



A local Special Olympics Program is like a family. Local Programs provide opportunities for us [the athletes] to communicate, meet, make friends and practice together. Local Special Olympics Programs help create potential for improvement of sports results and achievements.

Each athlete has his/her own potential and destiny. Increasing numbers of local Programs will help girls and guys feel better and more comfortable. They will have a place to go and something to do. They will know that people think and help them. Special Olympics is like a pyramid, with local Programs working as its foundation.

Leonid Stroilin

Special Olympics Global Messenger



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The current version of the Special Olympics Local Program Development Guide is a result of a major collaborative effort involving participants in the Special Olympics movement working throughout the world.

We wish to sincerely thank the regional organizational development staff in all seven Special Olympics regions for providing their valuable comments and spearheading development and review efforts at the regional level.

We must also thank the Program Development & Learning division for their in-depth review of the guide and incorporation of the most up to date concepts.

To those alert readers who contacted us with tips, suggestions and recommendations, we are much obliged. We would particularly like to thank representatives of the following Programs, who took part in formal reviews and discussions related to local Program operations: Special Olympics Belgium, Special Olympics Egypt, Special Olympics Lebanon (local programs of Sidon, Trepoli and Ba'lbak), Special Olympics Luxembourg and Special Olympics Maryland (USA).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page #
Special Olympics Overview	
• Preface	1 - 2
• Mission Statement, Philosophy, Goals and Vision	3 - 4
• Athlete	5
• Sports and Competitions	6
• Divisioning	7 - 8
• Structure	9 - 11
Local Program Overview	
• Local Program Management Model	12
• ORGANIZE, COACH, AND COMPETE	12 - 13
• Key Steps to Organizing a Local Special Olympics Program	14 - 17
• Planning a Local Special Olympics Training and Competition	18 - 22
Organize: Local Program Coordinator Plan	
Coach: Training and Coaching Plan	
Compete: Competitions Coordinator/ Manager Plan	
• Conducting a Local Special Olympics Competition	23 - 28
APPENDICES	Appendix #
General Information	
Definition of Eligibility for Participation in Special Olympics	1
Special Olympics Global Movement and Strategic Projects	2
Special Olympics Language Guidelines	3
Forms	
Potential Local Program Self-Assessment	4
Special Olympics Registered Local Program	5
Special Olympics Local Program Roster	6
Special Olympics Volunteer Registration	7



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Job Descriptions

Local Program Coordinator	8
Coach	9
Local Competitions Coordinator	10

Worksheets

Special Olympics Budget Worksheets	11
Sample Competition Expense Worksheet	12
Special Olympics Expense Budget Template	13
Practice Plan Worksheet	14

Checklists

Practice Site Checklist	15
Season Planning Checklist	16

Additional Guidelines and Samples

Steps in the Fundraising Process	17
Fundraising Action Plan	18
Local Public Relations Program Guidelines	19
Media Relations Plan	20
Script for Opening, Awards and Closing Ceremonies	21

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW



PREFACE

Ready! Set! Go!

Over the last several years, Special Olympics has been actively promoting the idea of innovative quality growth involving Special Olympics Programs throughout the world.

We realize that quality growth does not happen at the Special Olympics World Games or regional conferences. Real growth of the movement can only take place at the local level, where our athletes first get acquainted with Special Olympics and its representatives, where sports training sessions take place and local competitive events bring the joy of first victories.

Local Programs create ongoing opportunities for Special Olympics athlete involvement and greater athlete satisfaction, which are critical to Special Olympics growth. Hence the primary goal of the Local Program Development Guide is to serve as the well-rounded, basic resource for quality, local Special Olympics operations.

What is a local Program? Local Programs consist of all Special Olympics direct service outlets (including independent Special Olympics clubs, specialized schools, independent-living facilities, and professional sports clubs) offering training and competition opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities¹ according to Special Olympics rules and guidelines.

To help you start or grow a successful local Special Olympics Program, the Guide covers three major functions of Special Olympics programming that you need to know to be successful:

ORGANIZE, COACH AND COMPETE

Appendices in the Guide provide an array of ready-to-use tools that will help optimize and simplify local Program operations, ensuring uniform standards and high quality activities.

¹ The term "intellectual disabilities" used throughout the current Guide refers to various terminologies used in different parts of the world, including learning disability, developmental disability, intellectual handicaps, mental handicaps and mental retardation.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW

Another resource titled, *Ready! Set! Go! Local Program Start-Up Kit* outlines the simplest, key steps you need to take to start a local Program. For more copies of this Guide or the Start-Up Kit please contact your Program for assistance or visit our web site at <http://www.specialolympics.org>.

