



Volunteer Screening Policy in Arkansas

Board Approved: April 26, 2013

I. SCREENING

INTRODUCTION

Special Olympics has the right and responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote and ensure a safe environment for all participants: athletes, coaches, volunteers and staff. With this in mind, Special Olympics International has developed and implemented a mandatory volunteer screening policy to set certain standards for each of the US programs to follow with regard to Class A and Class B Volunteers. Special Olympics Arkansas ("SOAR") has amended those standards as described herein.

VOLUNTEER CLASSIFICATIONS

Class A Volunteers

- SOAR Staff – Paid or Volunteer
- Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes
- Unified® Partners
- Volunteers in a position of authority or supervision with athletes
- Volunteers in a position of trust of athletes
- Volunteers who handle \$1000 or more of cash or other assets of SOAR

Examples could include but are not limited to coaches, chaperones, drivers, committee members, etc.

Class B Volunteers

- Volunteers who only have limited contact with athletes or who have contact with athletes accompanied by coaches and chaperones

Examples could include but are not limited to day of event volunteers, athlete buddies, Healthy Athlete volunteers, etc.

TYPE OF SCREENING

Class A (Adult)

- Completion and submission of a volunteer application form along with photo ID (government issued), screened using a national vendor.

Class A (Minor)

- Completion and submission of a volunteer application form, two personal/professional references (one of whom is from the volunteer applicant's school, church, civic group, etc - reference to exclude relative or legal guardian.), along with photo ID (only required to extent available).

Class B (Adults and Minors)

- Completion of a volunteer registration form or sign in sheet and photo ID check or identification verification check at events (for minors, IDs are only required to the extent available).

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE BACKGROUND SCREENING

Class A Volunteers must be screened using a national vendor that includes the sex offender registry for each state in which the sex offender registry is available electronically. In addition to, but not in place of; the check through the national vendor, SOAR may conduct a statewide criminal background check. If the applicant answers "yes" to either of the questions regarding suspension or revocation of driver's license on the Volunteer Application or if SOAR has received information through the screening process that the applicant may have motor vehicle related convictions then a Motor Vehicle Record check is required to be able to drive on behalf of SOAR.

All Class A Volunteers must be re-screened every three years.

DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should fill out a form that meets the requirements as set forth below. The background form, required for SOAR, can be signed electronically or have a legal signature. Once the form is signed and returned to the SOAR Headquarters Office, an initial background check is completed and will be run every 3 years that the volunteer is active in the program.

Class A Volunteer form must include:

- Full name and other information necessary to conduct the required check under the policy
- The questions currently required by SOI General Rules
- A legally sufficient authorization to conduct the necessary screening
- A release that protects Special Olympics from liability in connection with the Program conducting the screening
- Consent to use the volunteer's name and likeness to promote and publicize the purposes of Special Olympics

Class B Volunteer registration materials must include:

- Full name, complete address, telephone number and, if applicable, the name of the civic group or corporate sponsor with which they are associated
- Consent to use each the volunteer's name and likeness to promote and publicize the purposes of Special Olympics

RESULTS OF BACKGROUND CHECK USING NATIONAL VENDOR

Automatic Disqualifiers

Any situation where a person is required by state or federal law to register with any Sex Offenders' Registry.

Any situation where a person has been or is hereafter convicted of, been found guilty of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to committing, attempting to commit, or conspiring to commit any of the following violations as defined by either Arkansas or federal law, including situations where a person has received a suspended imposition or execution of sentence following a plea or finding of guilty:

- child abuse
- sexual abuse of a minor/adult
- causing a child's death
- neglect of child or any other individual for whom the potential volunteer had/has responsibility
- kidnapping
- any degree of murder
- any form of voluntary manslaughter
- distribution or sale of any controlled substance or narcotic
- any degree of felony assault
- arson
- robbery
- forcible or statutory rape
- forcible or statutory sodomy
- felonious restraint, child molestation, deviate sexual assault, sexual misconduct involving a child, sexual abuse
- criminal sexual conduct
- stalking or harassment

Three or more moving violation convictions within the past three years or situations where a person has been or is hereafter convicted of, been found guilty of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to DWI/DUI within the last seven years automatically disqualifies the volunteer from driving on behalf of Special Olympics. This includes dispositions where a volunteer has received a suspended imposition or execution of sentence following a plea or finding of guilty.

