your National/State Program and connect with them for advice, support and help.

Find a Special Olympics National/
State Program Near You



Financial Management for Clubs
(Sport New Zealand example)

Ensure financial management of your club complies with local audit requirements.



CORE FUNCTIONS

Financial Management



Managing the financial aspects of your club doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming. The size of your club determines the financial management processes that need to be put in place. Here are three important aspects to help manage your club's finances.



Get Organized & Stay Organized

If your Club's finances aren't actively managed, things can quickly get out of hand. It is important to make the time to set up simple financial policies and processes that comply with local accounting regulations and to recruit the right people to manage day-to-day financial management. Once these are set you can get the most out of your financial position.



Use the Right Tools

There are so many great tools available that simplify the management of the financial aspects of your club. Online banking and accounting software products take the pain out of managing your club's accounts. Some of these are even free for clubs and not for profit organizations. Using the right tools makes financial processes so much quicker and easier.



Communication and Transparency

Transparency is a great way to promote trust within your club and sharing your financial position is key to this, particularly if your members pay fees and would like to see where their money is going. Make sure you communicate regularly and have a communication plan that incorporates updates and messages on the club finances. This also shares the load, keeps members connected and may even open up opportunities for more financial support.

It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!
It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



CORE FUNCTIONS

Financial Management



Putting it into practice...

Below is further information on the three important aspects of managing your club's finances.



Get organized & stay organized

What steps do we need to take to ensure we effectively manage our finances?



- Develop clear and simple policies to guide responsibilities & actions.
- Secure the services of someone with skills in financial management to serve as treasurer.
- Develop a detailed annual budget (and stick to it!)



Set up a routine to maintain control of club money month to month. Establish a standing item on financial reporting at committee meetings



Use the right tools

- What does our club need from accounting software?
- How does your club use internet banking to be as effective possible?



- The easiest way for clubs to keep track of finances, accounting software is generally affordable and flexible to suit the needs of your club.
- Don't be afraid to ask other clubs what they use & to try different products



Setting up a bank account where payments can be authorized online by account signatories is key to making club payments easy.



Communication and transparency

What information on club finances do your club members expect?



Make a simple plan on how club finances are reported to club members and with what frequency



By making the financial reports simple, they can be used to give an update on financial position if requested by other members.



LOCAL CLUB IS ESTABLISHED

Club Development



Special Olympics is committed to offering high quality sports and engagement experiences for its members and supporters. As the Local Club develops and grows, its management team should focus on providing high quality sports and non-sports activities.

To create more opportunities for people with ID, besides traditional Special Olympics Sports, a Club may choose to **INTRODUCE ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING:**



UNIFIED SPORTS

An inclusive sports program where athletes (people with ID) and partners (people without ID) regularly train and compete as teammates.



MOTOR ACTIVITY TRAINING PROGRAM (MATP)

Non-competitive motor skills training program for athletes with significant intellectual (and physical) disabilities.



YOUNG ATHLETES

This sport and play program for children 2-7 years old with and without ID introduces basic sports skills, like running, kicking and throwing.

To drive sports **QUALITY**, the club should maintain and work to improve:

- ▶ Frequency of training and competition events
- ▶ Adequate equipment and facilities
- ▶ Athlete and Unified Partner preparation, development and improvement
- ▶ Coach preparation and development
- ▶ Sports partnerships
- ▶ Competition management, safety and protocol
- ▶ Safeguarding

As the Local Club develops, it should start exploring other programming opportunities offered through Special Olympics



ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

Create opportunities for trained athletes to lead independently or with others in your Club as volunteers, coaches, [Health Messengers](#), and staff.



HEALTH

Contact your National/State Program to help you start incorporating Health programming into your club.

Develop **ATHLETE LEADERS** by following the steps:

- **INSPIRE:** educate club members and team about the benefits of [Unified Leadership](#).
- **EXPAND:** identify athletes who demonstrate leadership skills. Identify and assign mentors.
- **EMPOWER:** look for athlete training and skill development opportunities.
- **ACTIVATE:** use every opportunity to engage athletes in leadership roles within the club (e.g. be part management team, be a coach or assistant coach, etc.)

Examples of **INCLUSIVE HEALTH** offerings:

- Engage athletes in ongoing fitness opportunities, with focus on physical activity, nutrition, and hydration, to improve overall health, well-being, and physical fitness.
- Educate and support parents and family members to care for the health of their child with ID through Family Health Forums.
- Teach athletes about topics, like healthy eating and strong minds, to help athletes lead stronger, healthier lives.

