



Special Olympics College Program Event Guide

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Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools®**

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Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®



“My work with Special Olympics as a college athlete has truly helped to build me into the Doctor of Physical Therapy and the human being that I am today. As soon as I started to work with Special Olympics in Fargo, North Dakota, I was hooked. What started as a simple volunteer session at a pancake breakfast has turned into much more. I realized the passion that all the athletes had for life, their sport, and their community. I am now much more conscious about all that I have to be grateful for in life, and much of this started with the appreciation that I saw in these Special Olympics athletes.

My favorite Special Olympics event was in my second year of graduate school. After college athletics, I knew I needed to incorporate this passion of working with Special Olympics into my education and career. We had coordinated with a local Motor Activity Training Program to bring in about 50 students to run stations for a culminating event they were holding.

Although it rained through a good deal of the event, we still made it there, got the athletes moving, had a dance party, and shared a special day with all the athletes from Dade County Special Olympics in Florida. This kicked off my continued desire to get more future physical therapists passionate about Special Olympics and improve our ability as providers. **This all started with my involvement as a college athlete and I will be forever grateful for that.”**

- Domenic Fraboni, Doctor of Physical Therapy and Podcast Host

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SECTION 1:

Introduction to Special Olympics College Programs



Special Olympics
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Purpose of Event Guide & Additional Resources

The Special Olympics College Program Event Guide can help college students and administrators create and implement effective, quality Special Olympics events on campus. This resource outlines the steps and guidance to identify, plan and carry out an event, or series of events. This guide should be used with other Special Olympics college program resources to meet the needs of the college as it moves toward meaningful inclusion.

[Special Olympics college program page](#)

- Learn about national partner organizations to connect with on your campus and connect with other clubs across the country.

[Special Olympics college program map](#)

- Find out where there are existing college programs across the United States.

[Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® Resources](#)

- Find more information about hosting events, logos and branding, inclusion campaigns, and how to bring Unified Intramural Sports to a college campus.
- Resources include
 - Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide
 - Special Olympics Unified Intramural Sports Guide
 - Logos and Branding
- [Sample Resource Toolkit](#)
 - This drive is available for all Special Olympics College Clubs and college programs to use as editable templates. Users can download and edit their own documents to fit their own needs.

[GenerationUnified.org](#)

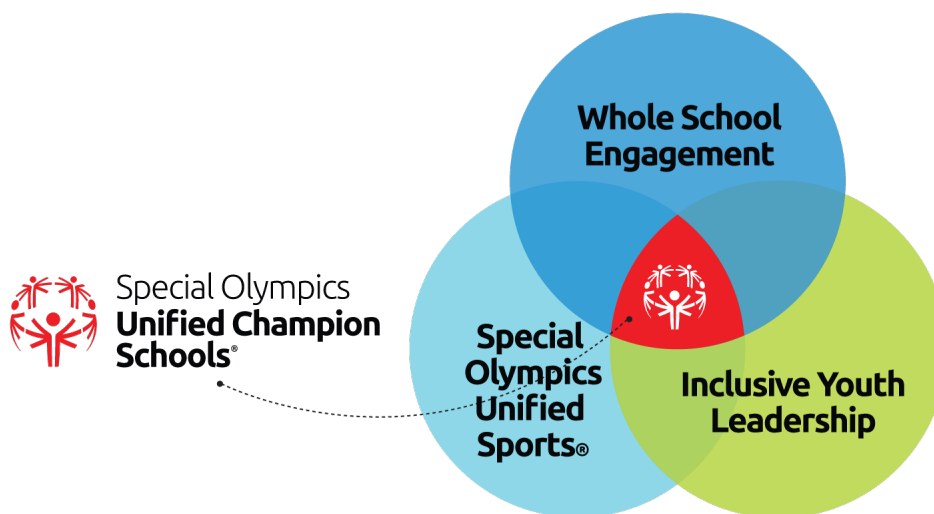
- Stay up to date on the latest stories of youth and students leading the Special Olympics movement toward a world of meaningful inclusion.

For questions regarding the Special Olympics College Program Event Guide, or any other related college program inquiries, please contact socollege@specialolympics.org.