This Guide is not intended to provide comprehensive coverage of every aspect of Special Olympics activities. Additional resources and guides are available through your Program office providing in-depth coverage on each subject mentioned in this publication.

The *Ready! Set! Go! Local Program Development Guide* is a dynamic document. We encourage everyone at all levels of the movement to propose recommendations for improvement of the featured materials, ensuring ongoing improvement of each subsequent edition of the Guide. Please email your comments to localprogram@specialolympics.org.

Ready, Set, Go!

Sincerely,

Local Program Development Team

Special Olympics

1325 G Street NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20005 USA

+1 (202) 628-3630

localprogram@specialolympics.org

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW



SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSION

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 mental retardation, 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.

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 believes that through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually; families are strengthened; and the community at large, both through participation and observation, is united in understanding people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS GOALS AND VISION

Special Olympics' near-term objective is to inspire and support global expansion in order to reach 2 million athletes by 2005 while insisting on high-quality sports training and innovative athletic opportunities.

Special Olympics vision is to be an unprecedented global movement which through sports training and competition improves the lives of people with intellectual disabilities



SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW

and, in turn the lives of everyone they touch. In 2000, Special Olympics made a bold commitment to double the number of athletes participating in the movement by 2005. To support this commitment to growth, Special Olympics established the following goals:

- Achieve quality growth—2 million athletes by the end of 2005.
- Become a worldwide movement lead by athletes.
- Commit to changing attitudes of every person on Earth.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW



SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE

The definition of a Special Olympics athlete is included below. There is no charge to compete in Special Olympics. A more detailed definition of eligibility for participation in Special Olympics is included in the Appendices.

Special Olympics Athlete

The Special Olympics standard and expectation is that every Special Olympics athlete (8 years of age or older) participates in a minimum of 8 weeks of training per sport before competing in an Olympic-style competition which includes opening, awards and closing ceremonies. A Special Olympics athlete is a person with an intellectual disability who trains in a Special Olympics sport and who competes at least once in a Special Olympics Games or competition at any level (local, state, national, regional, or world) during the calendar year (1 January - 31 December); or a person with an intellectual disability who participates in Motor Activities Training Programs.

Special Olympics Participant

A Special Olympics participant is a person with an intellectual disability who trains in a Special Olympics sport but has not competed in a Special Olympics Games or competition at any level (local, state, national, regional, or world) during the calendar year (1 January - 31 December).

Athlete Participation Summary

Annually, Special Olympics conducts a movement wide census of athletes also known as the Athlete Participation Summary (APS). The above definitions are used to help define and count Special Olympics athletes. Through the use of an athlete participation summary worksheet, Programs count how many total athletes and participants are in their Program, as well as collect information about an athlete's gender, age participation by sport, activity in Unified Sports, Athlete Leadership Programs and Motor Activities Training Program. Working with your Program/Sub-Program, please review additional instructions on how you are to count registered athletes and participants at the local level.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW



SPECIAL OLYMPICS SPORTS AND COMPETITIONS

All Special Olympics competitions follow the rules published in the Official Special Olympics Summer and Winter Sports Rules available through your respective Special Olympics Program or sub-Program or from Special Olympics headquarters (to access the Rules, visit the Special Olympics Web site at www.specialolympics.org; click on “Compete” and then on “Sports Rules”). Special Olympics Sports Rules generally follow the rules adopted by international sports federations and national sports governing bodies.

Special Olympics Sports offered

Twenty-six Olympic-type sports are officially offered by Special Olympics (see list below). Consult your Program for more information on other nationally popular sports or recognized sports that may be of interest at the local level.

Special Olympics also offers the Motor Activities Training Program (MATP). MATP refers to activities for individuals with intellectual disabilities with significant physical and/or cognitive challenges who are not ready to participate in Special Olympics sports training and competition activities and who participate in MATP activities.

Special Olympics Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities (Unified Sports Partners) to train and compete together.

Alpine Skiing
Badminton
Bowling
Equestrian
Football (Soccer)
Power Lifting
Softball
Speed Skating
Tennis

Aquatics
Basketball
Cross Country Skiing
Figure Skating
Golf
Roller Skating
Snowboarding
Table Tennis
Volleyball

Athletics
Bocce
Cycling
Floor Hockey
Gymnastics
Sailing
Snowshoeing
Team Handball



DIVISIONING

The fundamental difference that sets Special Olympics competitions apart from those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate, and every athlete is recognized for his or her performance. Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions.