Adverse judgment for damages or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor and/or being the subject of any court order that restricts contact with a minor for any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor.

Disqualifiers if within the last four years

Any situation where a person has been or is hereafter convicted of, been found guilty of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to committing, attempting to commit, or conspiring to commit any of the following violations, including situations where a person has received a suspended imposition or execution of sentence following a plea or finding of guilty:

- Prostitution-related crime
- possession of a controlled substance crime
- fraud

- larceny or other financial crime
- domestic violence

Temporary Disqualifiers

Volunteer Applicants presently facing criminal charges (other than minor traffic violations or municipal ordinance violation(s)) will have their application process stayed pending resolution of the charge(s).

ACTIONS BASED ON THE REPORT FROM NATIONAL VENDOR

Assigned SOAR Staff Member

Reviews the Application Verification reports, and approves or denies applicant based upon policy.

If applicant is denied:

- Prints the Criminal Report and submits letter to applicant indicating restrictions.
- Submits copy of letter to appropriate staff and agency coordinator.
- The Criminal Report and a copy of letter will be reviewed and initialed by President/CEO.

If applicant is approved:

- Appropriate documentation in SOAR database to ensure applicant is noted as a "qualified" or "disqualified" volunteer.

II. FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE VOLUNTEER/STAFF SCREENING PROCESS

The following applies to all volunteers and staff members who have successfully completed the screening process and are eligible to participate in SOAR Activities.

For purposes of this policy, the term “crime of a sexual nature” is defined the same as in the “Athlete Policy” governing the same subject matter and that definition is incorporated by reference into this policy.

Any SOAR volunteer or staff member who is alleged to have committed, or is under investigation for committing a crime of a sexual nature must notify SOAR immediately in writing of the investigation or allegation and the facts surrounding it. Any volunteer who is or becomes aware of any athlete, volunteer, or other staff member who is alleged to have committed, or is under investigation for committing a crime of a sexual nature or who witnesses or observes any athlete, volunteer, or other staff member commit a crime of a sexual nature must also notify SOAR immediately in person, by telephone or in writing, to include email. Failure to perform the notification obligation may be grounds for disqualification from the program. Any SOAR staff member who is or becomes aware of any athlete, volunteer, or other staff member who is alleged to have committed, or is under investigation for committing a crime of a sexual nature or who witnesses or observes any athlete, volunteer, or other staff member commit a crime of a sexual nature must notify a SOAR supervisor immediately. Failure of a SOAR staff member to perform the notification obligation may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Anyone who has been alleged to have committed, or is under investigation for committing a crime of a sexual nature will be suspended indefinitely from participating in any SOAR activity, pending resolution of that allegation or investigation.

Any person who is required by state or federal law to register with any Sex Offenders Registry is permanently barred from participating as a volunteer or staff member in any SOAR activity.

Any person who has been or is hereafter convicted of, been found guilty of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to committing, attempting to commit, or conspiring to commit a crime of a sexual nature, including the receiving of a suspended imposition or execution of sentence following a plea or finding of guilty, is also permanently barred from participating as a volunteer or staff member in any SOAR activity.

SOAR will aggressively pursue all legal remedies available to it against any individual (or that individual's parent(s) or legal guardian(s)) covered by this policy who fails to comply with this policy's reporting and suspension requirements.

III. PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS TRAINING

The Protective Behaviors training is “housed” on the Special Olympics Incorporated (SOI) Web site, at this link: <http://www.specialolympics.org/protectivebehaviors> and a link may also be available through the SOAR web site. Each volunteer and staff member must complete the training at his/her convenience by the deadline set by SOAR. Once a volunteer/staff member completes the training, SOAR will receive email notification that the individual has successfully completed the training.