



Volunteer Coordinator Manual

Updated: December 2023

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Special Olympics
British Columbia





Welcome!

Volunteers are the driving force behind all aspects of Special Olympics BC, acting as Local Committee members, subcommittee members, coaches, and program volunteers.

The role of **Volunteer Coordinator** is integral to all Special Olympics BC Locals. Volunteer Coordinators oversee the recruitment, screening, training, and retention of volunteers. They work on the targeted recruitment of volunteers for vacancies within the local, ensure they are properly screened and trained, and ensure existing volunteers are appropriately recognized for their dedication to Special Olympics BC.

Volunteer Coordinators are a key component of the Local Committee and work closely with other Local Committee members to ensure all tasks are completed. The time and dedication to the Local are the greatest gifts that can be given to the athletes and are greatly appreciated.

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The Special Olympics BC website contains many of the resources and information necessary for this position as well as programs, within the Local. This valuable tool can be accessed at any time by visiting www.specialolympics.bc.ca and browsing in the [Resources](#) section on the website

This manual provides links to the website and resources so that you will be able to access the most current information available.

For further information or questions please contact the Community Development Coordinator for your region.

Contact information for all SOBC staff, including your Community Development Coordinator, can be accessed at [SOBC Staff Contacts](#).

General Contact Info:

Special Olympics British Columbia
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Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6

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Table of Contents

Welcome!	2
About Special Olympics	5
The Birth of Special Olympics in Canada	5
Special Olympics British Columbia	6
Vision, Mission & Values	6
Strategic Plan	6
The Oaths of Special Olympics	7
Principles that guide Special Olympics British Columbia	7
Special Olympics BC Programs	8
SOBC Web Site – Useful Links	9
Current SOBC News	9
SOBC Resources	9
SOBC Policies	9
Sport Specific Resources	9
Coach Certification Requirements	9
Safe Sport	9
Contact Information	9
Regional Structure	10
Provincial Staff & Leadership Council	11
Volunteer Role Types and Responsibilities	12
Job Description – Volunteer Coordinator *Updated	13
Volunteer Coordinator Year at a Glance	14
Special Olympics BC Policies	15
General SOBC Policies	15
Volunteer Role Types and Responsibilities	15
Administrative Volunteers	15
Program Volunteers	16
Local Committee Roles	16



Volunteer Recruitment & Onboarding	18
Steps for Volunteer Management	18
TARGETED RECRUITMENT	20
Places to Recruit	21
Screening and Placement	21
Screening & Registration <i>*Updated</i>	21
Criminal Records Checks (CRC's)	22
On-Boarding and Training	22
Effective On-going Communication	23
Volunteer Retention	23
VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION	24
Volunteer Appreciation Night	24
SOBC Annual Provincial Awards	24
Athlete Awards	24
Volunteer Awards	25
Service Pins	25
APPENDICES	26
SOBC Volunteer Reference Letter Request Process <i>*NEW</i>	26
SOBC Volunteer Screening – Sample Interview Questions	27
SOBC Volunteer Screening – Reference Checks Volunteer	28
Expectations & Dispute Resolution	29
Criminal Record Check Progress	31
Flow of CRC Documentation	31
Local Review of CRC Status	31
Information to Send to a Volunteer Requiring a CRC (Sample Email)	



About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that provides sports training and competitive opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. The organization is recognized by Sport Canada as the main provider of these services to people whose primary diagnosis is an intellectual disability, although some participants also have physical challenges.

The Birth of Special Olympics in Canada

In the early 1960s, children with intellectual disabilities were tested for physical fitness levels with the results revealing that these individuals were half as physically fit as their non-disabled peers. It was assumed that the low fitness levels were a direct result of their disability. However, troubled by this assumption, a Toronto researcher — Dr. Frank Hayden — began to conduct his own research on the subject and discovered that given the opportunity, people with an intellectual disability could become physically fit, and acquire the physical skills necessary to participate in sport. Inspired by his discoveries and seeing the need for new kinds of sport opportunities, Dr. Hayden sought ways to develop a national sports program designed specifically for people with an intellectual disability. His work came to the attention of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, D.C. which led to the creation of Special Olympics.

The first sports competition organized under the Special Olympics banner was held at Soldier Field in Chicago in 1968. To ensure that Canada was well represented at the competition, Dr. Hayden called on renowned broadcaster, successful businessman, and humanitarian Harry "Red" Foster. Upon returning to Canada, after accompanying a Canadian floor hockey team to these first Games, Red set about laying the foundation for the Special Olympics movement in Canada as a way to enhance the lives of Canadians with an intellectual disability.

Today, over 31,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities participate in Special Olympics programs across the country. Around the world, Special Olympics has grown to involve more than 5.7 million athletes in 200 countries and jurisdictions.

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Special Olympics British Columbia

Since 1980, Special Olympics British Columbia, a registered charitable organization, has provided high-quality year-round sport programs and competitions for athletes with intellectual disabilities, enriching their lives and opening hearts and minds to their abilities. Today, over 5,200 athletes participate in Special Olympics BC sports programs in 55 communities across British Columbia.

Special Olympics BC offers year-round programs in 18 sports, as well as local, provincial, national, and international competitive opportunities. These opportunities provide athletes with far more than the physical benefits of improved health and athletic ability. Participation in sports provides opportunities for athletes to develop social skills, cultivate friendships, strive for, and achieve goals and increase their self-esteem — enabling athletes to win in sport, and in life.

Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision

Sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities all across British Columbia.

Our Mission

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities through sport.

Our Values

Inclusion: We foster inclusive communities.

Diversity: We honour what is unique in each individual.

Empowerment: We create opportunities to pursue full potential.

Respect: We operate in an environment of cooperation, collaboration, and dignity.

Excellence: We elevate standards and performance.

Strategic Plan

The [Special Olympics BC's Strategic Plan](#) outlines the goals, strategies, and targets we want to collectively and collaboratively achieve in order to advance Special Olympics.

