

Suggested Criteria for Selecting Qualified Athlete Leaders to Serve on SONA Program Boards

(Fall 2017, Updated 2021)

Special Olympics



For accreditation, each Program must have at least one Special Olympics athlete on its board of directors. They must play a meaningful and integral role, and have the same voting rights and privileges as other board members.

- Special Olympics skills and experience
 - Be knowledgeable about Special Olympics and your Program specifically
 - Athlete Leadership courses completed:
 - Introduction to Athlete Leadership
 - Understanding Leadership
 - Athlete Representative OR Governance
 - Have at least 5 years of Special Olympics sports experience
 - Currently a registered, active athlete
 - Participated in a sport competition or program within the past 5 years
 - Experience serving on a Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Council or other planning committee
 - Understand that they are the “voice of the athletes”
 - They must share their own opinion, but also must be able and willing to collect and share opinions of all athletes within their Program

- General skills and experience
 - Be at least age of majority in your jurisdiction (no minors)
 - Have access to transportation to get to and from meetings
 - Have access to a computer and possess basic computer skills
 - Have an email address and be able to answer emails consistently and independently
 - Have effective communication skills (speaking/language – verbal or non-verbal, written, and active listening)
 - Able to contribute during meetings independently (able to read, understand, and have discussions)
 - Have a professional demeanor when representing the Program
 - Will honor the confidential nature of items discussed and voted on at board meetings
 - Will commit to the time requirements and expectations of the role

Programs are encouraged to make use of Special Olympics’ [Athlete Leadership](#) and [Unified Leadership](#) curriculae to help train and engage with athlete board members.