What Your College Program Can Become

Special Olympics college programming

Special Olympics college programming falls under the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) umbrella. All U.S. postsecondary institutions (colleges, universities, community colleges, junior colleges, etc.) with Special Olympics college programming, including Special Olympics Unified Sports®, inclusive leadership, and whole campus engagement, are following the Special Olympics UCS model.



Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

Once your school has achieved one or more of these three main components, your school can become a Unified Champion School in your respective state Program. With sports as the foundation, Unified Champion Schools offers activities that equip young people with tools and training to create climates of acceptance within sports, classrooms, and campus life.

The program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially inclusive school that supports and engages all learners.

What a Unified Champion School “looks like” can vary greatly from school to school, based on the needs, goals, schedules and other factors unique to each school; but the three basic building blocks remain the same.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®: The Three Components

Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports joins students and Special Olympics athletes on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and inclusion. In the context of a Special Olympics College Club, Unified partners are college students without intellectual disabilities playing with Special Olympics athletes, individuals with an intellectual disability, on an equal playing field.

At many schools, Unified Sports functions as an intramural or club sports on campus. At advanced levels, this becomes tournaments with other local Special Olympics College Clubs.

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership invites students and Special Olympics athletes to fulfill meaningful roles and lead together in their college program.

A Special Olympics College Club functions as an officially registered student-led club on campus, where students meet multiple times a month to plan events. This club includes Special Olympics athletes and college students working collaboratively and as equals. The club works to achieve three the main components of Unified Champion Schools: Unified Sports, Inclusive Leadership, and Whole Campus Engagement.

Whole Campus Engagement

Acceptance and Inclusion Campaigns bring the whole college community together. Pledge signing drives, like Spread the Word >> Inclusion, and rallies for respect can engage the whole student body.

All college students can be fans in the stands at local games, cheering on the team. Whole School Engagement is a great entry point to introduce more students to the Special Olympics movement and encourage participation in the Inclusion Revolution.

Special Olympics National School Recognition Program

After your school has received recognition as a Unified Champion School in your respective state, your club can become a National Unified Champion School. A college or university operating as a Unified Champion School that demonstrates an inclusive campus climate as well as a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for ALL members of the community, qualifies for national banner recognition.



Special Olympics recognizes these colleges and universities that meet the ten national standards across the three core components.

At the college level, these are the National Standards for banner recognition:

- [College/University Standards](#)

Terms to know

- **athlete:** not capitalized. Person, either a student or from the campus community, with intellectual disability that is a member of the club or competes in Unified Sports on campus. At the college level, athletes should be adults with the ideal age range being 18-34 years old.
- **college:** not capitalized. The term used in this resource for all postsecondary education institutions. Includes colleges, universities, junior colleges and community colleges, amongst others.
- **partner:** not capitalized. College student without intellectual disability that is a member of the college club and/or competes in Unified Sports on campus.
- **state Program:** Each state (US) has a Special Olympics program that is responsible for all Special Olympics events and activities that happen within its local areas. This is the shortened version of the term "Special Olympics state Program" that is used in this resource. For colleges in countries outside of the United States, this is like a local or provincial program.



SECTION 2: Planning Your Event



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6 Steps to a Successful Event

Throughout this section, different types of events and timelines will be demonstrated. For any event that is chosen to be put on, whether a Unified Sport, awareness campaign or social gathering, this checklist covers the necessary steps for hosting a successful event. Use this list as a helpful reminder when planning and executing an event.

1 Step 1: Contact the state Program & College

- Contact the Special Olympics state Program before any plans are made
- Contact the appropriate staff at the college to determine if any additional applications and documents are needed to host an event on campus
 - Contacts could include a Special Olympics College Club advisor or Campus Recreation staff

2 Step 2: Set a Date

- Determine amount of time needed to plan event
- Confirm location, date, and time
- Set goals and desired outcomes for the event

3 Step 3: Create an Event Plan

Event Plan should include:

- Timeline of Events
- Target Audience
- Equipment Checklist
- Budget
- Have a contingency plan in place for possible issues that may arise

4 Step 4: Recruit Participants & Promote Event

- Promote event on campus, in community, and on social media
 - See [College Club toolkit](#) for a sample press release
- Recruit Special Olympics athletes, Unified partners, and volunteers
 - See College Club Starter Guide for how to recruit athletes, partners and volunteers
- Collaborate with other organizations to engage more participants

5 Step 5: Execute Event

Pre-Event

- Meet with committee members and volunteers to confirm event logistics and tasks
- Arrive early for set-up

During Event

- Follow the event plan
- Have fun!