We aspire to continue to grow, introducing more British Columbians with intellectual disabilities to the transformative power of sport, and we are committed to ensuring we deliver best-in-class programs for our athletes.



The Oaths of Special Olympics

Athlete Oath

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

Coach Oath

In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies, in the spirit of sportsmanship.

Official Oath

In the name of all judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in these Special Olympics Games with complete impartiality, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the spirit of sportsmanship.

Principles that guide Special Olympics British Columbia

- Programs are athlete centered and based on the needs and interests of athletes.
- Athletes are encouraged to participate at their level of choice within existing programs.
- Programs are community based, and efforts must be made to ensure that they are accessible to individuals who have an intellectual disability.
- Programs are for individuals who have an intellectual disability
- Our efforts must be to provide the best quality programs possible given the resources available.
- Special Olympics BC is a volunteer-based organization.
- No person who has an intellectual disability may be denied access to Special Olympics BC programs because they cannot financially afford to participate.
- The safety and well-being of the athletes, volunteers and staff is of prime concern.
- Volunteers and staff are resources to the organization. These resources must be managed properly so that they may grow in a positive environment.
- The goals of those involved with Special Olympics BC will only be achieved if they take full advantage of the opportunities and resources made available to them.
- The athletes who wish to compete must meet certain minimum standards, including regular attendance at, and participation in, training sessions.



Special Olympics BC Programs

Each Special Olympics BC local has the authority to decide which of the 18 sports, sanctioned by SOBC, to offer. To retain accreditation within Special Olympics BC, each Local must offer at least one winter and one summer sport. Special Olympics BC only sanctions these 18 sports, and no Local may support, financially or otherwise, sports other than those listed below.

Summer Sports	Winter Sports
10-pin bowling	5-pin bowling
Athletics	Alpine skiing
Basketball	Cross country skiing
Bocce	Curling
Golf	Figure skating
Powerlifting	Floor hockey
Rhythmic gymnastics	Snowshoeing
Soccer	Speed skating
Softball	
Swimming	

Additionally, these weekly programs are also sanctioned by Special Olympics BC:

- Club Fit
- Youth Programs
- Active Start
- FUNdamentals
- Sports Start
- School Sport Competition
- Fit Families & Friends

Programs must run for a minimum of 12 weeks for at least one hour per week to be sanctioned by Special Olympics BC. The ideal program would run 1.5 hours every week for 16 weeks.



SOBC Web Site – Useful Links

The Special Olympics BC website is an invaluable source of information and resources. Below are examples of links that will be useful to you. You are encouraged to bookmark links you come across that are useful to you for future reference.

<https://www.specialolympics.bc.ca>

Current SOBC News

All volunteers are encouraged to subscribe to SOBC's Monthly Newsletter at

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/e-newsletters>

Links to follow social media can be found at <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/get-involved/sign-our-e-newsletter/social-media>

SOBC Resources

This is the main entry point for information for athlete, coaching, administration, and fundraising

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/resources>

SOBC Policies

The following link provides access to both Special Olympics BC and Pan-Canadian (National) policies

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/policies>

Sport Specific Resources

Access to sport specific pages that provide information on rules, competition planning, basic skills, and training information and videos

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/sport-rules-resources-videos>

Coach Certification Requirements

Complete information and applicable links to required training for coach volunteers

<https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/coach-certification>

Safe Sport

Safe sport is integral to all that we do. <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/safe-sport>

Contact Information

SOBC Staff & Community Contacts - <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/contact-us>

Leadership Council / Regional Coordinators - <https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/who-we-are/our-leadership/leadership-council>



Regional Structure

The province is divided into eight sport regions. Each region is responsible for the coordination and organization of Regional competitions, sending Regional teams to Provincial Games and all other Regional activities. A volunteer Regional Coordinator coordinates these activities in conjunction with representative locals supported by SOBC Community Development Coordinators

Region 1- Kootenays

Locals: Kimberley/Cranbrook, Nelson, Creston, Grand Forks, Trail, Castlegar, Elk Valley, Golden, Nakusp & Invermere

Region 2- Thompson-Okanagan

Locals: Kamloops, Penticton, Vernon, Revelstoke, Kelowna, Salmon Arm, Clearwater, Princeton, Summerland, Keremeos, South Okanagan & Merritt

Region 3- Fraser Valley

Locals: Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Surrey, Ridge Meadows, Abbotsford, Langley & Mission

Region 4- Fraser River

Locals: Richmond, Burnaby & Delta

Region 5- Vancouver-Squamish

Locals: North Shore, Vancouver, Squamish, Sunshine Coast & Whistler Valley

Region 6- Vancouver Island

Locals: Campbell River, Port Alberni, Victoria, Comox Valley, Nanaimo, Oceanside, Powell River, Salt Spring Island, Cowichan Valley & Mount Waddington

Region 7- North West

Locals: Terrace, Smithers, Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Burns Lake & Vanderhoof

Region 8- Cariboo- North East

Locals: Williams Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Prince George, Quesnel, 100 Mile House & Mackenzie



Provincial Staff & Leadership Council

Community Development Coordinator (CDC)

The Community Development Coordinator is a Provincial Staff member of Special Olympics BC. Each region in the province has a Community Development Coordinator dedicated to them. They uphold and enforce the policies of Special Olympics BC and they work to facilitate growth in each region through alignment of the strategic plan as adopted by the Board of Directors.

The Community Development Coordinator provides support to Locals through regular in person visits and is available to answer questions and assist volunteers on an as-needed basis either through their Local visits or by phone/email.

Leadership Council

Special Olympics BC's Leadership Council provides vital guidance for our organization and movement, and SOBC benefits significantly from the efforts of these valued volunteers. Comprised of the Regional Coordinators representing the eight SOBC Regions and respected leaders in the SOBC sport world, the council serves as the link between community and regional programs and the Board of Directors of Special Olympics BC. This group plays an important role in helping chart the course of SOBC sport program development, strategic plans, policies, and resources.

