North America
Local Program Guide

Why the guide is important and how to use it.

US Business Meeting - July 17, 2018

Special Olympics
Today we will review

- Purpose of the Guide and how it was created
- Quick look at the contents and how the guide is set up
- Styling and customizing the Guide to meet your Program’s needs
- Your ideas for how to best use the Guide in your Program
- Why the Guide is important and where to host the Guide in your Program
The Purpose of This Guide:

• Serve as a resource for Local Program leadership
• Improve quality of the Local Program
• Provide necessary information and tools to manage the Special Olympics Local Program in each community
• Establish the framework for each Local Program with 3 parts providing crucial information for success:

  • Part 1: A Quick Start Guide to Developing a Local Program
  • Part 2: Growing & Sustaining a Local Program
  • Part 3: Resources
Creating this Guide...
Built Through Collaboration

This guide was a collaborative effort between Special Olympics North America (SONA) and U.S. Accredited Programs.

- Written by U.S. Accredited Program Staff with support from SONA
- Reviewed with Local Program volunteers and staff at Northwest Regional Meeting
- Shared with Accredited Program staff for feedback

The **Local Program Guide Committee** is the team behind the creation of this guide.
Customizable & Cost-Effective

A digital copy of this guide is available on **SONA Resources** with customization possible for all Accredited Programs.

SONA Local Program Guide
- **Program Guide (PDF):** The Local Program engages with the public to offer official Special Olympics sports training and competition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports® partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities). The SONA Local Program Guide is a resource for Accredited Programs to customize.
- **Program Guide (DOC):** Here is the SONA Local Program Guide in Microsoft Word format.
- **Webinar Presentation and Instructions for Customizing the Guide:** Here is the presentation that accompanied the webinar about how to use the Program Guide.

Unified Champion Schools
- **All Unified Champion Schools Resources:** The Unified Champion Schools resources page serves as a portal for students, educators, and programs.
- **Core Package: Overview One-Pager:** This document is best used for quick overview of UCS with high level reach information.

Unified Sports
- **Unified Sports Tools and Resources:** Special Olympics Unified Sports is a fast-growing initiative that brings people with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same team to compete. This page offers background information, resources, and news.
- **Unified Sports Coach Recruitment Video:** Coaches share their insight on the keys to being a successful Unified Sports coach and the role they play in ensuring meaningful involvement on the field and fostering social inclusion off the field.
- **Unified Sports Inclusion Recruitment Video:** Teammates and coaches talk about the power Unified Sports can have in building friendships at school and in the community.
Customizable

- Customize the Local Program Guide with a Letter from your CEO

- Include a message to the Local Program Coordinators in your Program

A Letter from our CEO

On behalf of the Program Committee of the United States Leadership Council (USLC), I am pleased to provide our Special Olympics North America Local Program Guide. This guide is a resource for Local Program leadership, providing the necessary information and tools to manage the Special Olympics program in each local community.

Local Program leadership is critical to the successful organization of Special Olympics programs at the grassroots level. This is the foundation of our worldwide movement and the starting point for each athlete’s participation.

This guide includes:

- Part 1: A Quick Start Guide to Developing a Local Program
- Part 2: Growing & Sustaining a Local Program
- Part 3: Resources

The North America Local Program Guide can serve as a tool to engage new Local Program leadership, providing the Local Coordinator with information and tools necessary to build a foundation for the Local Program. Parts 2 and 3 provide the next level of resources to grow the Local Program by offering new and expanded opportunities.

Our staff are here to offer additional guidance and support as you work tirelessly to engage athletes in local sports training and competition opportunities.

Thank you for your commitment to our athletes and the Special Olympics movement.

Insert Name of your Program CEO
“Local Program leadership is critical to the successful organization of Special Olympics programs at the grassroots level. This is the foundation of our worldwide movement and the starting point for each athlete’s participation.”
The Local Program Guide is created in 3 Parts:

Part 1: A Quick Start Guide to Developing a Local Program
Part 2: Growing & Sustaining a Local Program
Part 3: Resources
Part 1: Quick Start Guide

• Serves as a tool to engage new Local Program leadership, providing the Local Program Coordinator with information and tools necessary to build a foundation for the Local Program

• Covers the **Mission & Vision, Sports, Support Structure**, and more in order to provide Local Program Coordinators, staff and volunteers with a comprehensive understanding of Special Olympics and Local Programs

• Can be utilized by itself to introduce volunteer leadership to the concept of Local Program Management or combined with Parts 2 and 3
Part 1: Quick Start Guide to Local Program Management

Section 1: Overview

Mission & Vision

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

The vision of Special Olympics is to help bring all persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected, and given the chance to become productive citizens.