Ability Grouping

In Special Olympics, every effort is made to place athletes in divisions where their performance ability is no more than 15 percent higher or lower than others in the same division; this placement process is called divisioning. The 15 percent guideline gives all athletes a reasonable chance for success. Divisioning is possible because of Skills Assessment Tests established in each sport that allow coaches to test, score and division their athletes prior to competition (Skills Assessment Tests for each sport are available as a part of the respective sport's rules).

Ideally, individuals and teams are placed in divisions of no less than three competitors. Divisions shall never exceed eight athletes or teams.

EXAMPLE: Divisioning a 100-meter race

Division I

15%

Athlete	A	-	10.0 sec
Athlete	B	-	10.4 sec
Athlete	C	-	10.6 sec
Athlete	D	-	11.0 sec

Division II

15%



SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW

Athlete	E	-	11.6 sec
Athlete	F	-	11.9 sec
Athlete	G	-	12.0 sec

In team sports competition, the total Skills Assessment Test scores of athletes on the team, and a classification round prior to competition, can be used to determine ability divisions, and the 15 percent guideline shall apply to these divisions. A divisioning round involves teams competing in a short version of the official team sport.

In judged sports such as gymnastics, figure skating and equestrian, the 15 percent guideline is not appropriate for use in divisioning. Nevertheless, athletes should be placed in divisions based upon performance capabilities.

Age Grouping

To provide the safest and most meaningful competitive experience, athletes are placed in competitions against athletes who are as close in age to them as possible. The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules define the recommended age groups and generally suggest no more than five years age difference between competitors.

Gender Grouping

When appropriate, athletes are also divided by gender and compete on male and female teams.

Awards

Awards are an important part of Special Olympics competition. Special Olympics believes in recognition of each individual's efforts. Medals should be given for first through third place and ribbons signifying each athlete's place of finish for fourth through eighth place. At the local level of competition, 1st-8th place ribbons may be used. Information about official Special Olympics medals and ribbons may be obtained through your state/provincial or national office.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW



SPECIAL OLYMPICS STRUCTURE

The Special Olympics movement has several levels of management that are important to be aware of and understand. See the description on the Special Olympics Global Movement in Appendix I. The Special Olympics General Rules (accessible via www.specialolympics.org) provides more information on these defined levels and roles in the movement.

Special Olympics, Inc.

Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) headquarters is based in Washington, DC and is registered as a 501 (c) 3 or non profit organization with its own Board of Directors. Special Olympics oversees and governs Program accreditation, licensing, strategic planning and the Special Olympics general and sports rules. Special Olympics also develops global resources and conducts Regional and World Games. There are also several systems and strategic projects such as Healthy Athletes, Family Support Network, Athlete Leadership Programs, the public web site, Knowledge Management System, So Get Into It™, Centralized Direct Mail Program, Games Management System and the Program Development System that are administered from headquarters.

Regional Special Olympics Offices

The seven Special Olympics regional offices are located in Asia-Pacific, North America, Middle East/North Africa, East Asia, Africa, Europe-Eurasia, and Latin America. By being geographically closer to the Programs these regional offices act as an extension of headquarters but provide more customized assistance to the Programs in order to facilitate growth. Regions also provide assistance to headquarters in terms of data collection, translation needs, informing and communicating strategy.

Special Olympics Programs

Each of the 200 Special Olympics Accredited Programs in 150 countries are considered the headquarters for Special Olympics in that country. A Special Olympics Program is independently registered as non profit or non governmental organization in its



SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW

respective country and has its own board of directors. An Accredited Program means any U.S. or National Program accredited by Special Olympics to organize and conduct Special Olympics training and competition programs within a particular jurisdiction. Special Olympics Programs maintain control over the assets and operations of sub and local Programs, described below.