The Leadership Council plays an essential role in creating Special Olympics BC policies. Policies can be created through issues brought forward by members from the local level speaking to their Regional Coordinators. Regional Coordinators bring the concepts to the Leadership Council for deliberations. Out of those discussions, the Leadership Council can recommend the creation of policies, which must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Regional Coordinator

Regional Coordinators are dedicated volunteers who have been elected by the region to represent them at the Leadership Council. It is through the Leadership Council that they provide feedback and input from their regional members to the Board of Directors of Special Olympics BC.

Regional Coordinators provide support to the region by connecting with Locals on a regular basis and hosting regional meetings. They are an invaluable resource to the volunteers within the region and are a great source of leadership – acting as mentors for Local Coordinators and other Local Committee members.

Information on the Leadership Council and contact information for Regional Coordinators can be found at [Leadership Council](#)



Volunteer Role Types and Responsibilities

There are two categories of volunteers within each Special Olympics BC Local: Administrative and Program.

Detailed job descriptions of both administrative and program roles can be found at **Volunteer Roles – Job Descriptions** under Admin in [SOBC Resources](#).

Administrative Volunteers

Administrative volunteers are generally part of the Local Committee. The Local Committee works behind the scenes to ensure that programs can run successfully and safely in each local. Each committee member has a designated role with assigned tasks and responsibilities. These responsibilities vary by position, and not every local will have all the positions filled. Some smaller locals may choose to omit and/or amalgamate some positions, whereas larger locals may further divide positions or create sub-committees. However, it is important to have some key positions filled for the local to run effectively.

Key Administrative positions to have filled are the Local Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and Program Coordinator. These positions support with a lot of the groundwork to get programs up and running in locals across the province.

Program Volunteers

Coaching and program volunteers provide support to Special Olympics BC sport programs and competitions. The main responsibilities of **coach volunteers** are to provide sport specific instruction at weekly programs and encourage athletes to grow and develop their skills. The specific responsibilities for coaching volunteers depend on their role as a coach. Coaches are also role models, teachers, mentors, and friends to athletes and fellow volunteers. Coach volunteers have [certification requirements](#). Programs are also supported **by program volunteers** who support key functions required to facilitate quality sport programs including timers, score keeping, team managers etc.



Job Description – Volunteer Coordinator

Liaise with: Local Coordinator, Local Committee, Volunteers

Position: Volunteer - Elected by the Local membership

Commitment: 1 year term (no limit to the number of terms)

Goals:

Establish and implement a recruitment and on-boarding program to ensure the Local has the highest quality volunteers with the best training available at every level of the Local

Specific Accountabilities:

Ensure that incoming volunteers take the on-line orientation, are provided with appropriate training and on-boarding information

Fill requests for volunteers from other Local Committee members through targeted recruitment strategies

Work with the Registration Coordinator to organize registration events in the spring (March) and summer (August/September) before programs start.

Attend registration events and work with the Registration Coordinator to ensure that SOBC registration policy is followed:

- Ensure all new volunteers have a Criminal Record Check
- Ensure all new volunteers complete required registration steps and an online orientation.

Access training opportunities for all levels of volunteers and make sure they are communicated (i.e., coaching courses, regional conferences)

Evaluate volunteer placement, and if required, work with the Local Coordinator to remove a volunteer from their duties and/or move people into better suited roles

Ensure volunteers are recognized

- Host a volunteer appreciation event
- Work with Local Committee to fill out and submit SOBC award applications

Provide a Volunteer Coordinator's report at monthly Local Committee meetings and share updates with SOBC staff monthly.

Attend monthly Local Committee meetings



Volunteer Coordinator Year at a Glance

MONTH	ACTION
Monthly/Ongoing	<p>Monthly Local Committee meetings – provide a report for each meeting, attend and participate (Locals are required to have 10 meetings / year)</p> <p>Awareness - Year-round, read the SOBC e-newsletter and social media accounts for provincial news and stories. You can select applicable social media to follow at https://www.specialolympics.ca/british-columbia/get-involved/sign-our-e-newsletter/social-media</p> <p>Volunteer recruitment, screening, and onboarding.</p>
April - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an annual planning meeting for Local Committee members to engage in discussion of the next year and set goals accordingly. • Participate in Annual Meeting (required in May or June) • Participate in budget development • Ensure registration process is in place for the coming season including scheduling in person registration event with Registration Coordinator in March, August and/or September
June-Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine volunteer requirements for fall programs through input from Program Coordinator and Head Coaches • Target any specific recruitments needs (ongoing) • Ensure all athletes and volunteers complete required registration documents (with registration coordinator) - ongoing
Sept-Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support registration events (typically in March, August/September) • Onboarding new volunteers in advance of fall program starts
Oct - Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review budget for Local (with Local Committee) • Support submission of SOBC Award nominations sent to provincial office (in conjunction with Program Coordinator)
March-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure volunteer appreciation is occurring– ie. receiving SOBC service pins – your Community Development Coordinator will assist you with this. Acknowledge provincial award nominees.



Special Olympics BC Policies

The Special Olympics British Columbia Society Board of Directors is morally and legally responsible for the philosophies and operations of the Society. As such, all Locals and Regions of Special Olympics BC must abide by the policies, guidelines, procedures, and philosophies established by the Society.

General SOBC Policies

All policies can be found on the SOBC Website. Please refer to the following link for the most up to date policies - [SOBC Policies](#)

If, after reading the SOBC Policies, you have any questions, please contact the SOBC Vice President, Sport, for assistance.

As policies are periodically updated, we encourage you to refer to policies on the website so that you are always accessing the most current information.

The Volunteer Coordinate is encouraged to be familiar with general policies but should ensure understanding of the following policies as they pertain to volunteers

- Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Dispute Resolution
- Appeal Policy
- Volunteer Screening Policy
- Coach Certification Requirements

Volunteer Role Types and Responsibilities

There are two categories of volunteers within each Special Olympics BC Local: Administrative and Program. These roles are a key resource for the Volunteer Coordinator as they keep the Local organized and delegate tasks amongst the committee.