One of the main ways Special Olympics is fostering inclusion through sports is the expansion of Unified Sports Programming, which brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team to promote inclusion. First pioneered in the 1980s, Unified Sports was inspired by a simple principle: Training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Special Olympics Philosophy

Special Olympics is founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can -- with proper instruction and encouragement -- learn, enjoy, and benefit from participation in individual and team sports. Special Olympics believes that consistent training is essential to the development of sports skills, and that competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress, and providing incentives for personal growth.

Special Olympics has demonstrated that, through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities can benefit physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Additionally, families are strengthened and the community at large -- both through participation and observation -- comes to better understand people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect, and acceptance.

Goal

The ultimate goal of Special Olympics is to provide individuals with intellectual disabilities of all ages the opportunity to participate as productive and respected members of society at large. This occurs by offering ongoing opportunities for these individuals to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition. This is done while also increasing the public’s awareness of their capabilities and needs, creating welcome communities of inclusion around the world. To learn more about Special Olympics, visit http://www.specialolympics.org/.
Part 1: Quick Start Guide

Sports Training & Practice
Requirements concerning Special Olympics training may be found in Article 1, Section 3.05: http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sport-essentials/general/sports-rules-article-1.pdf

Minimum Standards
The minimum standards for athletes desiring to compete in Special Olympics are based on Special Olympics Inc. Sports Rules. All athletes must be trained in the sport before competing. Part of this training may include nutrition education and physical conditioning. Eight consecutive weeks are mandatory. However, for Regional or World Games, training is recommended twice a week for ten weeks. All athletes must have opportunities to compete during that time.

Levels of Competition
Athletes of all skill levels have an opportunity to advance to the next higher-level competition provided the sport and event are offered at the next level from Sub-Program Games to World Games.

Criteria for Advancement
The criteria for advancement can be found on page 18 of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules: http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sport-essentials/general/sports-rules-article-1.pdf

Special Olympics staff, with assistance from the Games Organizing Committees, may establish quotas for the number of athletes and teams participating in Games.

The Accredited Program identifies the number of athletes or teams eligible for advancement within the sport/event based on participation in competition at the lower level. If the number of eligible athletes or teams does not exceed the quota, all athletes and teams may advance.

Finance
Accounting for all funds raised and used by your Local Program is important to protect the credibility of Special Olympics brand, as well as to ensure compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the United States (or comparable agency in your country) as a tax-exempt charitable not-for-profit organization.

Oversight & Manage Financial Resources
The following steps should be taken in order to ensure that the Local Program’s financial resources are managed appropriately:

- Identify a Local Program volunteer to manage finances:
  Recruit someone who is capable of helping to budget, manage funds, and report finances as required. Notify the Accredited Program office as to who has been identified for this role.

- Create annual revenue and expense budgets:
  Budget what Program activities, training, and competitions your Local Program plans to engage in, and then manage within those parameters, imposed budgets by consulting the Local Program leadership regarding proposed goals, budget expenses, and revenue based on prior performance. Budgets are typically prepared during the third or fourth quarter of the current year for the following year, and will be reviewed and approved by the Accredited Program prior to implementation.

- Reconcile expenses and revenue:
  On a monthly basis, reconcile expenses and revenue against the budgets with receipts. Generally, the Accredited Program will require quarterly reports to ensure that everything is accounted for and balanced.
“Although each Local Program varies in size and culture, a team structure supports opportunities for athletes, families, and additional volunteers as the program grows.”
Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program

Special Olympics encourages Local Programs to look ahead and plan for growth. In this section of the Guide, Local Program Coordinators learn how to grow and sustain their individual Local Programs.

This section helps to enhance Local Programs, offer suggestions on how to best work towards developing partnerships and how to effectively utilize technology to the advantage of the Local Program.
Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program

Section 1: How to Grow & Sustain Your Local Program

Planning for Growth
As your Local Program grows, it will have to evolve in order to serve athletes in a quality manner. The goal of all programs is to grow and be a part of the Special Olympics family. As more athletes join a Local Program, more sport opportunities will need to be added, and more organizations need to be engaged. The budget will have to increase, and the coach and volunteer base will need to grow. For this reason, it is better to plan for growth when launching a Local Program in order to best accommodate the Local Program’s needs as they are discovered.

Enhancing Existing Sports
Consider adding additional training opportunities and sports performance standards to the Local Program to encourage increased performance. Expand the Local Program from just one sport-focused training season per week by adding a second training season focused on fitness and conditioning. Focusing on health and fitness is an excellent way to enhance the existing sports programs will assist your athletes in their health and well-being. It is a good practice to have the coaches and athletes participate in 2 high quality sports opportunities per week.

