



VOLUNTEER AND UNIFIED PARTNER SCREENING POLICY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CLASS A VOLUNTEERS

Who typically falls into the Class A volunteer category?

Examples include coaches, chaperones, Unified Partners, athlete leadership mentors, overnight hosts, drivers for athletes, and volunteers who have substantial administrative and/or fiscal authority.

Fundraising event committee members, Games Management Team members, and Board members who meet the definition of a Class A volunteer are also subject to the screening requirements.

Additionally, parents and siblings of athletes are subject to the screening requirements when they are serving in a Class A volunteer capacity. For example, if a parent or sibling is coaching or chaperoning an athlete as part of a Special Olympics activity, the parent/sibling is considered a Class A volunteer (even if the only child who is being coached/chaperoned is the parent's child) and therefore, is subject to the screening requirements.

Note: Sports officials and media personnel are not subject to the volunteer screening policy unless such media personnel or sports officials are acting in a Class A volunteer capacity when they are not working in their professional capacity, including but not limited to being housed in the same housing accommodations as the athletes.

CLASS B VOLUNTEERS

Who typically falls into the Class B volunteer category?

Examples include Healthy Athletes volunteers, volunteers who drive on behalf of Special Olympics (other than drivers for athletes) and day-of-event volunteers.

MINORS

Who is a minor?

Oklahoma defines a minor as under the age of 18; however, Special Olympics Oklahoma recognizes individuals under the age of 16 as minors. Accordingly, those who are 16 and older are subject to background checks and Protective Behaviors Course requirements.

DRIVERS FOR ATHLETES

Are hired drivers considered Class A volunteers?

No. SOOK is not required to conduct the required screening on drivers hired commercially or employed by unrelated agencies (unless those drivers are also acting as Class A volunteers). However, that hiring agency will ensure that a reputable company is used to transport the athletes and that the company has appropriately screened its drivers and has adequate liability insurance.

Are family members, parents, siblings, or extended family members of athletes who are asked by Special Olympics to transport unrelated athletes considered Class A volunteers?

Yes. Anyone (other than hired drivers) asked by Special Olympics to transport unrelated athletes on behalf of Special Olympics is considered a volunteer and is required to complete the necessary volunteer registration form and is subject to the appropriate screening.

SCHOOL-BASED VOLUNTEERS

Is Special Olympics Oklahoma required to screen school-based program volunteers and Unified Partners?

In order to provide a thorough answer to this potentially complex question, the Risk Management & Insurance Task Force (RMITF) categorized school-based programs into three separate categories, as follows:

1. Schools conduct Special Olympics activities as part of the curriculum (may be part of an IEP for a student, for example) and such activities are under the direct control and supervision of the school (not Special Olympics). These school events are not being held outside the school day. If a school event is held off premises, the event is solely a school-organized and conducted activity (for example, the school takes the students to a bowling alley for practice, but it is a school-operated activity using school staff without outside involvement from Special Olympics and where the teachers are acting within the course of their employment).

- SOOK is not required to screen these "volunteers" or Unified Partners as all activities are conducted in the course of the individual's participation in school organized activities (employment or volunteer) and such activities are supervised by the school.
2. Students come to Special Olympics through a school-based program. Students train for Special Olympics during the school week, generally on-premises. The school might host a competition after school hours or on the weekend or may take the students to an off-site event organized by Special Olympics.
- SOOK is required to screen volunteers and Unified Partners for off-site or after-hours events organized by Special Olympics or co-organized by Special Olympics and the school. This applies to volunteers regardless of whether or not they are employees or volunteers of the school and/or being paid by the school to attend the event. Screenings conducted by schools do not satisfy this requirement.
3. The school recruits for Special Olympics, but it is considered an extra-curricular activity and events are held off-site and organized only by Special Olympics.
- SOOK is required to screen these volunteers and Unified Partners, as the event is conducted by Special Olympics Oklahoma.

POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS AND UNIFIED PARTNERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

Is Special Olympics Oklahoma required to screen Unified Partners and Class A volunteers who have recently moved from another country?

SOOK will conduct the required check through an approved vendor if it can be conducted without a social security number. If the check cannot be conducted without a social security number, SOOK must confirm the following prior to allowing the individual to participate. Please note that the following should be considered for all potential volunteers who recently moved from another country, but it is required in instances when an approved vendor is unable to conduct the check.

- At least two references have been obtained from the potential volunteer or Unified Partner and checked by Special Olympics Oklahoma.
- A Class A registration form has been submitted including answers to the "four questions" relative to criminal offenses.
- A personal interview with the potential volunteer has been conducted by a SOOK representative.

