

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS CANADA AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS BC**  
**Equity, Diversity, AND Inclusion Policy**

***This Policy has been prepared by Special Olympics Canada and is a Pan-Canadian Policy applicable to Special Olympics Canada and its Chapters. This document cannot be modified by a Chapter without consultation and approval from Special Olympics Canada.***

**EFFECTIVE DATE: March 15, 2022**

**LAST REVISED: New**

**Commitment**

Special Olympics Canada (SOC) and its Chapters recognize and value individual differences in identity, perspective, and lived experience. We encourage and support participation in our organization of all segments of Canadian society and are committed to creating and sustaining a safe, accessible, diverse, and inclusive environment. In doing so, SOC and its Chapters will promote and reflect Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in our governance, programs and operations.

We recognize that achieving the goals of EDI requires commitment and dedication from the leadership of the organization at all levels, through our policies, actions and communications. We are committed to the pursuit of the goals and principles set out in this policy in steady and purposeful steps.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the commitments of SOC and its Chapters, and the expectations for all athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff, Board members and contractors, to support an environment where EDI are cultural norms and where all individuals are respected and valued.

The strength of this policy's purpose is embedded in our mission, vision and value statements. It will support SOC's mission to enrich the lives of Canadians with an intellectual disability through sport and its vision that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities across Canada. The following SOC values guide this Policy:

- **EMPOWERMENT** – We create opportunities to pursue full potential.
- **EXCELLENCE** – We elevate standards and performance.
- **RESPECT** – We operate in an environment of cooperation, collaboration and dignity.
- **DIVERSITY** - We honour what is unique in each individual.
- **INCLUSION** – We foster inclusive communities.

**Acknowledgement**

SOC and its Chapters recognize Indigenous peoples and communities across Turtle Island as traditional and continued custodians of the waters and lands upon which sport is played and celebrated. SOC and its Chapters acknowledge the role we play in helping to achieve reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples and are guided and informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action related to sport and recreation.

**Definitions**

1. The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:
  - a) *“Athlete”* – refers to an individual registered as an Athlete with Special Olympics Canada or a Chapter
  - b) *“Chapter”* – means the Provincial or Territorial Special Olympics organization recognized by Special Olympics Canada as a provincial or territorial governing body of Special Olympics
  - c) *“Diversity”* – refers to the similarities and differences among people. It includes, but is not limited to ability, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, culture, religion, marital status, family status, socio-economic level, body size and shape, language, and accent. Valuing diversity means respecting and appreciating differences in individuals and groups and upholding human rights. It also means valuing various points of view and being open to new and different ideas while ensuring the presence and integration of a variety of individuals with different personal characteristics, particularly Under-represented Groups, in a group or organization.
  - d) *“Equity”* – is the fair treatment of people. Equity requires consistently promoting justice and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by organizations or systems to ensure everyone has the opportunity to grow, contribute and develop regardless of their identity. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of outcome disparities and requires the removal of barriers and creation of accessible and respectful environments. Everyone has the opportunity to achieve their personal potential in an equitable environment.
  - e) *“Inclusion”* – is the act of making everyone feel welcome and allowing them to be their true self. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, and valued for who they are and for their contributions to organizational goals. Consider the following: diversity is a fact; inclusion is an action. Diversity is a noun; inclusion is a verb.
  - f) *“Under-represented Groups”* – refers to any group involved at the athlete, coach, volunteer, staff and/or Board level whose representation is less than adequate or sufficient based on that group’s representation within the larger population in Canada or other geographic area. Specific characteristics of an Under-represented Group vary according to context but can include women, persons with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC), members of the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual communities (2SLGBTQIA+), newcomers to Canada, people of various religions, people from different regions, and people of low socio-economic status.

**Responsibilities**

6. SOC and its Chapters, athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff, Board members and contractors are responsible for adhering to this Policy and contributing to a safe and positive sport community in which all individuals are treated with respect.
7. SOC and its Chapters commit to advancing EDI in the areas specified in the sections below.

**Participation**

8. SOC and its Chapters will enhance the quality of, and increase the level of participation in their leadership and programs by:
  - a) Leading and supporting initiatives that focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Under-represented Groups.
  - b) Ensuring that individuals from Under-represented Groups have equitable opportunity to participate in programs, training, and other activities.

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- c) Dealing with any incident of discriminatory behaviour according to the *Pan-Canadian Code of Conduct and Ethics* (which outlines expectations about appropriate behaviour) and the *Discipline and Complaints Policy* (which outlines the mechanism for reporting and reviewing complaints).

### **Board Leadership**

9. The Boards of Directors of SOC and its Chapters will ensure EDI is central to their planning, oversight, and policy development/approval activities.
10. SOC and its Chapters commit to fostering an inclusive Board environment and ensuring their Boards are diverse and include members from Under-represented Groups.

### **Communications**

11. SOC and its Chapters will ensure that Under-represented Groups are portrayed equitably in promotional materials and official publications, and that inclusive language and images that portray a strong message of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are used in all communications.

### **Programming, Services, and Resources**

12. SOC and its Chapters are committed to equitably reflecting Under-represented Groups in programs, services, and resources and will ensure that the provision of equitable opportunities for Under-represented Groups is central when developing, updating, or delivering programs and policies. SOC and its Chapters will ensure participants are neither disadvantaged nor denied access on the basis of a prohibited ground pursuant to applicable human rights legislation.

### **Human Resource Management**

13. SOC and its Chapters are committed to using equitable and inclusive human resource management practices, including but not limited to: promotion of job opportunities, hiring practices, performance management processes, pay scales and accommodation for specific needs.

### **Outreach and Education**

14. SOC and its Chapters commit to reach out to Special Olympics athletes and volunteers from Under-represented Groups to better understand what barriers they face and what more can be done to achieve Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
15. SOC and its Chapters will provide EDI-related training, education, and/or professional development opportunities on an ongoing and regular basis, to athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and Board members.

### **Evaluation**

16. SOC, its Chapters, and the Boards of Directors will monitor and evaluate EDI progress on an annual basis.