Adding Unified Sports® Options to Already Existing Sports
By partnering with schools, churches, or other community organizations, the Local Program can grow by giving volunteers the option of becoming Unified Sports® partners to train and compete alongside Special Olympics athletes.

Adding New Sports
In order to better gauge the popularity of the sports offered by your Local Program and the Accredited Program, regularly surveying the athletes, coaches, Management Teams, and families is encouraged to obtain the best information and feedback.

In order to make effective decisions in adding a new sport or Program, the following need to be taken into consideration:

- **Interest**
  - Determine community interest by hosting a sports demonstration night for local athletes, Unified Sports® partners, and coaches. Introduce basic sports skills and determine community interest for adding a program or sport.
  - Brochures within schools, community boards, group homes, and other areas that serve individuals with intellectual disabilities are helpful for increasing awareness and determining interest.

- **Whole School Engagement**
  - Athlete Leadership
  - Athlete Leadership programs provide Special Olympics athletes the opportunity to become advocates for Special Olympics. Athletes are provided with training and the subsequent opportunities to speak publicly, meet with sponsors or donors, and hold leadership positions within the organization.

- **Youth Activation**
  - Youth Activation Committees are an inclusive group of school-aged leaders, both with and without intellectual disabilities. The committee encourages its members to support the Accredited Program and develop their leadership skills through event participation, volunteer opportunities, and fundraising.

- **Healthy Athletes®**
  - The Healthy Athletes® program is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities.

- **Healthy Athletes®**
  - The Healthy Athletes® program is a program that can be implemented within any Special Olympics program. By promoting a healthy lifestyle with fitness and overall wellness components, you can ensure that your Local Program is equipped to make healthy choices beyond the sport and competition realms.
Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program

Section 2: Developing Partnerships

What is a successful partnership approach for Local Program development?
Throughout North America, Local Programs are forging partnerships in their communities in creative and exciting ways. The following information is provided to help you get started with creating your own partnerships with sponsors, volunteers, clubs and organizations, athletes, and others in your community.

Prospects

Identify Potential Prospects
Who aligns with the Special Olympics mission? It is important to think outside of the box.

- Health and insurance companies
  - Example: What opportunities might be available for addressing obesity and Special Olympics athletes?
- Prominent companies in your community
- Potential family connections

Identify the value of your Local Program to a company through goals and objectives that the company is trying to meet.

Discover the Key Contact: Gatekeeper vs. Decision Maker
- Get past the gatekeeper to the decision maker
- Develop a relationship and focus on getting the decision-maker to an event

Network Everywhere
- Keep an open mind
- Always listen for opportunities; all interactions provide an opportunity to share the Special Olympics mission and identify program needs
- Be Positive, on Point, and Persistent
- Many times, you will have to get through a lot of “No’s” before you find the “Yes”
- Be persistent and reframe your ask when necessary
- Develop a “Yes” mentality

Get in the Door
- Look at different levels of engagement; start small
- The first level may be inviting the decision-maker to an event
- Connect the decision-maker with an athlete who can introduce them to Special Olympics
- In the course of conversation with the decision-maker, find out what is important to them as an individual and to their company
- Do not go into the conversation with a specific agenda; listen and develop their involvement together; create a partnership.
Part 2: Further Developing Your Local Program

Section 3: Using Technology

Technology enables a Local Program to work smarter, more efficiently, and more effectively.

Volunteer Management

Technology and volunteer management systems provide a strong platform for volunteers to learn about Special Olympics and its various ways to get involved. Technology helps volunteers learn about opportunities, register, and monitor progress towards training. It also provides access to applications and allows them to learn of placements. A strong volunteer management system will retain volunteers and help provide ongoing communication and recognition.

Programs can utilize technology to ensure all of the requirements are met for background checks, applications, and training. A volunteer management system allows people to register online and notifies them of deadlines to complete background checks and applications.

A volunteer management system will enable you to keep track of all volunteers and continue to engage them in future events, document volunteer hours, and share important details of volunteer opportunities.

Creating an online presence for volunteer opportunities, and streamlining the process for volunteers to register, will increase the numbers of people engaging in Special Olympics programs. Communicate with your Accredited Program to access what opportunities are available for the Local Program to work collaboratively.

Games Management

Each Local Program must use a Games Management System (GMS) to maintain data and performance records on all athletes. This system is also essential to the division process so that athletes are entered into the appropriate division, which ensures that they are competitive and receive the most positive experience at all levels.