Check the links in the next page for practical examples



LOCAL CLUB IS ESTABLISHED

Club Development



Where to find more help

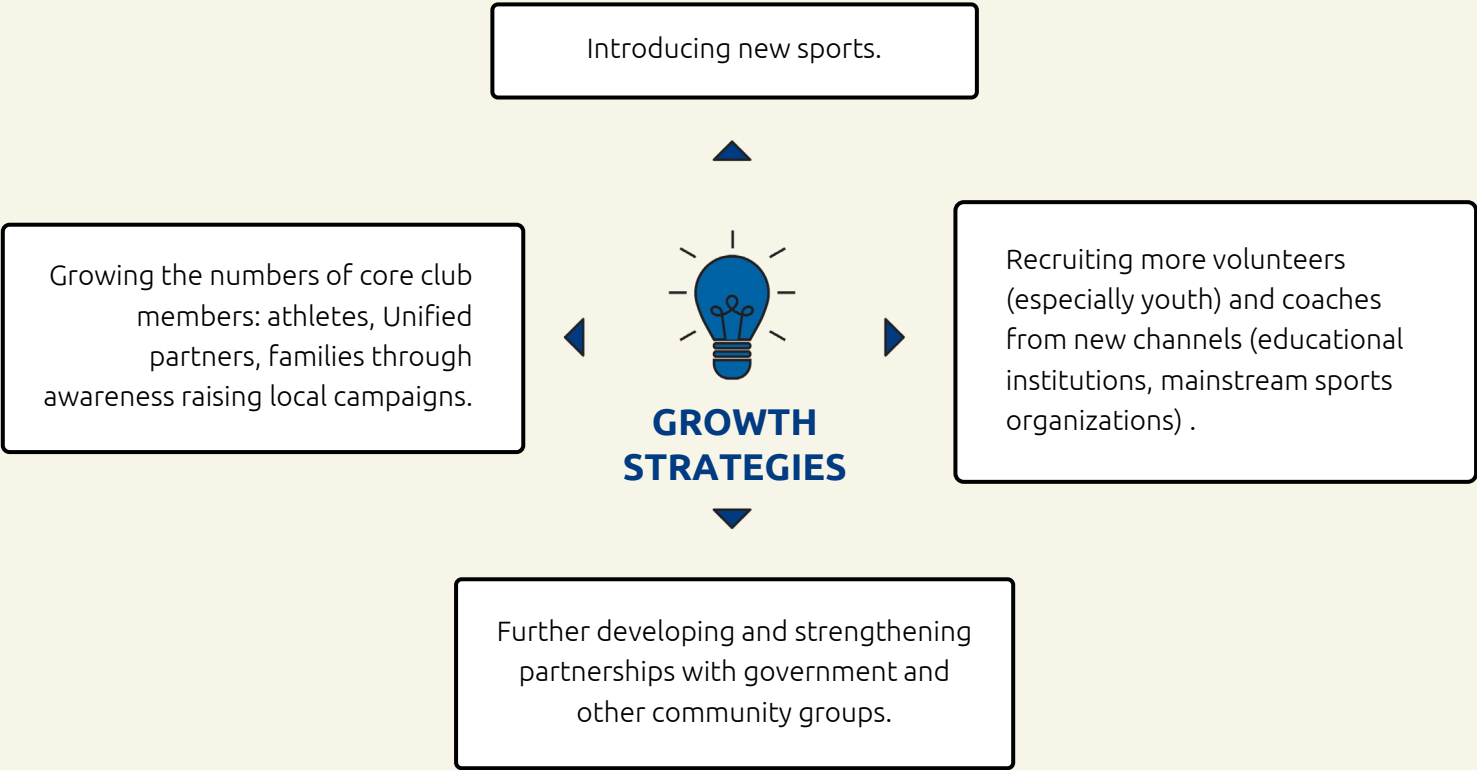
Athlete Leadership

Motor Activities Training Program


RESOURCES

Inclusive Health including Young Athletes

Unified Sports



Find a Special Olympics National / State Program Near You


LINKS

About Special Olympics

Click on the resource and links boxes to access further information.



LOCAL CLUB IS ESTABLISHED

Club Sustainability



Special Olympics Clubs deliver sports training and competition opportunities for local athletes and are vital in providing a sense of community and belonging for their members. Ensuring your club is sustainable takes a lot of hard work and commitment and depends on a wide range of linked factors. Here are the top 3 things to help ensure your club's sustainability.