Detailed job descriptions of both administrative and coaching role responsibilities can be found at **Volunteer Roles – Job Descriptions** under Admin in [SOBC Resources](#)

Administrative Volunteers

The Local Committee works behind the scenes to ensure that programs run successfully and safely in each local. Each committee member has a designated role with assigned tasks and responsibilities. These responsibilities vary by position, and not every local will have all the positions filled. Some smaller locals may choose to omit and/or amalgamate some positions, whereas larger locals may further divide positions or create sub-committees. However, it is important to have some key positions filled for the local to run effectively.



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Local Committee Roles

Without administrative volunteers, our organization could not take root and thrive in local communities.

Local Coordinator: Ultimately responsible for all actions of the Local. Represents Local's point of view at all meetings. Communicates with all committee members, as well as the Provincial Office and Regional Coordinator. Schedules, chairs, and hosts Local Committee meetings. Sets budget with committee, communicates with athletes, submits accreditation, and ensures policies and procedures are adhered to.

Program Coordinator: Responsible for all aspects of programs in the Local. Secures facilities needed for competitions, organizes Local/Regional events, chairs regular coaches' meetings, communicates information on coaching resources, submits progress reports to the Local Committee, evaluates programs, places new athletes and coaches, and attends all Local Committee meetings.

Treasurer: Responsible for keeping and submitting regular financial records, communicating with all committee members on financial status, developing the annual budget with the Local Committee, and attending all Local Committee meetings. This role is supported by the SOBC staff finance team.

Secretary: Communicates with all Local Committee members, records and distributes meeting minutes, and attends all Local Committee meetings.

Volunteer Coordinator: Recruits, liaises with, and represents volunteers, interviews and screens volunteers, provides registration opportunities for potential volunteers, provides orientation and training sessions for volunteers, maintains records, addresses requests of volunteers, organizes volunteer recognition, and attends all Local Committee meetings.



Fundraising Coordinator: Coordinates all the Local's fundraising activities, prepares annual fundraising plan, seeks out organizations to provide financial support, recognizes and maintains relationships with the Local's sponsors, advises Provincial Office of all local sponsors, adheres to exclusivity of sponsors, and attends all Local Committee meetings.

Public Relations Coordinator: Coordinates all aspects of public relations for the Local – including developing local media contacts, providing appropriate material for media coverage, organizing promotional events, following the SOBC the style guide – and attends all Local Committee meetings.

Registration Coordinator: coordinates distribution and receipt of registration information. With the support of the Local, is responsible for ensuring registration is completed annually by all athletes and volunteers participating in SOBC programs and that information is up to date in the database. This position may be filled by multiple people with one managing athlete registration and a second managing volunteer registration.

Other Local Committee that can be filled:

Equipment Coordinator: Coordinates the distribution of equipment to coaches for their sport season, collects equipment from coaches at end of season, conducts safety inspections on returned equipment, maintains an organized storage space, and report needs for equipment replacement to Local Committee.

Family Coordinator: Represents local families at monthly committee meetings, maintains consistent communication with SOBC staff and the families in designated Local, assists family members to become advocates for Special Olympics, and works to ensure that families feel connected and valued within the organization.

Athlete Representative: Local Committees are encouraged and supported by Provincial Office to have an Athlete Representative at the table. This individual would be the voice for local athletes. They would bring issues to the table and communicate directly with the athletes to ensure their needs are being met.



Volunteer Recruitment & Onboarding

The process of maintaining a full roster of volunteers for each Local is a continuous one. There must be consistent recruitment of volunteers to keep programs running and the Local Committee functioning optimally. It is also important to ensure that volunteers are provided with on-boarding, as well as training, to make sure they are equipped to take on the position they are given. This early period in a volunteer's experience with Special Olympics BC is crucial as this lays the groundwork for their relationship with the organization moving forward.

After the volunteer has been given some time to try out their chosen position, it is essential to check-in with the volunteer to evaluate their experience, make sure they are well-suited to the position they have been assigned, as well as make sure they are being successful in that role.

The role of Volunteer Coordinator is to oversee the overall process of recruitment and on-boarding. Depending on the size of the Local, it may be helpful to enlist subcommittee members of the Volunteer Coordinator position to take on parts of the volunteer on-boarding role. If assistance is needed with recruitment and/or on-boarding, do not hesitate to contact your Community Development Coordinator (contact information can be found at [Contact Us](#))

Included below are steps and ideas that can help in the recruitment and on-boarding process of volunteers. These steps also provide ideas to guide in the management and retention of volunteers – a satisfied volunteer is a long-term volunteer!

Steps for Volunteer Management

1. Planning

- a. Determine where volunteers are needed by speaking to the members of the Local Committee
 - i. Program Coordinator will know what coaching volunteers you may need
 - ii. Local Coordinator and Local Committee Members will know what Local Committee Members, sub-committee members, and one-day volunteers you'll need

2. Recruitment

- a. Creating and maintaining online volunteer postings. Provincial Office also maintains a list of volunteer opportunities on the SOBC Website on the [Get Involved Volunteer](#) page. Your Community Development Coordinator can post opportunities from your local on this site.
- b. Distributing posters and other promotional materials to community locations. Please contact your CDC to coordinate materials to ensure they provide needed info and meet branding requirements.
- c. Spreading requests by word of mouth through your Local including other members of the Local Committee, as well as family members and caregivers



- d. Working with your Public Relations Coordinator to place ads on local radio, newspapers, and other media outlets to publicize your requests for volunteers

3. Screening and Placement

- a. Conduct interviews with potential candidates to get to know them and their skills better
- b. Verification of two references of the potential volunteer. Refer to the **Volunteer Screening Policy** which can be found on the [SOBC Policies](#) section of the SOBC website. Refer to the **Appendices** for a reference check template
- c. Procurement of a Criminal Record Check (refer to the **Appendices** for current processes)
- d. Provide the volunteer with the Portal link to register online.
 - i. Or provide the required volunteer registration forms if volunteers are unable to use the online Portal.
- e. Ensure the volunteer is informed of who he or she will be placed with (i.e., under the supervision of a Head Coach or the Local Coordinator) and how to get in touch with this person