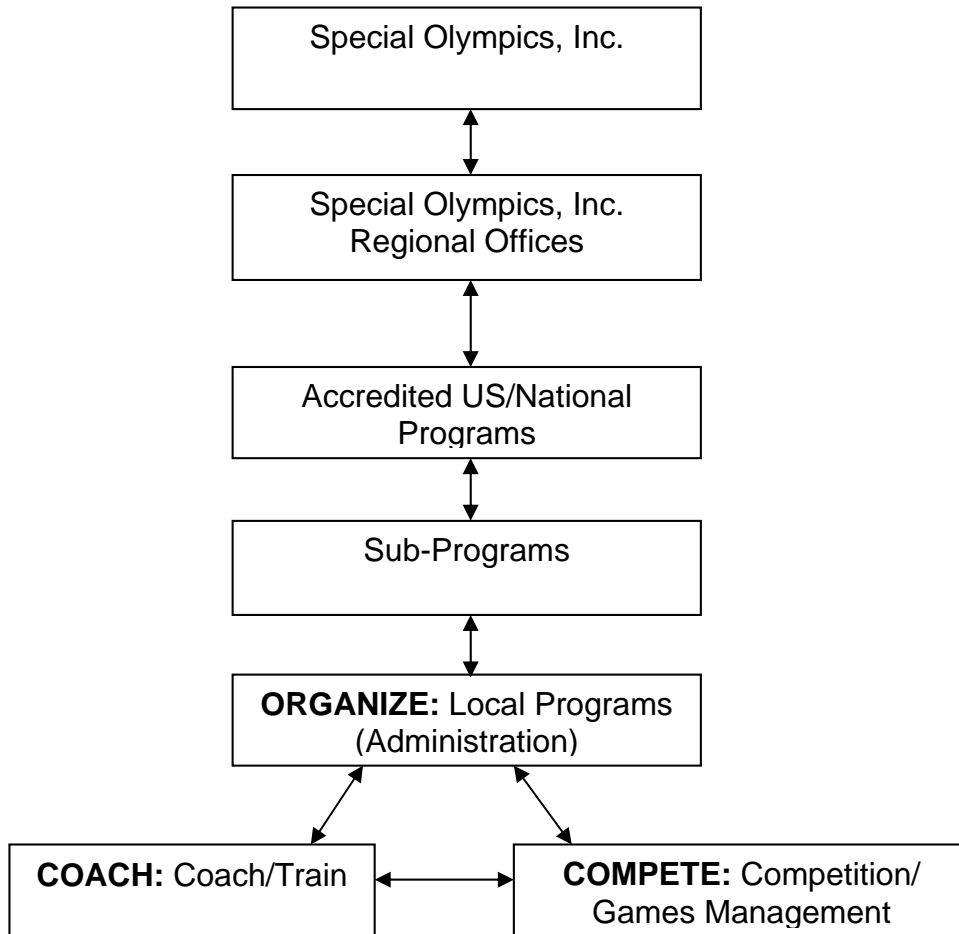
Special Olympics sub-Programs

A sub-Program is a Special Olympics entity directly below a Program that has managerial responsibility for and indirectly conducts sports training and competitions, within a defined geographic area of an accredited Program. A sub-Program must be located within the jurisdiction (territory) of the Program and must be accredited and authorized by the Program to organize and conduct local Special Olympics programs within a defined area. Sub-Programs accredited to operate within the jurisdictions of U.S. or National Programs should not be separate legal entities rather, each sub-Program should be operated as a division or branch of the accrediting Program. A sub-Program is governed by the Special Olympics Program and Board of Directors.

Special Olympics local Programs

The local Program is located within the jurisdiction of and typically managed by the sub-Program or State/National Program. Local Programs consist of all Special Olympics direct service outlets (including independent Special Olympics clubs, specialized schools, independent-living facilities, and professional sports clubs) offering training and competition opportunities according to Special Olympics rules and guidelines. Local Programs create ongoing opportunities for Special Olympics athlete involvement and greater athlete satisfaction, which are critical to Special Olympics growth.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS OVERVIEW





LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LOCAL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT MODEL: ORGANIZE, COACH, AND COMPETE

Local Programs can vary in size and scope yet they must always provide the basic direct service of sports training and competition to athletes. Local programs are Special Olympics direct service outlets and include independent Special Olympics clubs, specialized schools, independent-living facilities, and professional sports clubs that offer training and competition opportunities according to Special Olympics Rules and guidelines.

To qualify as a Special Olympics local program, any entity must fulfill three basic functions:

ORGANIZE, COACH AND COMPETE

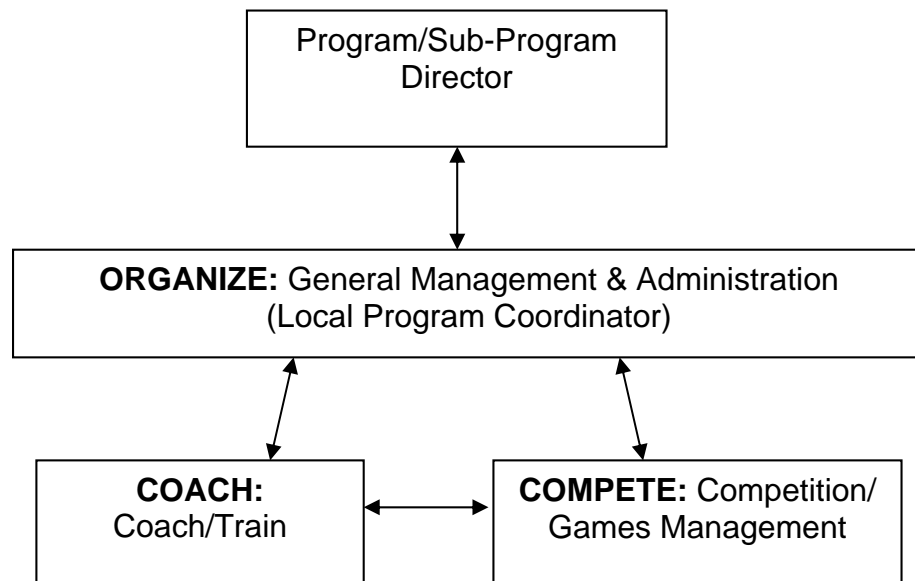
1. **Organize:** General and administrative local Program management
 - a. Ensure Special Olympics mission and philosophy are effectively carried out.
 - b. Aggressively expand opportunities for more persons with intellectual disabilities.
 - c. Leadership and guidance in sport program development. The local Program Development Coordinator works to establish ongoing relationships with the sports community to support quality sports training and competition.
 - d. Oversight of administrative activities such as athlete registration, data collection and analysis, public relations activities, local fundraising events, volunteer registration and management.
 - e. Liaison and link to sub or National/State Program to ensure alignment with organizational goals, plans, and higher level competitions for athletes as well as state-wide or national opportunities or events that occur throughout the year.
2. **Coach:** Training and Coaching
 - a. Conduct frequent high quality sports training for athletes provided by well-trained coaches in preparation for competitions;
 - b. Includes registration of athletes with the appropriate Special Olympics Program or sub-Program office;
3. **Compete:** Conducting and organizing competitive events
 - a. Conduct frequent high quality sports competitions for athletes led by a Local Competitions Coordinator supported by volunteers.

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Depending on specific circumstances, these key functions can be vested in a single dedicated person who decides to start a local Program or they can be assigned to a number of people responsible for particular areas of expertise (see Job Descriptions in Appendices). For example, the training and coaching functions occurring in a more advanced local Program with several dozen athletes might be fulfilled by a Head Coach and a number of assistant Coaches or by several Coaches, each of whom is responsible for coaching a different sport. Visit <http://www.specialolympics.org> for Special Olympics Coaches and Sports Skills guides.

Special Olympics Programs' experience worldwide suggests that the model below can be used by your local Program and customized to your situation. However, the basic functions must remain: ORGANIZE, COACH and COMPETE.

This model can work if the local Program is managed by volunteers or by paid staff. As the model illustrates the local Program Coordinator liaisons with the sub-Program staff and also takes ultimate responsibility for local Program operations. The higher level sub-Program or Program may have to work with several different local Programs, not just yours. Lines of communication are two way as it is important to gather feedback from all functional areas.





LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

KEY STEPS TO ORGANIZING A LOCAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM

Remember the major functions of a local program are:

ORGANIZE, COACH AND COMPETE

The 14 Steps identified below provide an outline and brief listing of the activities necessary to organize the basic functions of a local Program:

- Manage and administer activities and goals
- Recruit and train athletes, coaches, volunteers and
- Organize and conduct competitions.

When starting or developing a local Program, review the following steps with those individuals who are going to assist you.

Step 1: Identify leadership

- Get acquainted with appropriate Special Olympics sub-Program and Program staff and volunteers and obtain their contact information.
- Select who is going to be responsible for the three key functions identified in the previous model:
 - **Organize:** General Management & Administration (Local Program Coordinator),
 - **Coach:** Training and Coaching Athletes (Coaches),
 - **Compete:** Competition/Games Management (Competitions Coordinator).

Step 2: Plan your local Program operations

- Use the Local Program Self-Assessment Form to take an inventory of needs and resources (Appendix #)
- Determine your planning timeline: single sports season/one calendar year
- Identify components of your plan
 - Recruitment needs, sources and schedule for athletes, coaches and volunteers
 - Sports training and competition schedule(see Appendix X for competition plan and sample schedule)
 - Fundraising and inkind donations (see Appendix X for fundraising steps and action plan)

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Promotion/Public awareness (see Appendix X for PR guidelines and media relations plan)
- Budget

Step 3: Recruit and register coaches

- Identify your needs based on athlete interests (example: We need 5 athletics coaches to work six hours per week over a 15-week season).
- Determine available recruitment channels (e.g., schools, sports organizations).
- Establish contacts, acknowledge your needs and recruit coaches.
- Visit <http://www.specialolympics.org> for Special Olympics Coaches and Sports Skills guides.