6 Step 6: Post Event Follow-Up

- Evaluate goals and objectives
- Determine what worked best and what could be improved
- Send thank-you notes to those who contributed to the event
- Share the pictures from your event on social media and with state Program
 - See College Club Starter Guide for social media engagement tips



Finding the Right Event

To bring meaningful inclusion to campus - whether as a club, council, or department - it's time to start planning events to engage students, staff, and local athletes! Planning events can be a daunting task, but it is vital in order to spread awareness and get college communities involved with Special Olympics. The biggest question is - where to begin?

When planning events, it is important to keep in mind the goals and purpose of the event, the amount of time required, and the amount of interest from athletes and students/partners. Large-scale events require more time to plan and promote.

The event types that follow in the next section will contain an explanation of the type with a sub list of possible events sorted by time commitment:

- Special Olympics Unified Sports
- Inclusion Campaigns and Rallies
- Social Events
- Volunteering and Fundraisers
- Virtual Events

Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports join people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It is inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Unified Sports experiences can range from pick-up play to organized games, from instructional and developmental to competitive, and from individual focused to large teams. Work with the state Program for recommendations on best practices in terms of rules and equipment.

- **Needs:** partners and athletes, field or gym, sports equipment, officials, uniforms, rules, awards
- **Great for:** Competitive experience, socializing, meeting new people, introducing new people to Special Olympics



Examples of Unified Sports Events

Unified Sports Experience/Field Day

Athletes and partners participate in a series of activity stations or informal team games. Field Day can be focused on one sport or cover a variety of sports and physical activities. This activity can be a great introductory event and can be useful if you have a ratio of athletes to partners that is uneven.

Unified Sports Exhibition Game

Hold a Unified Sports game with partners and community athletes (some colleges may have academic programs that have athletes on campus). Work with the state Program and campus recreation to get up-to-date rules, equipment and officials. This event can be a first step to introducing a Unified Sports league to a campus.

Example: A Special Olympics College Club is trying to get Campus Recreation to start Unified Intramurals on campus, so as a sample, they decide to host an exhibition volleyball match. The club recruits the athletes and partners (partnering with the Greek community on campus) for the game and campus recreation provides the equipment and trained officials from its Intramural leagues. The game is exciting and a lot of fun, and soon campus recreation announces they will start full Unified Sports Intramural leagues.

Unified Sports Clinic

Promote sports instruction from experienced clinicians (either players or coaches) in a series of stations and drills. Clinics are a great way to engage the college's student-athletes as leaders of the stations. It is recommended that clinics are Unified with both athlete and partner participants receiving instruction.

Unified Fitness

[Unified Fitness](#) brings together individuals with and without intellectual disabilities for non-competitive physical activity. Unified fitness can take the form of a club, where members challenge themselves, set goals, establish friendships and earn rewards. Fitness activities could include walking, hiking, yoga, dancing, cycling, strength training and more.

Unified Sports Rivalry Series

Elevate a college sports rivalry by putting together a Unified Sports game against a rival opponent. Athletes and partners will each represent one side of the college rivalry in a game that takes place in the same time frame that the varsity game happens. In order to boost attendance, the clubs schedule the game the day before the intercollegiate varsity game. Special Olympics Rivalry Series games have been taking place since 2013 and have featured some of the best rivalries in college sports. These games can lead to high-level media exposure.

Examples of Unified Sports Events (cont.)

Unified Intramural Sports League

Intramural Sports are popular among students on most college campuses. Unified Intramural Sports function just like any other intramural on campus, but the rosters consist of a required ratio of partners to athletes. The leagues should match up with the intramural sports schedule already being offered and receive the same delivery in season length and awards (i.e. championship t-shirts). The leagues can provide regular competition for athletes that may not have the opportunity elsewhere. Likewise, Unified Intramural Sports oftentimes recruit many students who don't typically play intramural sports. Contact your campus recreation department to facilitate a conversation with the state Program to start a league.