Right People in the Right Roles

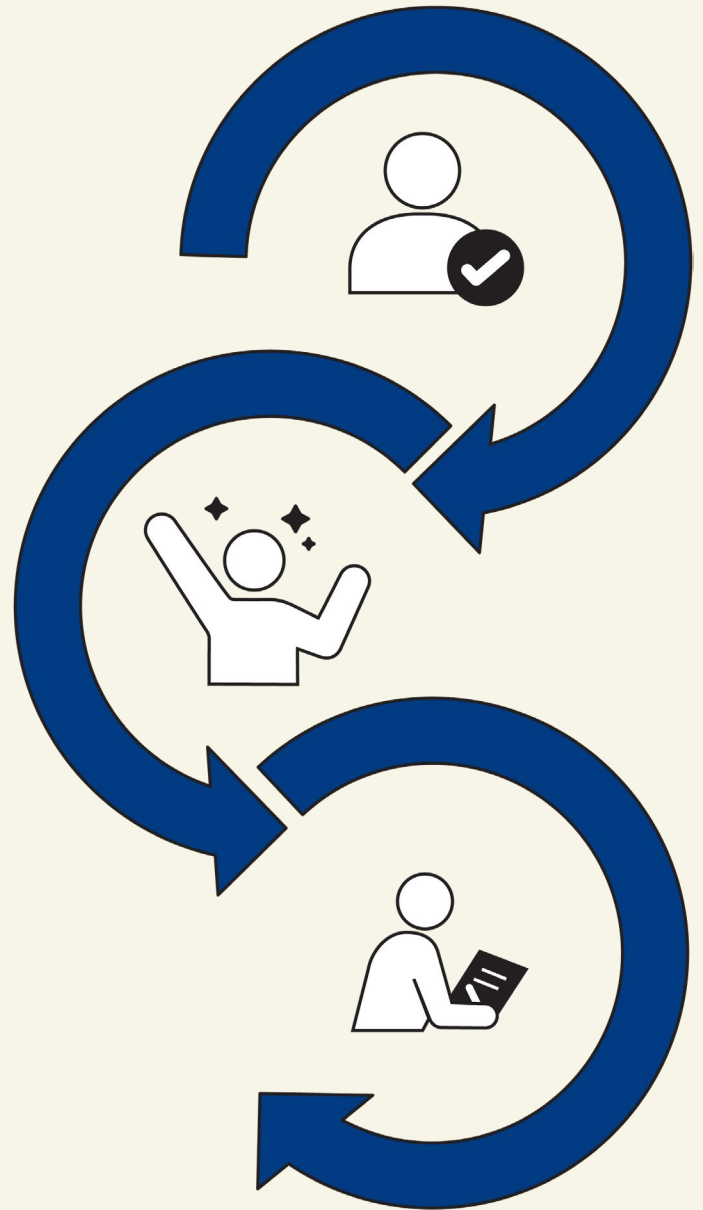
Sustainability of a Club depends on the commitment and dedication of your management team. The Club needs to ensure it has skilled people in key governance, leadership, management and delivery positions. Engage people with diverse backgrounds to run club activities. Consider club members' strengths and weaknesses, provide clear roles and responsibilities.

Recognize Members' Contributions

To ensure club sustainability, it is important to retain members. Create a sense of belonging for all team members and make sure they know and promote the mission of your Club. Make sure to acknowledge contributions of your management team and volunteers and thank them for their service.

Have a Plan!

Have a succession plan for your core leadership team. Another important part of sustainability is consistent operational (short-term) and strategic (long-term) planning. A good plan will identify how the club will work towards the club's goals. If the club isn't very clear on what it will do and who will be doing it, then there will always be a risk of the club not being successful. Planning should be done in close collaboration with the National/State Program team and engage all members of the Club management team.



It's as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

It's not really. That's why we've provided a more detailed walk through in the next pages...



LOCAL CLUB IS ESTABLISHED

Club Sustainability



Putting it into practice...

Below are some examples of how to ensure sustainability



Right People in the Right Roles

- What roles are needed for your club to be successful in meeting it's goals?
- Who are the people supporting and working within your club?



- Your club has a list of roles & responsibilities which includes a descriptor that clearly shows the expectations.
- Your club has a list of supporters with an understanding of their strengths & weaknesses



- List the key roles your club needs to be successful.
- Match the key roles with current club supporters & identify roles that need to be filled



Recognize Members' Contributions

- What retention and recognition practices do you have for athletes?
- How can you recognize volunteer contributions?



- Offer athletes regular training and competitions. Share their personal progress with families
- Provide opportunities and recognition for coach trainings & certifications
- Give volunteers ways to progress and change roles



- Establish Coach-of- the-Year award.
- Develop volunteer appreciation process (e.g. Thank You cards)



Have a Plan!