4. Orientation and Training

- a. Hold an orientation and/or training session for new volunteers – enlist help of Regional Coordinator or your Community Development Coordinator as needed. Contact information for your Regional Coordinator can be found at [Leadership Council](#).
- b. Make sure new volunteers are provided with the appropriate On-Boarding document, including Manuals (if applicable) relevant to their position (i.e., Head Coach Manual, Program Coordinator Manual).
- c. Inform volunteers of all training and professional development opportunities including NCCP courses, Coach Development Workshops (CDWs), webinars, regional conferences, and summits put on by the Provincial Office. Information will be shared through SOBC Provincial Office. To determine which certifications are required for a specific position, refer to [Coach Certifications](#) information on the SOBC website.
- d. All new volunteers must complete the **Special Olympics Canada Volunteer Orientation** course which can be accessed through [Online Volunteer Orientation](#). This may be done prior to an interview but should be completed prior to starting a program

5. Recognition and Retention

- a. Plan at least one volunteer recognition event each year (Christmas party, annual BBQ, etc.)
- b. When appropriate, provide small token recognition items to volunteers to thank them for their service
- c. Make sure service pins are presented
- d. Nominate your volunteers for SOBC Provincial Awards and other civic awards in your community (deadline approximately April 1st)



6. Evaluation

- a. Evaluate volunteer experiences through regular feedback and input from coaches, committee members & other volunteers.
- b. Conduct follow up phone calls/emails
- c. As a volunteer leaves, thank them and if you wish conduct an exit interview to seek input on their experience (optional).

TARGETED RECRUITMENT

Building an effective team involves more than just assembling a group of individuals. For a team to be effective, its members must unite behind an inspiring vision and be motivated to bring that vision to life. When looking to fill a volunteer vacancy within your local, it is important to consider how we find the best person for this role - it may not always be the first available person. It is recommended to spend a little extra time recruiting a well-suited candidate that will hold an interest and be successful in their position.

It is important to make sure that when recruiting volunteers for specific positions, we are looking closely at several factors:

- **A good beginning** – Volunteers often approach an organization because something about its mission is appealing to them. Try to take the time to find out exactly what the appeal is and how much the potential volunteer knows about the organization. This helps in terms of finding out where he/she can fit in.
- **Availability** – Volunteer positions may differ in the hours of time required to give – will the volunteer be able to commit to this time? If a committee position, will they be available for the required monthly meetings? If it's a coach position, are they available for the scheduled day/time of practices?
- **Skill set** - Does the volunteer possess some skill & understanding for the position? Experience is not always required but some demonstration of skill is a strong asset! We offer training for volunteers at all levels of the organization.
- **Individual Interests** – Someone who is coming into the organization hoping to coach swimming may or may not have any interest in becoming a Secretary. Make sure to ask & place volunteers in areas that they have an expressed interest, after some time they may request to try something new!
- **Volunteer Resources** – Provide information in a way so that volunteers have what they need about their role at their fingertips (On-boarding resources, job description, necessary manuals, etc.) The volunteer may read the handbook cover to cover, but it is more likely to be used as a reference so being able to find information quickly and easily is important.

Volunteer Coordinators should be very familiar with the information and resources they are giving to potential volunteers; the initial contact with the Volunteer Coordinator will play a huge role in the longevity of a volunteer.



Places to Recruit

Online Ads:

- Volunteer Centers/Employment Centers
- Online Classifieds and Volunteer sites (Govolunteer.com, Kijiji, craigslist, Volunteer Connector, etc.)
- Your Local's Facebook page or other social media accounts, website, or Community Resources page on the Special Olympics BC website

Posters:

- Local Universities/Colleges
- Chamber of Commerce
- Public Library
- Community Living Agencies (day programs, group homes, Home Share)
- Child Development Centre
- SOBC Sponsors (liaise with your CDC and Fundraising team to confirm)
- Local Businesses

By Email, Mail or Phone:

- Local Universities/Colleges
- Child Development Centre
- Service Clubs (Rotary, Eagles, Legion, etc.)
- Word of mouth
- Parents and Family Members of existing athletes
- Local radio stations and newspapers

Screening and Placement

Screening & Registration

Once a potential volunteer has been found, it is important to thoroughly screen them to ensure that they are not a risk to athletes, other volunteers, or the organization itself. The first step in the screening process is to conduct an interview. Ideally, the interview would take place in person, but a phone/online interview would also work. If you choose to meet in person, make sure it is in a public place. For **Sample Interview Questions** and **Reference Check Questions** refer to the **Appendices**.

Once the interview, and reference checks have been completed and the potential volunteer is deemed appropriate, they must complete a registration form, the participation waiver and media opt in or out form, as well as a Criminal Records Check.



Registration

Once the registration is completed, SOBC will approve the enrollment from Chapter level on the Portal, then Volunteer Coordinator will need to approve the enrollment or update the application status from the Local level.

if a paper registration form is completed, then this should be sent to the Local's Registration Coordinator. From there the Registration Coordinator will enter this information into the portal and ensure each program they volunteer for has the information required to keep them safe.

Registration information can be found on [the resources section](#) of the SOBC website under **Admin**.

Once a new volunteer had registered, they must also complete the [Special Olympics Canada online volunteer orientation](#) and Criminal Record Check.

Criminal Records Checks (CRC's)

Criminal Record Check's must be completed before a volunteer is considered a screened volunteer. Prior to completing a CRC, a volunteer may not be alone with athletes and must be accompanied by a fully screened volunteer at all times. CRC's can be completed online and are free of charge for volunteers. **For detailed instructions on how to complete the CRC screening, please see the Appendices.** If you have questions about CRC's please email crc@specialolympics.bc.ca.