Extramural Tournament

Sometimes playing on one college's campus is not enough. Whether at a NIRSA Regional or National Tournament, a State Special Olympics tournament, or something created amongst clubs – there is opportunity to play against other schools in a tournament format. Remember to check on partners' and athletes' availability to travel.

Example: After organizing a Unified soccer team on campus, the Special Olympics College Club wants to compete against other teams nearby at a Unified Soccer Invitational. The team raises enough money to travel to the tournament and stay for the weekend. The team finds this an effective way to strengthen their playing skills and build team unity. The club really enjoys being able to meet other athletes and partners from across the state.



Examples of Unified Sports Events (cont.)

	Time for Planning	Frequency	Level of Experience	Level of Play
Unified Sports Experience/ Field Day	4-6 weeks	Once or recurs regularly	All levels	All levels
Unified Sports Exhibition	4-6 weeks	Once	All levels	Recreation or competitive
Unified Sports Clinic	4-6 weeks	Once	All levels	Developmental
Unified Fitness	6-8 weeks	Weekly	All levels	Recreational
Unified Sports Rivalry Series	8+ weeks	Once (with practices prior)	Medium to High	Competitive
Unified Intramural Sports League	10+ weeks	Weekly	All levels	Competitive or developmental
Extramural Tournament	10+ weeks	Once (with practices prior)	Medium to High	Competitive

Inclusion Campaigns and Rallies

Campaigns and rallies, or similar events, are intended to reach a wide range of stakeholders on a campus with a common purpose or outcome. These events should be relatively easy for a participant to engage in and should bring awareness about the Special Olympics movement to the whole campus. Consider other groups and special guests to invite to these events.

- **Needs:** Venue, volunteers, educational materials, microphones/sound systems
- **Great for:** connecting to other campus events, spreading awareness, engaging high volume of people

Spread the Word Campaign

Started in 2009, the Spread the Word campaign is an on-going effort to raise awareness about the power and impact of meaningful inclusion in all sorts of settings. The campaign can be held at a single event or cover multiple events/days. Check out the [Spread the Word >> Inclusion website](#) for items and banners that can be ordered.

Banner Presentation/Unified Pep Rally

Celebrate the inclusiveness of a campus and all the Special Olympics Unified Sports and engagements that take place. Schools can apply to receive National Banner Recognition every spring through Special Olympics. Whether or not official banner recognition is received, a group can still organize a pep rally. Invite students and the community to an assembly-style rally where the partners and athletes will be recognized for their hard work. Consider looking into your schools homecoming week to be part of a parade or any other events happening that week.

Example: A school is recognized by Special Olympics as National Unified Champion School. Campus Recreation secures a venue and invites the university president and other notable staff to the banner ceremony. Before the banner is unveiled a Unified Basketball exhibition game takes place to showcase exactly the type of competition that occurs on a regular basis. Following the game, the Special Olympics College Club president, the club athlete representative and the university president all unveil the national recognition banner.

	Time for Planning	Frequency	Note
Spread the Word >> Inclusion/Respect Campaign	4-8 weeks	Once	Spread the Word Day is always the first Wednesday in March
Banner Presentation/ Unified Pep Rally	6-10 weeks	Once	ESPN selects the Top 5 Banner Schools for a special presentation

Social Events

Social events are opportunities for partners and athletes to come together off the field of play and interact as friends. These activities allow for more time to get to know people on a personal level.

- **Needs:** Venue, activity, food (know dietary restrictions)
- **Great for:** strengthening friendships, having fun

Team Meals

Whether it is at someone's house for a potluck, a park for a cookout, or a local restaurant, getting everyone together for a night of conversation and laughter over a nice meal is one of the best ways to create an environment of inclusion.

Game Night

Finding common interests is a key to building friendships. A game night with cards and board games amongst partners and athletes is a great way to build inclusion.

Banquet or dance party

A dance party or banquet can be a fun way to connect! These are a great way to celebrate the end of a sports season or tournament, or just a way to get more people involved.