The official SOI website provides a resource on the use of the GMS. It contains training videos, downloads, and tips:
http://resources.specialolympics.org/topics/athlete/gms-learning-center.aspx

Communications & Marketing

Social Media

Social media can be a powerful and cost-effective way to reach a broad audience.

What is Social Media?

What defines and constitutes social media is constantly evolving and changing. Social media is a form of communication that is comprised of platforms that allow for the two-way sharing of information. Information shared on social media includes text posts, photos, audio, and visual media. Social media

Sample tools your Local Program may create and share include:

- GMS
- PDF division (heat) sheets
- Fundraising event instructions
- Program and Local Program calendar(s)
- Local Program Guide
- Sports Information guide
- Sports Rules

*NOTE: Special Olympics does not endorse these products, but is citing them for the purposes of illustration.
“The Local Program engages with the public to provide sports training, competition opportunities, and related activities. Through sports, Special Olympics creates inclusive communities where all people respect one another and work together for the greater good.”
Part 3: Resources

To ensure that each Local Program runs efficiently, this guide offers an entire section dedicated to resources.

Included in the Resources section are:

• Sample checklists and useful tools
• Best practice tips
• Local Program management team position descriptions

Accredited Programs are encouraged to include their own Resources in this section.
Part 3: Resources

The Special Olympics Resource site is a self-service website that includes a variety of tools and valuable resources. Local Programs should contact the Accredited Program for additional resources.

View Special Olympics Resources: [http://resources.specialolympics.org/ResourcesDefault.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/ResourcesDefault.aspx)

Sample Checklists, Tools, and Best Practices
The following resources are offered as suggestions based on local Program needs. You may customize the forms in this Resources section to suit your individual needs. Please check with the Accredited Program to determine if they have an alternate form for these resources that can be utilized by the Local Program.

- Local Program Management Team Position Descriptions
- Local Program Management Team Training Checklists
- Sport Training and Competition Checklist
- Codes of Conduct - Athletes, Coaches, Family/Members
- Developing an Emergency Management Plan
- Incident Action Steps Card
- Incident Weather Policy

Sport Training & Competition Checklists

Checklist for Training Sites

**Logistics**
- Facilities arranged and evaluated for safety and accessibility
- Equipment procured and prepared
- Length of practice
- Time of day for practice
- Availability of coaches and volunteers
- Communication of dates and times to athletes
- Documentation of scores or assessments

**Athletics**
- Number involved
- Age level and maturity
- Skill level
- Adjusting for different skill levels
- Preparedness for potential injuries

**Health & Safety**
- Practice conditions
- Water available
- Weather conditions
- Hazard-free playing surface
- Equipment in proper condition
- Emergency procedures
- Medical forms on site

**Skills to be learned**
- Physical
- Mental
- Technical
- Mental

**Delivery of instructions**
- Key points
- Teaching methods
- Position of athletes: Not facing the sun, athlete needs both hearing or vision, etc.
- Delegation of volunteers and assistant coaches
- Intervention for behavior or crisis
- Positive feedback and support
- Progression throughout the session:
  - Easy to difficult
  - Slow to fast
  - Unknown to known
  - General to specific

**Organizations of Practice**
- Warm-ups (body and skills)
- Review previously taught skills
- Introduce new skills
- Game or event situations; competitive experience
- Cool down and team talk
- Cell phone numbers of chaperones and coaches
- Emergency contact information for chaperones and coaches

**Other**
- Communication with parents, coaches, and event staff
- Coordination with Special Events
Part 3: Resources

Codes of Conduct

The following are sample codes of conduct for Local Programs. Check with your Accredited Program to see which Code of Conduct is currently in use.

Special Olympics Athlete Code of Conduct

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sport and the mission and vision of Special Olympics. All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports partners agree to the following code:

Sportmanship
- 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 insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

Training & Competitions
- I will train regularly.
- 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, competition, and competitions.
- I will not hold back in preliminary competitions just to get into an easier finals competition division.

Responsibility for My Actions
- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympic events.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the International Federation, and the National Federation/Governing body rules for my sport(s).

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences by my program or a Games Organizing Committee, up to and including not being allowed to participate.