Once all screenings have been completed, make sure the new volunteer is introduced to the individual that will be over-seeing them or whom they may be reporting to (for example, the Head Coach or a long-standing program volunteer). Also ensure that the person over-seeing this new volunteer is aware of when they will first be introduced – this allows them to be prepared for the first meeting & get the new volunteer involved as soon as possible. Ideally, the Volunteer or Program Coordinator will attend the first meeting to ensure a warm welcome!

On-Boarding and Training

Once the new volunteer has completed the screening process, the next step is to make sure they are adequately on-boarded and trained. It is crucial that new volunteers be provided with all the resources necessary to feel confident in their position. Positive on-boarding experiences for new volunteers will result in long-term commitments to the organization!

Special Olympics BC has developed an **On-Boarding Package** that can be provided to new volunteers, including program and administrative roles. In addition to the general onboarding package, new volunteers should be provided with a role specific manual (when applicable). On-boarding resources can be accessed under **Admin** in [SOBC Resources](#).

It is not necessary that the Volunteer Coordinator be an expert in every position, but it does help to have a general idea of what kind of tasks each role requires. For training of larger Local Committee roles, you can enlist the help of your Local Coordinator and/or Community Development Coordinator for assistance. It is important to let volunteers take their position and give it a try. Once they have been trained, let them dive into the role. Make a commitment to follow up in a set time frame in case they need more support or have questions.



Effective On-going Communication

Good communication is an essential tool in achieving productivity and maintaining strong relationships at all levels of a Local; it also shows volunteers that they are respected and appreciated at any level which fosters longevity of volunteers. Basic steps to follow are:

- **Regular check-ins** – Just as you would for employees, have a regular check-in with volunteers. Find out how they are managing their role, whether they are having any difficulties, or if they would like to expand/deepen their involvement. Perhaps they have certain goals for themselves you can help them to achieve.
- **Keep them in the loop** – Many times, we forget to communicate key changes, challenges, or developments to our Local as a whole. To maintain the level of engagement and to make sure that everyone involved remains informed, make sure you put forward an effort to communicate. Also, bring volunteer updates to monthly meetings to keep the Committee informed.
- **Customized communication** – Depending on the number of volunteers and what type of roles they fill; it might make sense to develop tailored communication. You can use this tool not just for sharing information but also for developing a volunteer community with special recognition and unique stories that demonstrate the value of volunteer contributions.

Volunteer Retention

To keep strong, well-trained volunteers within Special Olympics BC, volunteers need to have an outlet to voice their feedback to the organization, both positive and negative. Volunteer Coordinators are a good first point of contact for volunteers to communicate feedback they may have.

Even after a volunteer has been with the organization for a lengthy period, it is important to give them the opportunity to express their concerns or questions about their volunteer experience. They may have suggestions or concerns that they haven't felt comfortable voicing in a larger setting, or they may be directly related to the volunteers they are working alongside.

Volunteer Coordinators should aim to connect with as many volunteers as possible on a regular basis to make sure they are familiar with the Volunteer Coordinator should concerns arise. In the case of large locals with many volunteers, subcommittee members could be assigned to connect with specific volunteers on a regular basis.

If a volunteer expresses a concern that needs attention, the Local Coordinator is the best first point of contact. If this is not possible or would be inadvisable due to the nature of the concern, the [Regional Coordinator](#) or [Community Development Coordinator](#) can assist and will consult with the Provincial Office if needed.



VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

As a volunteer-driven organization, Special Olympics BC relies heavily on the 4000+ volunteers around the province who work hard to offer life-changing opportunities to Special Olympics BC athletes.

It is important to make sure all volunteers are adequately recognized for their efforts. Special Olympics BC recognizes volunteers in several different ways, including Locally hosted volunteer appreciation nights, SOBC Awards, and service pins.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

It is not only permissible but encouraged for Locals to host an annual volunteer appreciation event. It is up to the Volunteer Coordinator and subcommittee members to plan and host this event for the volunteers within the Local.

Locals are permitted to choose to host volunteer appreciation events in a manner that suits them. The decision on what kind of event should be hosted should be agreed upon by the Local Committee. It is important to be fiscally responsible when choosing how to celebrate, while still making sure the event is enjoyable for everyone.

Locals are encouraged to host a volunteer-only appreciation event, separate from a Local wind-up.

SOBC Annual Provincial Awards

Thousands of Special Olympics BC athletes, volunteers and sponsors help to inspire greatness within our organization and within our community. Special Olympics BC is proud to recognize the exceptional contributions and achievements of SOBC athletes, volunteers, and sponsors through our annual awards. It is the Volunteer Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that the athletes and volunteers within the local are adequately recognized. This doesn't mean they must complete all nominations, but rather oversee the application process and ensure nominations are submitted in advance of the deadline. These nominations open in late winter and are sent to the Local Coordinator when they are available.

Athlete Awards

Athletic Achievement Award

The Athletic Achievement Award is presented annually to a Special Olympics BC athlete who has demonstrated outstanding athletic skill both in practice and competition. This athlete works hard to develop their abilities and to excel in their sport(s). In addition to athletic ability, this athlete must act as a role model for other Special Olympics athletes.



Spirit of Sport Award

The Spirit of Sport Award is presented annually to a Special Olympics BC athlete who exemplifies the true meaning of sportsmanship. The Special Olympics Athlete's Oath states, 'Let me win, and if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.' This athlete lives by our athlete's oath and is an inspiration to fellow athletes and coaches. This athlete shows dedication, enthusiasm and always gives their best effort.

Volunteer Awards

Grassroots Coach

The Grassroots Coach Award will be presented to a coach who works tirelessly to ensure that all athletes, regardless of their ability level, are provided with opportunities to train, improve, and compete. This coach emphasizes fair play and good sportsmanship and ensures that all athletes feel included and valued. This coach recognizes the unique gifts of each athlete and can form an exceptional bond with the athletes who require a unique approach from their coach.

Howard Carter Award

Howard Carter was an upstanding member of the automobile business community and a great friend of Special Olympics BC. Mr. Carter recognized the value of coaches and as such this award is presented in his memory. The winner of the Howard Carter Award is a coach who provides exceptional training to the athletes and ensures that they are prepared to beat their personal bests and deliver high-caliber performances at competitions. This coach is a creative problem solver and always is developing new ways to improve strength and conditioning of the athletes.

