



# General Volunteer Onboarding Information

Updated: February 2022





# Welcome!

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

As a volunteer-based organization, we are sincerely grateful for your interest in volunteering with Special Olympics BC! You are joining a vibrant community that truly makes a difference in the lives of individuals within intellectual disabilities, their families, and their communities

This onboarding document provides information on

- Next steps as a new volunteer
- Special Olympics BC general information
- Volunteer resource links to support you in your role

For further information or questions please contact your Local's Volunteer Coordinator or 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  
210-3701 Hastings Street  
Burnaby, BC V5C 2H6

Tel: 604.737.3078  
Toll Free: 1.888.854.2276  
[info@specialolympics.bc.ca](mailto:info@specialolympics.bc.ca)



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# New Volunteer – What's Next

You've registered with your Local community and are excited to get started in your volunteer experience with Special Olympics BC (SOBC)

We are so grateful that you have decided to give your time and expertise to Special Olympics. Special Olympics BC is committed to supporting you as you develop in your volunteer role.

Please never hesitate to reach out to contacts within your Local community or to your Community Development Coordinator. Contact information for all SOBC Staff, and communities can be accessed with the SOBC Website [Contact Page](#)

Below are steps needed to start as a volunteer

- Complete the Special Olympics Canada Volunteer Orientation Course
- Complete a Criminal Record Check
- Review this Onboarding Package
- Reach out with any questions you may have

## Special Olympics Canada Volunteer Orientation

All new volunteers are required to complete the Special Olympics Canada Volunteer Orientation. The course takes approximately 1 ½ hours and can be done in sections if you wish. You must complete all sections to be given credit

Instructions on how to access the course can be found accessed here [Volunteer Orientation](#)

## Criminal Record Check

It is important as a volunteer working with children or vulnerable persons to complete a criminal record check. Once you have decided to come on board with Special Olympics- BC please complete your online Criminal Record Check as soon as possible.

Your Local Volunteer Coordinator will provide with the instructions on how to complete

## Special Olympics BC News and Events

As a new volunteer you are part of a dynamic community of volunteers and athletes across BC. To keep up with news and events you can connect via the following links

All volunteers are encouraged to subscribe to [SOBC's Monthly Newsletter](#) at

Links to follow social media can be found at [SOBC Social Media](#)

## Ongoing Coach Training & Education

All coaching volunteers are required to complete certain course work in their first year of volunteering. Complete information and other Coach development opportunities can be found at [SOBC Coach Education](#)



# 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.





## **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



## 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.



# Volunteer & Coaching Resources

## SOBC Web Site – Useful Links

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

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

### 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 Education & Development Information

Information on upcoming coach development webinars, courses, and resources for coaches

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

### 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>