

Special Olympics Virginia Volunteer Eligibility Policy

POLICY: The mission, philosophy and official rules of Special Olympics, Inc. shall guide all program activities of Special Olympics Virginia.

Standard 2: Volunteer eligibility

Any person who has made written application on Special Olympics Virginia's Volunteer Registration Form and has been screened and accepted as a volunteer by an authorized individual is eligible to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities are open to all persons who have been accepted regardless of race, religion, gender or national origin.

Volunteer Registration Process

- All volunteers must complete the appropriate Volunteer Registration Form, present a photo ID (if available for minors) and meet eligibility requirements in order to be accepted as a SOVA volunteer.
- Providing false information on a Volunteer Registration Form may automatically disqualify an individual from serving as a SOVA volunteer.
- Approved volunteers must notify SOVA staff within thirty days if they are charged with or convicted of a criminal offense. If SOVA becomes aware that a current or potential volunteer was charged with a criminal offense, SOVA reserves the right to suspend the volunteer pending the outcome of the criminal charge.
- Special Olympics athletes are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer in various roles within the organization. Athlete volunteers must meet the same eligibility and age requirements as other volunteers.

Volunteers are divided into two classes based on their contact with athletes in the program.

Class A – Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes; volunteers in positions of authority or supervision; volunteers in a position of trust with athletes; and volunteers that handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets. Class A Volunteers include:

- Coaches
- Unified partners
- Trip coordinators or heads of delegations
- Chaperones
- ALP and global messenger mentors
- Non-hired drivers of athletes
- Area/local council members
- Volunteers who will handle over \$5,000

Class B – Volunteers who only have limited contact with athletes who are accompanied by coaches and chaperones. Class B Volunteers include:

- Single day or single event or fundraiser volunteers
- Healthy Athlete volunteers
- Volunteers who drive vehicles on behalf of Special Olympics not transporting athletes

Age Requirements

- The minimum age to volunteer as a Class A Volunteer (with the exception of unified partners) is 14 years of age. Unified partners must be at least 8 years of age.
- Head coaches, trip coordinators, heads of delegations, drivers and chaperones must be at least 18 years old.
- Class B Volunteers who are at least 14 years old may volunteer by themselves.
- Class B Volunteers who are ages 8 – 13 must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or chaperone. There must be at least one chaperone for every four volunteers.
- Children 7 years old and younger are not given volunteer assignments, but are welcomed and encouraged to be cheerleaders or spectators at competitions.

Volunteer Application Process for Class A Volunteers (Adults 18 and Over)

- All volunteers must complete SOVA's Class A Adult Volunteer Registration Form and present a photo ID. Social Security number and date of birth must be provided in order to be considered as a Class A Volunteer.
- All Class A Adult Volunteers are required to undergo criminal history records and sex offender registry checks before they can volunteer. Automatic disqualifiers for participating as a SOVA volunteer include:
 - Conviction of a felony
 - Conviction of a Class 1 misdemeanor crime against another person or similar crime with a special penalty structure (excluding traffic offenses)
 - Conviction of a Class 1 misdemeanor crime not against another person or similar crime with a special penalty structure within the past ten years (excluding traffic offenses)
 - Conviction of crimes of moral turpitude
 - Standing or active protective orders
 - Adverse judgment for damages or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse
- All Class A Adult Volunteers are required to undergo criminal history records and sex offender registry checks once every three years in order to continue as a SOVA volunteer.
- If an applicant answers "yes" to the question "Do you use illegal drugs?" the applicant is disqualified from serving as a Special Olympics Virginia volunteer.

- If an applicant answers “yes” to the question “Have you ever been charged with any criminal offense?” or “Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault?” a Special Olympics Virginia staff member must conduct an interview with the applicant to determine their eligibility as a SOVA volunteer. The list of disqualifiers outlined above will be used to determine the applicant’s suitability as a SOVA volunteer.
- If an applicant answers “yes” to the question regarding their driving record on the Volunteer Registration Form, the applicant will not be allowed to drive on behalf of SOVA until he/she supplies SOVA with a copy of their Motor Vehicle Records check. If SOVA receives information through the background check process or through a submitted Motor Vehicle Record that the applicant has a suspended license, a DUI/DWI within the past seven years or three moving violations within the past three years, the applicant will not be allowed to drive vehicles or transport athletes/volunteers on behalf of SOVA. The applicant may volunteer in other capacities if all other eligibility requirements are met.
- All Class A Adult Volunteers must take the Protective Behaviors training before they can volunteer.
- All Class A Adult Volunteers are required to take the Protective Behaviors training once every three years in order to continue as a SOVA volunteer.
- All Class A Adult Volunteers must present a photo ID at every event or have their identity verified by an approved volunteer attending the event.
- SOVA reserves the right to disqualify a potential or approved volunteer with or without cause.

Volunteer Application Process for Class A Volunteers (Minors 17 and Under)

- All volunteers must complete SOVA’s Class A Minor Volunteer Registration Form and present a photo ID, if available.
- All Class A Minor Volunteers must submit two personal/professional written references every three years. A one page reference form is available for this purpose. Family members or legal guardians may not be used as references.
- All Class A minor volunteers age 16 and over must take the Protective Behaviors training before they can volunteer.
- When a volunteer turns 18 years of age, the volunteer must undergo the application process for Class A Adult Volunteers.
- All Class A Minor Volunteers will be required to check-in with a photo ID (if available) at every event or have their identity verified by an approved volunteer attending the event.
- If an applicant answers “yes” to the question “Do you use illegal drugs?” the applicant is

disqualified from serving as a Special Olympics Virginia volunteer.

- If an applicant answers “yes” to the questions “Have you ever been charged with any criminal offense?” or “Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault?” a Special Olympics Virginia staff member must conduct an interview with the applicant to determine their eligibility as a SOVA volunteer. The list of disqualifiers outlined above will be used to determine the applicant’s suitability as a SOVA volunteer.

Volunteer Application Process for Class B Volunteers (Adults and Minors)

- All volunteers must complete SOVA’s Class B Volunteer Registration Form.
- All volunteers will be required to check-in with a photo ID (if available for minors) or have their identity verified by an approved volunteer attending the event.