President's Award

The President's Award is presented to a non-coaching volunteer that is dedicated to planning, organizing and operating sport programs, fundraisers, or competitions. This volunteer is an asset to the Local's committee or sub-committee and is always willing to take on a leadership role to ensure that the athletes and volunteers have the best experience possible. This volunteer donates countless hours and always has the best interest of Special Olympics BC in the forefront.

Service Pins

Special Olympics BC provides Local Coordinators with a list of volunteers that are coming up on an increment of 5 years of service sometime in the spring. These pins are a way to demonstrate gratitude for the long-term service provided by volunteers. It is recommended that the pins be presented in a ceremonial fashion, either at a year-end wrap up or volunteer recognition event. Volunteer Coordinators, in conjunction with input and approval from the Local Committee, are responsible for finding an appropriate time to present them.

APPENDICES



SOBC Volunteer Reference Letter Request Process

Volunteers may request a reference letter or a volunteer hour verification letter for their job or school applications. Below are the information you can provide to new volunteers.

A volunteer must submit the request to your Local or Coaches a minimum of 1 week in advance and with the following information:

1. Your full name
2. Your role, programs and/or the Local you're involved with
3. Your total hours contributed to Special Olympics British Columbia
4. Purpose of the letter
5. Name of the scholarship if applicable
6. Copy of scholarship requirements if applicable
7. Date when you need the letter
8. Where to send the letter when completed, or the method of contact needed for verification.
9. Resume or CV if applicable

You can then forward this request to their program's head coach to confirm their participation and ask for more information related to their involvement before providing a reference letter. You can also contact SOBC staff if you have any questions.



SOBC Volunteer Screening – Sample Interview Questions

Most potential volunteers will respond to an advertisement or a request for volunteers first by email. To maximize efficiency and find the most suitable candidates for a position, it is recommended to set up an in-person or telephone interview to assess a person's suitability to volunteer within Special Olympics BC. This does not have to be a formal interview and can be a casual chat over coffee or on the phone. Following examples of questions to assess the suitability of a potential volunteer:

General questions:

- "How did you hear about Special Olympics BC and why are you interested in volunteering?"
- "What kind of volunteer work have you done in the past?"
- Follow up: "What did you like about that opportunity?" "What did you find challenging about this opportunity?"
- "How long have you lived in *community of residence*?"
- "What do you do for work?" / "What are you studying in school?" and how to you find it related to volunteering with SOBC?
- "How much time do you have to give to Special Olympics BC?" / "What is your availability?"
- "Do you enjoy working as a part of a team?"
- "What do you think is your greatest strength?"

Position specific questions:

Coaching:

- "What coaching experience do you have?"
- "What experience do you have either participating in or playing *specific sport*?"
- "What experience do you have interacting with people with intellectual disabilities?"
- "How do you feel about supervising multiple people with intellectual disabilities?"
- "What do you feel are the regular benefits of sport participation?"

Local Committee Positions:

- "Do you have any other experience serving on a Local Committee/attending board style meeting?"
- "How do you feel about regular communication both by telephone and email?"
- "Do you enjoy working with a group on a specific task?"
- "How do you feel about overseeing other volunteers?"
- "How would you handle a situation when a volunteer is not doing what they have committed to?"

It is not essential to ask every single one of these questions, but they can be a good starting point to get a volunteer talking about themselves and their interests with Special Olympics BC. Before the meeting finishes, instructions on the volunteer orientation and the requirements for a criminal record check should be provided so they are aware these are requirements before they can be on-boarded in the organization.



SOBC Volunteer Screening – Reference Checks

As per the “Volunteer Screening and Registration” policy found under SOBC Policies, the Volunteer Coordinator needs to conduct an interview, contact 2 character/employer references, and then instruct the new volunteer to complete a Criminal Record Check. Any concerns about a potential volunteer can be discussed with the Local Coordinator or CDC staff person.

Sample Reference Check Template

Volunteer Name: _____

Date: _____

Referenced Check Conducted by: _____

1. Tell me about how you and _____ know each other. Is this a work relationship, or do you know each other in another capacity?

2. Did _____ have any major accomplishments while working with you, or in their life that you are aware of?

3. Is _____ a good communicator? How so?

4. In your experience, does _____ work better alone or in a team? Can you give an example?

5. Can you give me an example of a setback or stressful challenge _____ faced (without getting too personal), and tell me how they dealt with it?

6. Can you think of any reason why _____ shouldn't volunteer with SOBC?



Volunteer Expectations & Dispute Resolution

Refer to [SOBC Policies](#) for complete dispute resolution and appeal policies

Also important to review is [Safe Sport](#) information including “The Practice of Two”

Special Olympics BC is a volunteer-based organization that, through the efforts, time, skills, and judgment of volunteers, make it possible for athletes to benefit from quality sport training and competitive opportunities in a safe and positive environment. As a volunteer, you accomplish this by allowing the athletes the opportunity to interact with caring individuals, observe mature behaviour, and learn responsibility from your positive example. Volunteers are expected to:

Fulfill the responsibilities and expectations of your role:

- Carry out all aspects of your role in a reasonable time and to a reasonable quality.
- Take the initiative to become aware of the responsibilities of your assigned position.
- Follow and adhere to the policies, procedures, and philosophies of Special Olympics BC.
- Conduct yourself in a manner that reflects positively on the good name of Special Olympics BC and its growth and development.
- Refrain from any act that puts the safety and well-being of an athlete or volunteer at peril.

Set an example for athletes:

- Refrain from consuming alcohol at any program, competition, activity, or event when you have responsibility for the safety, well-being, or involvement of Special Olympics athletes.
- Refrain from using profanity in the presence of athletes.
- Avoid any behaviour which may be misunderstood or misinterpreted by athletes. The ‘Practice of 2’ helps to protect you and the athlete in case of actual or misinterpreted inappropriate behaviour.
- Always maintain your self-control.
- Treat everyone fairly within the context of their activity, regardless of gender, place of origin, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political belief, or economic status.
- Be helpful to and supportive of everyone associated with Special Olympics.