VOLUNTEER CLASSIFICATION

When is an individual considered a Special Olympics volunteer?

A person is not considered a Special Olympics volunteer until he/she has submitted a completed Volunteer Application, and in the case of Class A volunteer, completion of Protective Behaviors online course and has been screened by an Accredited Program. For example, if a person or group conducts "Special Olympics" type activities without the knowledge or approval of Special Olympics Oklahoma, then those individuals are not Special Olympics volunteers until their activities are recognized by the Special Olympics Oklahoma and they have complied with the volunteer screening policy.

Is an individual who is paid by his/her employer to conduct Special Olympics activities considered a Special Olympics volunteer?

Individuals who meet the definition of Class A or Class B volunteers are required to submit a completed volunteer application and are subject to the appropriate screening regardless of whether or not they are being paid by their employer while acting as a volunteer. Please note that the Special Olympics Corporate Insurance Program does not provide coverage to an individual who is being paid for his/her service ("paid" includes a fee, salary of other compensation by Special Olympics or anyone else).

EMPLOYEE SCREENING

Does Special Olympics Oklahoma screen their employees?

SOOK employees retain their status as Class A Volunteers at all times, thus completing the appropriate screening to do so.

MOTOR VEHICLE CHECKS

What is required to drive on behalf of Special Olympics Oklahoma?

Anyone who wishes to drive on behalf of SOOK must have a valid Oklahoma driver's license and current proof of insurance on the vehicle(s).

REQUIREMENT TO CONDUCT SCREENING PRIOR TO ALLOWING INDIVIDUAL TO VOLUNTEER OR PARTICIPATE

Is Special Olympics Oklahoma permitted to allow a volunteer to begin serving as a Class A volunteer prior to completion of the appropriate screening?

No. All U.S. programs are required to conduct the screening prior to allowing the individual to serve as a Class A Volunteer or begin participating as a Unified Partner. Note, however, that a volunteer who has completed the registration form and provided proper photo ID may serve as a Class B Volunteer pending completion of the appropriate background screening.

NATIONAL VENDOR

Is Special Olympics Oklahoma required to use a specific national vendor to conduct the required screening?

No. However, if they are planning to use a vendor that has not been evaluated by Special Olympics and American Specialty, SOOK must contact Special Olympics or American Specialty to obtain approval to use the proposed vendor's services. List of approved vendors is available upon request.

Is the U.S. National Sex Offender Registry an approved vendor?

No. The U.S. National Sex Offender Registry is not an approved vendor and therefore, the registry may not be used to conduct the required screening. However, the National Sex Offender Registry can be used in addition to the required screening through an approved vendor.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS CONDUCTED BY EMPLOYERS

Will a criminal background check conducted by a volunteer's or Unified Partner's employer satisfy the screening requirement?

No. To ensure that we are obtaining consistent data, Special Olympics Oklahoma is required to conduct its own screening on existing and new Unified Partners and Class A volunteers as outlined in the screening policy.

Is Special Olympics Oklahoma required to screen Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers (including law enforcement volunteers at Special Olympics fundraising events and Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers) who meet the definition of Class A volunteer?

Yes. Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers acting in a Class A volunteer capacity are subject to the same screening requirements as all other Class A volunteers. Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers who do not act in the capacity of a Class A volunteer, such as those individuals who only run the torch, are not subject to the screening requirements.

APPEALS PROCESS

What appeals process is available to allow individuals with certain criminal histories the opportunity to participate or volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics Oklahoma?

Special Olympics Oklahoma's appeals process may be found in SOOK's Volunteer Policy on page 6.

UNOFFICIAL SOURCES AND COMPLAINTS

Is an individual who is not eligible to volunteer in a Class A Volunteer capacity (due to his/her criminal history) permitted to volunteer as a Class B Volunteer?

No. Once SOOK acquires knowledge that a potential or existing volunteer (Class A or Class B) has a criminal history that would disqualify an individual from volunteering in a Class A Volunteer capacity, the individual is no longer eligible to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics in any capacity.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Does the Class A Volunteer Screening Policy replace the need for the training requirements outlined in the General Rules, Sports Rules or other Special Olympics policies?

No. The Volunteer and Unified Partner Screening Policy does not supersede any training requirements for any volunteers, whether those requirements are set out in the General Rules, Sports Rules or other Special Olympics policies. Specifically, the Protective Behaviors training continues to be required for all Unified Partners and Class A volunteers prior to volunteering for Special Olympics.

Does the Class A Volunteer Screening Policy alter the current Protective Behaviors requirement?

No. All U.S. Programs are still responsible for ensuring that all Unified Partners and Class A volunteers 16 years of age or older complete the Protective Behaviors training at least once every three years.