



Athlete Leadership Program

Special Olympics
Arkansas





Athlete Leadership Program

Through sports training and competitions, Special Olympics helps people with intellectual disabilities achieve joy, acceptance and success. They gain the confidence that comes with achievement. They feel empowered. Our Athlete Leadership Programs can take athletes even farther -- as leaders and respected spokespersons in their communities.

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs allow athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports training and competition: as coaches, officials, team captains, spokespeople and board and committee members. These roles give athletes a voice in shaping the Special Olympics movement, and a chance to spread the word about the transformations Special Olympics can bring to individuals and families. The Athlete Leadership Programs also provides a way for athletes to showcase talents and interests that may have gone unnoticed.

Special Olympics Arkansas invites any interested athlete to apply for Athlete leadership Year 1 Training. Applicants must be supported by the Area Director and current coach. The interested applicant should complete the athlete leadership application. Athletes will participate in online training, zoom calls and in person events year-round!

After completing the first year of Athlete Leadership Training each athlete will be asked to choose 1 or more roles they are passionate about: Health Messenger, Athlete Leadership Council and Governance, Athlete Spokesperson, and Sports Leadership. Read more about those roles below:



Athlete Leadership Council

This council is a forum for athletes to report to other athletes and Program leaders what is happening in their areas, voice their opinions about important issues, and gain leadership training and experience.

Who makes up the council

Athlete Leaders from across the state make up the council. All members must have completed one year of Athlete Leadership Training.

REQUIREMENTS

Each member shall:

- Be prepared to sit on the council for at least 2 years
- Attend monthly zooms and 2 in person meetings a year
- Actively participate in sports and Health programming
- Be willing to speak to groups of people about Special Olympics
- Participate in 2 fundraising events per year (area or state)
- Athlete must be able to communicate effectively. They should demonstrate adequate expressive and receptive language skills. This can include non-verbal communication methods.
- Athlete should demonstrate appropriate behaviors; i.e. gets along with others, has positive outlook, is dependable, demonstrates polite behaviors, and good sportsmanship.
- Willing to help out when needed and motivate others
- Athlete must be 16 years old or older

"The freethinking of one age is the common sense of the next."

Matthew Arnold 1875



Athlete Spokespersons

A Spokesperson is an athlete leader who communicates powerful declarations of the hope, acceptance, dignity and courage of Special Olympics athletes around the State. They help spread the message and vision of the Movement as well as the benefits they have gained by participating in Special Olympics

To be considered an athlete spokesperson you must complete the first year of athlete leadership training

REQUIREMENTS

Each member shall:

- Be prepared to serve for a minimum 2 years
- Attend monthly zooms and 2 in person meetings a year
- Actively participate in sports and Healthy programming
- Be willing to speak to groups of people about Special Olympics
- Participate in 2 fundraising events per year (area or state)
- Athlete must be able to communicate effectively. They should demonstrate adequate expressive and receptive language skills. This can include non-verbal communication methods.
- Athlete should demonstrate appropriate behaviors; i.e. gets along with others, has positive outlook, is dependable, demonstrates polite behaviors, and good sportsmanship.
- Willing to help out when needed and motivate others
- Athlete must be 16 years old or older

"All abilities can participate in sports, can achieve, and have value"

Role of a messenger

- Be attentive during workshops
- Understand Special Olympics
- Learn ways to provide information
- Prepare and practice 1-2 minute speech
- Demonstrate the ability to give a public speech
- Maintain contact with mentor and Special Olympics staff
- Represent Special Olympics professionally



Health Messengers

Special Olympics Health Messengers are athletes who are trained to serve as health and wellness leaders, educators, advocates and role models within their Special Olympics communities, as well as the community at large. They are leading their teams, families, friends and communities to pursue healthy lifestyles, and are advocating for healthcare providers and governments to adopt inclusive policies around health, wellness services, education and resources for people with intellectual disabilities.

To be considered a health messenger you must complete the first year of athlete leadership training

REQUIREMENTS

Each member shall:

- Be prepared to serve for a minimum 2 years
- Attend monthly zooms and 2 in person meetings a year
- Actively participate in sports and Healthy programming
- Be willing to speak to groups of people about Special Olympics
- Participate in 2 fundraising events per year (area or state)
- Athlete must be able to communicate effectively. They should demonstrate adequate expressive and receptive language skills. This can include non-verbal communication methods.
- Athlete should demonstrate appropriate behaviors; i.e. gets along with others, has positive outlook, is dependable, demonstrates polite behaviors, and good sportsmanship.
- Willing to help out when needed and motivate others
- Athlete must be 16 years old or older

"All abilities can participate in sports, can achieve, and have value"

Role of a messenger

- Be attentive during workshops
- Understand Special Olympics
- Learn ways to provide information
- Prepare and practice 1-2 minute speech
- Demonstrate the ability to give a public speech
- Motivate others to get healthy
- Maintain contact with mentor and Special Olympics staff
- Represent Special Olympics professionally



Sports Leadership

Special Olympics Sports Leaders have the options of becoming a coach, official, or games management team member.

To be considered a Sports leader you must complete the first year of athlete leadership training and be complete necessary requirements to for your role as a sports leader.

REQUIREMENTS

Each member shall:

- Be prepared to serve for a minimum 2 years
- Attend monthly zooms and 2 in person meetings a year
- Actively participate in sports and Healthy programming
- Be willing to speak to groups of people about Special Olympics
- Actively participate in specific sports trainings related to your sports leadership role
- Participate in 2 fundraising events per year (area or state)
- Athlete must be able to communicate effectively. They should demonstrate adequate expressive and receptive language skills. This can include non-verbal communication methods.
- Athlete should demonstrate appropriate behaviors; i.e. gets along with others, has positive outlook, is dependable, demonstrates polite behaviors, and good sportsmanship.
- Willing to help out when needed and motivate others
- Athlete must be 16 years old or older

"All abilities can participate in sports, can achieve, and have value"

Role of a messenger

- Be attentive during workshops
- Understand Special Olympics
- Learn ways to provide information
- Prepare and practice 1-2 minute speech
- Demonstrate the ability to give a public speech
- Uphold the sports code of conduct
- Maintain contact with mentor and Special Olympics staff
- Represent Special Olympics professionally



Mentors

Mentors:

Mentors will be used for our messenger speaking engagements.

Role of a mentor:

- Support the Athlete
- Understand Special Olympics
- Provide support as needed (assistance with speeches)
- Allow messengers to express themselves
- Provide constructive feedback to help skill development
- Represent Special Olympics professionally
- Available for speaking engagements as they arise (advance notice will be given)
- Available for trainings and one on one time with messengers