Name: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Athlete or Unified Sports
Partner Circle Role

Developing an Emergency Management Plan

Considerations
- Ideally, a physician, an athletic trainer, or a physical therapist knowledgeable in the triage and immediate management of athletic injuries should be present and on call.
- The coach should provide the athletes’ medical forms and any special instructions to medical personnel.
- An emergency medical technician (EMT) and ambulance should be available immediately upon calling.
- The coaching staff should be educated and skilled in immediate management designed to control the extent of the illness/injury and provide appropriate medical personnel are available.
- The coach and all personnel should be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

Each coach is responsible for activating an Emergency Management Plan
- The coach assesses the situation as quickly as possible after an incident has occurred.
- The coach should assess the incident right where it occurred, determining whether the athlete can be safely moved.
- The coach should know the athlete and his/her personality to best assess injury versus reaction.
- The coach should remain calm, which will also serve to keep the athlete and others calm.
- The coach should listen to the athlete to describe what happened.
- The coach should ask simple, clarifying questions.
- The coach should observe the athlete’s face and eyes while talking.
- The coach should observe for any asymmetry, trauma, general body alignment, and functional abilities.
- The coach should survey the area where the injury occurred for any unsafe objects or terrain.
- The coach should evaluate the criticality of the situation, and then institute action based on the evaluation of the situation.
- The primary survey of the athlete evaluates airway, breathing, circulation, and consciousness.
- The secondary survey of the athlete evaluates the seriousness of all other injuries once it is determined that the athlete is breathing and alert, with good cardiac function.
- If no medical personnel are available, the coach should respond based on his/her assessment of the criticality of the situation.
- When in doubt, do not put the athlete back into play.
- Always refer to a healthcare professional for additional follow-up.
“Through sports, Special Olympics also creates ongoing opportunities for physical activity and socialization, fostering greater athlete involvement and satisfaction – which are critical to Special Olympics’ growth.”
Styling and Updating your Guide...
Adding your Logo to the Header

To add your logo to the Header, move your cursor over the existing logo and double click. Next, right click on the current logo and select “Change Picture” from the drop-down menu. Upload the image of your logo. To leave the header edit mode, hit “close” when done.
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Tip: Clicking on an item in the Table of Contents will automatically jump to that section of the Guide.

• For PC Users: Hold “Ctrl” and then click
Updating The Table of Contents

To update the Table of Contents, click on “References” in your top toolbar. Next, select the “Update Table” icon as shown in the left image above. When prompted, be sure to select “Update page numbers only” and click “OK”. This will ensure that the Table of Contents styles remain the same.
The Styles Pane

The Guide follows a set of text styles. To view the Styles Pane, click on “Home” in your top toolbar and select the “Styles Pane” icon, as shown in the image to the left.

Tip: To only see styles being used, select “Styles in Use” from the “List” drop down at the bottom.
To use the Styles Pane, simply highlight the text you wish to change/update and select any of the listed styles. The text will automatically update to match your selection.
Adding Links

To create a hyperlink, highlight text, click on “Insert”, select “Hyperlink”. When prompted, add the full web URL.

**Tip:** Links must be fully written out so that users will be able to use links when referencing a printed version of the Guide.

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**Unified Sports**
Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that includes Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and Unified Sports® partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities). Through shared sport training and competition, Unified Sports® promotes inclusion for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

Coaches are required to take the Coaching Unified Sports® Course, which is available free of charge online at [https://nfhsslearn.com/courses/36000/coaching-unified-sports](https://nfhsslearn.com/courses/36000/coaching-unified-sports).

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**Unified Sports® Models**
Three models exist within Unified Sports®: Unified Sports® Competitive, Unified Sports® Player Development, and Unified Sports® Recreation. All three models provide different types of experiences in team sports.

**Unified Sports® Competitive**
- All athletes and partners must have sport-specific skills and tactics to complete without modification of rules.
Use the search bar in the top toolbar to easily find a word or phrase that you are looking for. The word/phrase you typed in will highlight every where it is located in the Guide.
The Customize Icon

You will find this icon next to sections that may be customized to fit your Local Program.

**Tip:** You can remove the icon by simply clicking on it and hitting “Delete”/“Backspace” on your keyboard.
Saving the Guide

The Guide will automatically save as a Word Document. To save as a PDF, Go to “File” at the top of the program and select “Save As”.

In the file format drop-down, select “PDF”.
“While everyone in the Special Olympics global movement plays a vital role, the importance of the Local Program level of the organization cannot be emphasized enough. It is at the grassroots level of the movement that most people engage with Special Olympics. This grassroots level is where fans cheer on their family, friends, and neighbors who compete, and it is where communities of inclusion are built.”
Why the Guide is important to our Programs and Where to host the Guide
ADD - Why the Guide is important from CEO perspective!
Accessibility is Key

All Local Program Guides should be easily accessible on your Accredited Program’s website under either the Local Programs or Resources section.
Suggestions or Updates?

Please contact Nora Mason with suggestions for updates or edits:

nmason@specialolympics.org
Thank you to all who have contributed to the SONA Local Program Guide and to all who are committed to utilizing this new resource to impact Local Programs throughout North America. Together we will continually improve overall Program excellence throughout our region.