



# Leading a Program Building Block

Our Leading a Program quality standards relate to:

- **Leadership** – including communication, culture, engagement, managing a team, organization, and setting vision
- **Recruitment** – including process for recruiting for personnel needs including volunteers
- **Training** - including process for training staff and key volunteers
- **Performance Management** – including managing the performance of staff and key volunteers
- **Recognition & Retention** – including recognition and retention for staff and volunteers
- **Risk Management** – including best practice for avoiding or mitigating risks related to staff and volunteers as well as creating a culture that values risk management



For standards related to recruiting athletes, coaches and officials, see the Sport Essentials Building Block. For standards on general risk management, see the Planning & Financial Management Building Block.

## Program Quality Standards

The Program Quality Standards are a tool to help Programs develop and grow. They were a 'ground-up' initiative - created with input from Programs in all Regions. The standards are for Special Olympics Accredited Programs, specifically for Program Leaders. They enable Program Leaders to understand, manage, support and deliver activities to a high level of quality.

### Using the standards:

The standards are grouped into 10 'building blocks'. Within each building block, most standards have three stages. Read them from left to right – starting with Stage 1 and moving in the direction of Stage 3.

You can use the standards to conduct a self-assessment, help set goals for your strategic and operational plans, track your progress and celebrate your growth.

The standards can help you set goals in your plan, but do not replace your Program's plan which should outline specific growth goals. You may also consider using the self-assessment tool we have created to help you.



Leading a Program	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<b>Leadership</b>	Program leaders set and adhere to goals and plans that grow the Program and align with the Movement strategy	Program leaders have set a clear, structured strategic direction for growth and development of the Program	Program leaders have established a long term vision for the Program
	Program leaders advocate Special Olympics values, promote teamwork and lead by example	Program leaders have established a positive culture consistent with Special Olympics mission, vision and values	Program is recognized as a model by other SO Programs and external stakeholders
	Program is well organized and coordinated to enable staff and key volunteers to work efficiently	Program staff and key volunteers operate as an integrated team and consistently deliver against goals	Program leaders promote excellence in implementation and lead by example
	Program has clear process for communication between Board and key staff and/or volunteers	Program Board proactively supports and motivates key staff and/or volunteers	
	Program leaders engage in positive, ongoing communication with SOI	Program leaders engage in SOI activities, meetings and events to share, learn and implement best practices	
	Program is assessed against quality standards	Program is formally reviewed with SOI resources	
	Program leaders continuously seek new ideas and opportunities to make changes that grow or improve the Program	Program implements a formal professional development plan for leaders, staff and key volunteers	Program leaders provide formal mentorship for staff or other SO Program leaders
<b>Recruitment</b>	Program has a written recruitment plan including personnel needs, written role descriptions, and actions required	Program has a formal recruitment process and advances diversity/inclusion in all recruitment and employment	Program conducts exit interviews to inform future recruitment
	Program proactively seeks volunteers (e.g. holds recruiting events)	Program implements and tracks a plan for increasing volunteer numbers every year	

Leading a Program	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
<b>Training</b>	Program has regular internal and external training opportunities for leadership	Program has regular internal and external training opportunities for volunteers and staff	Program conducts training needs assessment for leaders and staff and provides specific training
	New leaders and staff do formal orientation within 3 months of hire	New general volunteers do formal orientation within 3 months	
<b>Performance Management</b>	Program agrees and documents goals for each staff member each year	Program agrees and documents goals for key volunteers each year	Program has a formal performance management and development process
		Staff are evaluated at least twice a year based on agreed goals	Key volunteer performance is reviewed annually based on agreed goals
<b>Recognition &amp; Retention</b>	Program provides basic recognition for staff and volunteers (e.g. thank you letters/calls, newsletter/ website thank you articles)	Program has a formal approach to recognition for staff and volunteers (e.g. awards, special events)	Program recognizes key volunteers and staff by offering opportunities to deliver training or attend external events as a Program representative
	Program monitors its staff retention for planning purposes	Program track its volunteer retention rates and implements a volunteer retention plan	Program evaluates volunteer experiences (e.g. working at event) to improve retention rates
<b>Risk Management</b>	Program keeps personnel records and meets regulatory requirements	Program has written HR Policies & Procedures	Program has succession plans for Program staff and key volunteers
	Program conducts background checks for selected volunteers and staff	Program has a screening process for all volunteers and staff	
	Program communicates importance of risk management to staff and key volunteers	Program communicates importance of risk management as part of volunteer orientation and training	Risk management is implemented at all levels of the Program