Step 4: Conduct initial athlete recruitment and registration

- Recruitment is done by all local Program representatives, not just coaches.
- Initial athlete and coach recruitment efforts are closely coordinated to match athletes' interests and needs with coaches' availability and skills.
- Access the athlete registration packet which includes athlete data, medical and release forms through your Program representatives.

Step 5: Train Coaches

- Coaches training should cover:
 - Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy
 - Coaching Special Olympics athletes
 - Rules
 - Divisioning
 - Expectations
 - How to identify and foster athlete leaders
 - Sport-specific techniques

Step 6: Establish Relationships

Some of the key partners of a local Program can include:

- Schools



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- SO Get Into It™
- Unified Sports®
- Families:
 - Family Support Networks
 - Family Committees
- Community:
 - Colleges/Universities
 - Religious Institutions
 - General Public
 - Other community organizations
- Residential Settings (institutions, group homes, orphanages)
 - Peer involvement
 - Motor Activities Training Program
- Local government/municipalities

Step 7

- Conduct athlete training (see Special Olympics Sports Rules and Sports Skills Guides for details)

Step 8

- Inform and/or train those who are going to assist you with organizing the games/competition:
 - Coaches
 - Sports technical experts
 - Sports officials
 - Teachers
 - Government officials
 - Corporate and civic groups
 - Sport facilities representatives

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Step 9

- Organize competition events (see “Conducting a Special Olympics Competition” section for details)

Step 10

- Promote public awareness (see the Appendices “Local Public Relations Program” for details)

Step 11

- Raise funds (see the Appendices “Steps in the Fundraising Process” for details)

Step 12: Evaluate Program

- Collect and organize data
- Fulfill sub-Program and Program reporting requirements
- Seek athlete input on how athletes enjoy participation in the Program and ways to improve athlete experiences

Step 13

- Continue development of action plans and budgets (operational one-year and/or multi-year strategic plans)

Step 14: Expand your local Program

- Recruit and train new coaches, volunteers, families
- Conduct training for increased numbers of athletes
- Expand partnerships, funding and media relations
- Empower athletes to participate in leadership roles
- Evaluate your Program (conduct formal quarterly, semi-annual and annual evaluations)



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW



PLANNING A SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMPETITION

Steps 1-14 outlined previously provide an overall view of what tasks are necessary to provide sports training and competition opportunities for Special Olympics athletes. To compliment those Steps, three plans listed below outline a schedule of key activities that are typically held during a sports season. A three month Special Olympics Athletics season is used as an example. They are:

- **Organize:** Local Program Coordinator Plan
- **Coach:** Training and Coaching Plan
- **Compete:** Competitions Coordinator/ Manager Plan

ORGANIZE: Local Program Coordinator Plan

Objective	Activity	Sequence/ Order of Activities
Recruit and register “new” athletes	a. Identify potential athletes. b. Identify number of new athletes that can be accommodated. c. Communicate opportunity to participate in Special Olympics Athletics program to potential athletes.	1
Register athletes for season	d. Confirm current list of existing athletes and teams e. Communicate season schedule for Special Olympics Athletics program. f. Develop feedback process with coaches and competitions coordinator	2

**LOCAL PROGRAM
OVERVIEW**

	for end of season evaluation.	
Facilitate coaches education trainings	<p>g. Contribute to scheduling coaches meetings and education courses at the sub-Program level.</p> <p>h. Inform prospective coaches of opportunity to attend meetings and education courses.</p>	3 (ongoing)
Engage support from sports community	<p>i. Identify specific needs: coach course clinicians, coaches, officials, competition volunteers etc.</p> <p>j. Identify key points of contact in the local athletics community: athletics association/federation representatives, coaches, officials, etc.</p> <p>k. Request specific support from contacts in Athletics community.</p>	4 (ongoing)
Conduct follow up for Special Olympics Athletics meets	l. Evaluate season.	5

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

COACH: Training and Coaching Plan

Objective	Activity	Sequence/ Order of Activities
Schedule a minimum of 8 training sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review meet schedule and create season training schedule to include a minimum of 8 sessions of at least 60 minutes in length or equivalent for sport to ensure quality training. b. Assess Athlete transportation needs or challenges. 	1
Attend coaches education trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Register and participate in Special Olympics coaches' certification training. d. Research and attend additional sport specific educational opportunities. 	Ongoing
Conduct training sessions in preparation for competition (meet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Assess athletes' ability and work with athletes to make event selections. f. Practice in selected events and prepare for meet. g. Explain and reinforce to athletes what they can expect to happen at meet. 	2
Register Athletes to compete in Special Olympics Athletics meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Register team to compete in all local Special Olympics Athletics meets. i. Register team to compete in invitational sub-Program Athletics meets. 	3
Continue to conduct training sessions in preparation for meet(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. Prepare for competition schedule or season ending competition event. k. Review performance from previous sessions and set practice objectives to focus on key needs in preparation for meets. l. Focus on key needs in preparation for the season ending meet and how it will/might be different from the meets 	4