- What are the goals of the club?
- How will you achieve the goals of your club?



- Create a simple plan for the upcoming year or season. Consider sport/non-sport events, facilities, member and volunteer recruitment.
- Ensure everyone in your club understands and supports the plan.



- Write down your club's vision, goals & needs.
- Get ideas and feedback on the plan from club members, supporters and other clubs.

Check the links in the next page for practical examples

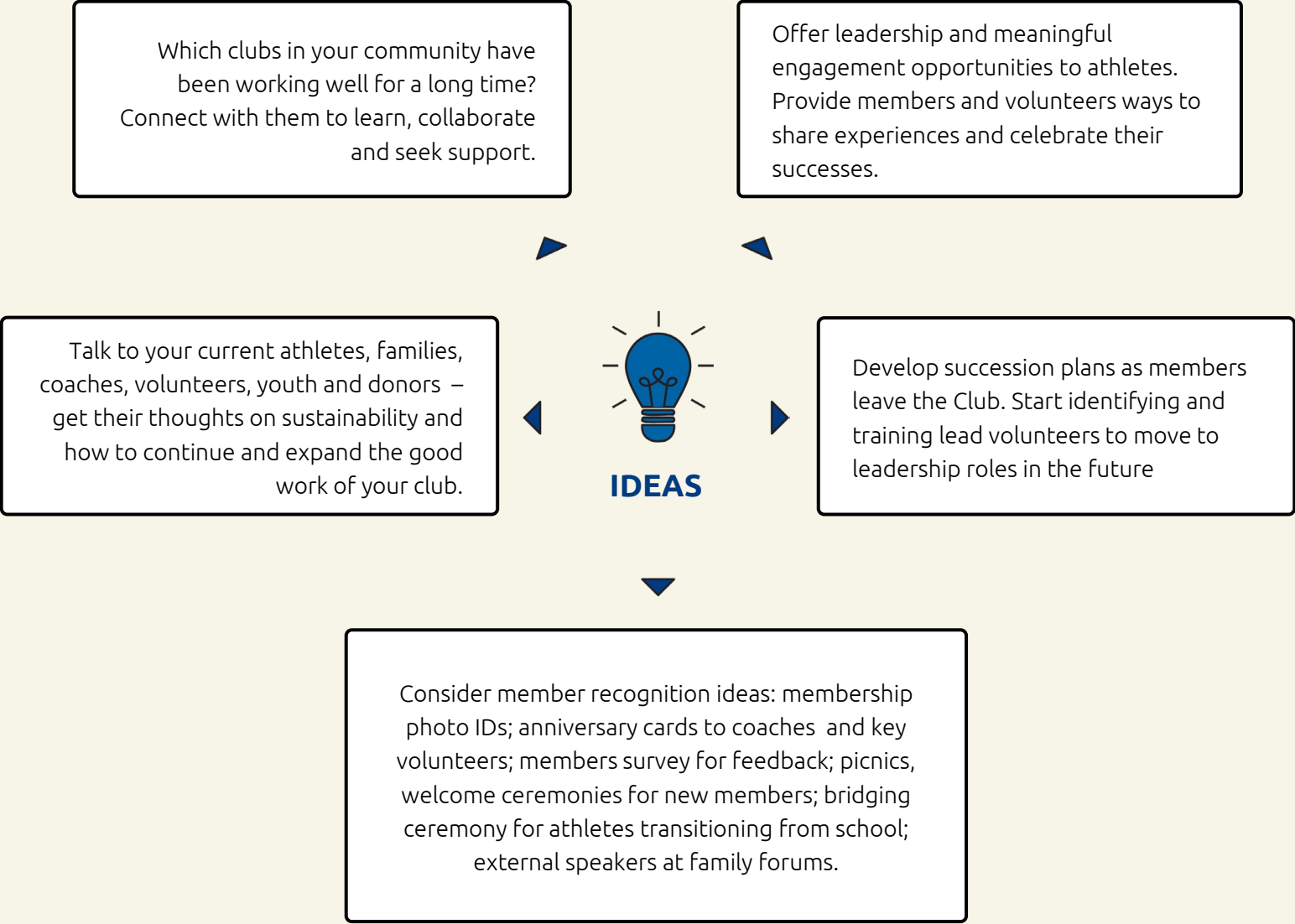


LOCAL CLUB IS ESTABLISHED

Club Sustainability



Where to find more help



[Find a Special Olympics National/ State Program Near You](#)


LINKS

[About Special Olympics](#)

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