Demonstrate good sportsmanship and cooperation:

- Consistently focus on the athlete and the Special Olympics Mission.
- Respect the rules and support the decisions of all sport officials and committees.
- Follow proper protest protocols.
- Be respectful during ceremonies and help your athletes be the same.
- Praise the athletes for their efforts and encourage them to celebrate the success of others.
- Direct comments or constructive criticism at the performance rather than the athlete.
- Support and encourage other volunteers and staff.



At times, a volunteer's ability and/or willingness to conform to these high standards may be questioned. The following steps should be taken when encountering such a situation:

- Ensure there is complete documentation of the incident causing concern. Documentation should include a description of the incident, time, date, and location of the incident, and names of any witnesses/supervisors to the incident. You can find templates for incident reports under forms on the [Coaching Tools](#) page on the website
- Discuss the situation with the volunteer, outlining the inappropriate nature of the conduct and positive alternative actions that could have been taken.
- Where the safety or well-being of those involved or the integrity of the organization is affected by the actions of the individual, contact the Provincial Office immediately to discuss the handling of the situation. Such situations may require immediate and direct action, including temporary or permanent suspension. In such cases, failure to follow all steps within this policy shall not invalidate the action taken.
- Where necessary, develop and implement a course of action designed to correct the inappropriate behaviour.
- Provide the volunteer with a written warning outlining the behaviour of concern, detailing the expected behaviour, and including a timeline for the required change(s) in behaviour. A copy of this warning must be forwarded to the Vice President, Sport for Special Olympics BC.
- If the inappropriate behaviour continues and disciplinary action is deemed necessary, a copy of all documentation must be forwarded to the Vice President, Sport.

Appeal process:

- Should the volunteer feel that the decision rendered following the above process was unfair, that individual may, within 14 days of receiving such notice, appeal the decision.
- The appeal must be in writing, indicating that he/she wishes to appeal the decision, complete with reasons for the appeal stating why the decision should be reviewed and must be submitted to the President & CEO for Special Olympics BC.
- The President & CEO will appoint an independent committee to hear the appeal.
- The appeal committee will submit its report to the President & CEO who will in turn notify the parties involved of the outcome of the appeal.
- Either party shall have the right to appeal this finding to the Local Committee of the Board of Directors within 14 days of being notified of the findings of the appeal committee.
- The decision of the Local Committee of the Board of Directors shall be final with no further appeals permitted.



Criminal Record Check Progress

All new and existing volunteers within your Local MUST have a current Criminal Record Check.

The Volunteer Coordinator, or designate, is responsible for monitoring status of CRC's and follow up with volunteers that do not have a current CRC as well as sending information on how to apply to new volunteers.

Flow of CRC Documentation

CRC information is recorded in the database. Below is the flow of how information is requested, received and recorded

- Local send instructions to the volunteer (refer to the following sample email)
- Volunteer completes (you may wish to add to the email a request to confirm with you when the volunteer has submitted)
- Completed CRCs are received and reviewed by Provincial Office and input into the database
- Local monitors status using Report 61 in the Portal (Provincial Office does not notify the Local when a CRC is received – monitoring is done through use of the portal). NOTE: this may be done by the Volunteer Coordinator or Registration Coordinator

NOTE: Provincial Office can't enter CRC data if a volunteer is not in the database, so prior to asking a volunteer to do a CRC please ensure the member is set up in the database

Local Review of CRC Status

- Locals are responsible for ensuring all volunteers have a current CRC. Monitoring is done through the Portal which is the volunteer interface to the registration database.
- Email registration@specialolympics.bc.ca for information on the Portal and instructions on how to monitor CRC status

Information to Send to a Volunteer Requiring a CRC (Sample Email)

Send the "Sample CRC Email" on the next page to new volunteers or returning volunteers who are missing a CRC or their previous CRC has expired.

There may occasionally be a volunteer that is unable to use the Online Process. If that's the case email crc@specialolympics.bc.ca and SOBC Office Administrator can provide you with information on the Manual Process.



Sample Email to Volunteer with CRC Instructions

You can request the two attachments (**referenced in red**) from your CDC or email crc@specialolympics.bc.ca

From: Jane Doe

Sent: July-13-21 1:54 PM

To: volunteer@mail.com (*this should be the volunteer's email*)

CC: CRC <crc@specialolympics.bc.ca> (*the CRC address must ALWAYS be included*)

Subject: Special Olympics BC - Criminal Record Check Instructions – JOHN DOE – SOBC BURNABY

(please include the volunteer's FULL NAME & SPECIAL OLYMPICS BC LOCAL they are volunteering for in the Subject Line)

Dear John,

A criminal record check (CRC) is mandatory for anyone volunteering with Special Olympics BC and each check is valid for a period of five years, at which time you will be required to complete a new check. I have attached two documents that will help you to complete your criminal record check online:

1. **eCRC Online Service - User Guide 2021:** this document outlines how to complete your CRC online using your BC Services Card.
 - a. **Website:** <https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck>
 - b. **Special Olympics BC Access Code:** **FASDVRNCVC**.
2. **CRRP – BC Services Card FAQ:** this document outlines Frequently Asked Questions about using your BC Services Card to apply for a Criminal Record Check Online.

Once you have completed the online CRC, a confirmation will be sent to the Special Olympics BC. This process can take anywhere from one to three weeks to complete, depending on the volume of online applicants that the Ministry of Justice is processing at any given time.

If you have any questions regarding the online criminal record check process, please contact the sender of this email.

Thanks,

Jane Doe

SOBC BURNABY - Volunteer Coordinator

IMPORTANT NOTE: As the Volunteer Coordinator, if you receive a message from a new volunteer indicating that they had to go into the detachment for a **manual CRC** then please ask them to email it directly to crc@specialolympics.bc.ca.