**LOCAL PROGRAM
OVERVIEW**

	they have been in.	
Schedule mini-meets or other competition opportunities with other teams	m. Involve teams in mini or dual meets to provide competitive experience during training period.	5
Attend season ending meet	n. Provide logistical information to athletes and families for season ending event.	6
Conduct season review of training, competition experience and athlete preparation	o. Seek feedback from assistant coaches, family members and athletes. p. Use a season ending meeting to gather feedback.	7



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

COMPETE: Competitions Manager/Coordinator Plan

Objective	Activity	Sequence/ Order of Activities
Schedule Special Olympics Athletics meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify dates for meets. b. Identify facilities, equipment and sites for meets. c. Determine events to offer and resulting meet schedule. d. Request facilities, equipment and sites on identified dates. e. Obtain written confirmation of commitment for facility use, equipment and dates. 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Inform/confirm all coaches of competition schedule. 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Secure equipment needed for trainings and meets. h. Define schedule for set-up and take-down/clean-up of facility on meet day(s). i. Define on-site registration process for teams/athletes. j. Prepare contingency plan for inclement weather and other emergencies 	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> k. Recruit and train volunteers to conduct meets. 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> l. Confirm local Program participation through registration process. 	5
Conduct Special Olympics Athletics meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> m. Begin competition schedule or conduct season-ending meet. 	6

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW



CONDUCTING A LOCAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMPETITION

A Special Olympics competition is when athletes compete against athletes in the same sport with whom they do not regularly train. A competition must also be organized so that athletes are grouped in their appropriate competition division (divisioning by age, ability and gender) in each event in accordance with Special Olympics Sports Rules. Special Olympics Sports Rules generally follow the rules adopted by international sports federations and national sports governing bodies. Visit our web site at <http://www.specialolympics.org> for Special Olympics Competition guides for more information on sport-specific competition.

Special Olympics local Program level competitions can be offered as either facility-based competitions for students of a school or residents of a residential facility, or as community-based competitions for all children and adults with intellectual disabilities living or working within the community. Participating in local competitions gives athletes the opportunity to qualify and progress to higher level games, tournaments and meets.

Lastly, local Special Olympics competitions must include an opening, awards and closing ceremonies. A more detailed outline of what is required to conduct a competition and each of these ceremonies is listed below.

Personnel Checklist (for all aspects of a competition)

- Competition coordinator/manager (person responsible for organizing and supervising the sports competition)
- Appropriate number of competition Officials and field of play personnel
- Technical delegate (An optional Program representative with experience in the respective sport ensuring the correct interpretation and implementation of the Special Olympics and Sports Rules in order to have a safe, high quality and dignified sports environment.)
- Support services volunteers



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- A Master of Ceremonies
- A local celebrity (e.g., high school or college athlete, teacher, principal, superintendent, radio/television personality)
- Parade officials
- Torch Run official
- Special Olympics flag bearers for raising and retiring of Special Olympics banner
- Two awards escorts
- An awards announcer for each sport offered
- An awards presenter for each sport
- Persons designated to handle medical/safety emergencies

Opening Ceremonies

At a minimum, an opening ceremonies must include a recognition of athletes participating (parade of athletes); time to vocalize the athlete's oath and official's oath; and a welcome statement made by a local celebrity or dignitary (example: school principal, local athlete, government official) to the participating athletes.

Schedule of Events

- f. Athletes enter ceremony area led by recognizable individuals/groups of individuals (for example, musical groups, color guard, and local celebrities).
- g. The Special Olympics torch is carried into the playing area by a Special Olympics athlete.
- h. The Special Olympics athlete oath ("Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.") is recited by a Special Olympics athlete.
- i. The official's oath is recited by a competition official ("In the name of all judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in the (insert name of Games or Tournament) with complete impartiality, respecting, and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the spirit of sportsmanship") is recited by the official.
- j. The competition is officially declared as open (by a Special Olympics athlete, a competition official or by another local celebrity).
- k. Athletes leave for the competition area.

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Equipment Checklist (Opening and Closing Ceremonies)

- Podium.
- Special Olympics banner.
- Sound system.
- DVD, CD or tape cassette player.
- Special Olympics CD or tape with appropriate parade music.
- Special Olympics torch (actual or symbolic).
- Tape, cones, etc. (used to mark off the parade route).
- Pre-event Planning Checklist for Opening Ceremonies
- Invite a local celebrity (for example, Special Olympics athlete serving as a member of the Board of Directors, high school athlete, teacher, principal, superintendent, radio/television personality, but definitely someone who can speak well) to be Master of Ceremonies.
- Utilize music for Opening Ceremonies.
- Select Special Olympics athletes to carry the Special Olympics banner
- Select a Special Olympics athlete to carry the torch.
- Select a Special Olympics athlete to recite the athlete oath.
- Review the Opening Ceremonies script and determine both a staging area where the Special Olympics athletes will assemble, as well as the route of the athletes' march.

Opening Ceremonies Organization

(see Special Olympics Script for Opening & Closing Ceremonies in the Appendix)

- a. March of the Special Olympics athletes.
 - (1) Special Olympics athletes carrying the banner will be first in line.
 - (2) Athletes should line up by class, school or agency behind the banner.
 - (3) VIPs or local celebrities should march with the athletes.
- b. The Special Olympics torch is carried in by designated athlete and a caldron, if available, is lit.
- c. The Special Olympics athlete oath is recited by an athlete (possibly jointly with another local sport celebrity).



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- d. Opening of competition is announced by a local celebrity who is introduced by the Master of Ceremonies.
- e. Athletes depart gym, stadium or field to prepare for competition.

Competition

In individual or team sports events.

Schedule of Events

- a. Athletes are grouped in their appropriate competition divisions in the staging area.
- b. Competition is conducted by divisions in each event. (Use of index card method or computer system to enable divisioning).
- c. Awards are presented to the athletes after competition is completed in each division.
- d. Awards presentation

At a minimum an awards presentation must have an awards announcer, who announces the results of the competition and the individual athletes' placement or participation; and a presenter(s), such as athlete leaders, local dignitaries, professional athletes, law enforcement officers, who present the athletes their awards; and Special Olympics awards distributed to athletes who finish 1st -8th place; and a participation ribbon distributed to those who are disqualified or did not finish.

Equipment Checklist

- One table to display awards, awards presentation tray, awards music, adequate sound equipment, possibly banners or flowers.
- Sufficient number of 1st-8th place medals or ribbons and sufficient number of participation ribbons
- Celebrity Presenters (for example, athlete leaders, local dignitaries, professional athletes, law enforcement officers, etc.)

Awards Ceremony Organization

1. All athletes who compete in a Special Olympics competition shall receive recognition for their effort in the form of a ribbon. First through eighth place ribbons shall be given by division in each event. Medals, if available, can be awarded for first through third place instead of ribbons.

LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2. An athlete who is disqualified or does not finish an event shall be given an official Special Olympics participation ribbon.
3. To maximize time and avoid athletes leaving the area, awards presentations should occur immediately following competition in each division.
4. The awards announcer will say the following: “Ladies and gentlemen...It is my pleasure to announce the results in the (division) of the (age and gender group) (event). In eighth place, with a time/score of (time/score), (name)... (pause for award presentation).” As in all sport award presentations, this presentation continues in sequential ascending order up to first place.
5. Groups of athletes are accompanied by a volunteer awards escort to the awards presentation.
6. For each athlete, the awards presenter should present the award and offer personal congratulations.

Closing Ceremonies

At a minimum a closing ceremony must include a dignitary, athlete, and announcer or emcee to announce the competition officially closed, and athletes are escorted out of the staging arena, field of play or exit the stadium.

Schedule of Events

- a. Athletes enter playing area.
- b. The Special Olympics torch is carried out or extinguished by a Special Olympics athlete.
- c. Competition officially declared closed (by a Special Olympics athlete, a competition official or by another local celebrity).

Pre-event Planning for Closing Ceremonies checklist

- Invite a local celebrity (Special Olympics athlete, high school/college athlete, teacher, principal, superintendent, radio/television personality, etc.) to be Master of Ceremonies (same individual selected for Opening Ceremonies).
- Prepare a script for Closing Ceremonies and map out a staging area and a parade route into and out of the gym, field or stadium.
- Select a local sports celebrity to declare the competition closed (possibly the same individual who was chosen to open the competition).
- Select a Special Olympics athlete to carry out or extinguish the torch.



LOCAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Invite local singers, dance groups or other popular local entertainment to perform during Closing Ceremonies.

Equipment

See Opening Ceremonies Equipment checklist

Closing Ceremonies Organization

- a. March of the Special Olympics athletes to music.
- b. Special Olympics torch is carried out or extinguished.
- c. Special Olympics banner is retired.
- d. Competition is officially declared closed by the local celebrity.
- e. Short performance by local entertainers.
- f. Athletes exit the arena/staging area.