Example: To celebrate a successful first year of partnering with Special Olympics, NAIA student-athletes want to have a formal event. They decide to host a banquet dinner where awards such as partner and athlete of the year will be presented. Following the dinner, there will be an hour of music and dancing. One of the student-athletes is a part-time DJ and has agreed to donate her services. While the partners and athletes that were involved will be celebrated, all of the student-athletes, coaches and staff in athletics have been invited in hopes that it will increase involvement next year.

	Time for Planning	Frequency	Open to Public?
Team Meals	1-3 weeks	Once or occurs regularly	No
Game Night	1-4 weeks	Once or occurs regularly	Could be
Banquet or Dance Party	4-6 weeks	Once	Could be

Volunteering and Fundraising

There is value to a college supporting Special Olympics (both community and schools programs) through fundraising and volunteerism. As a non-profit organization, donations of money and time are essential to the sustainability of Special Olympics at all levels.

- **Great for:** Introduction to Special Olympics, low planning commitment
- Check with your state Program for fundraisers unique to your state

Volunteer at Special Olympics event

All state Programs need volunteers to assist at various times throughout the year. There is a wide variety of opportunities for volunteering and an appropriate role can be found for any person – no matter the level of Special Olympics experience or sports knowledge.

Be Fans in the Stands

Nobody wants to play or compete in front of empty bleachers. Being a Fan in the Stands is simple - get a group of students and/or staff together, design some cool posters, attend a local Special Olympics event or Unified Sports game, and cheer!

Business Fundraiser

There are many businesses around a college campus that are used to providing fundraising opportunities for student groups. Ask local businesses to see what fundraising opportunities are available.

Example: Students reach out to their local, popular burger restaurant on campus to set up a fundraising night. The restaurant gives the students a special flyer/coupon and agrees to donate 15% of the total sales from any customers presenting the flyer coupon that night to Special Olympics. The students will also help with bringing the orders to the customers, bussing tables and get to have a table with Special Olympics information set up in the restaurant. In total, the fundraiser generates \$500 in donations and 18 people sign up to receive volunteer information from Special Olympics.

Polar Plunge

One of the main fundraisers for state Programs is a Polar Plunge. Participants of the Polar Plunge collect pledges and donations from friends and family to support Special Olympics. In exchange for the pledges and donations, participants commit to jumping into freezing cold water during the Polar Plunge event. Consider inviting others to plunge or even getting a whole school to work together as a plunging group.

Volunteering and Fundraising (cont.)

Event Fundraiser

Plan a larger scale event where either donations will be collected or event proceeds will be donated. It would be beneficial, but not required, to include athletes during these events.

Example: To help bring together the entire campus and members of their community, a Special Olympics College Club organizes a 3k walk/5k run on campus. The club holds the event during the week of their Spread the Word campaign to help raise awareness for inclusion.

	Time for Planning	Frequency	Potential Ideas
Volunteer at Special Olympics Event	1-3 weeks	Dependent on events	Volunteer roles: coach, official, registration, operations, results
Fans In the Stands	1-3 weeks	Dependent on events	Look for on-campus or off-campus games
Business Fundraiser	3-6 weeks	Once or twice	Businesses: restaurants, installing dorm furniture, concessions/raffles at college games
Polar Plunge	6-10 weeks	Once	Plunge as an individual, a group, or as a whole school
Event Fundraiser	10+ weeks	Once	Events: 5K walk/run, Golf Outing, 3v3 Basketball, Home Run Derby, Bowling

Virtual Events

Virtual events are an opportunity to be connected when you're not together in person. With technology, the virtual space can offer a variety of possibilities:

- Connecting with athletes around the country
- Networking with other Special Olympics College Clubs or programs
- Telling stories about Special Olympics
- Reaching individuals off-campus
- Fundraising

Unified Training Activities

A group of Unified partners and athletes meet on an online video meeting. All members take turns leading an exercise for the group. This can be a casual workout, or a focused training session.

Example: At NCAA DIII and NAIA institutions, Student Athlete Advisory Committees or Association of Student Athletes host sport-focused virtual activities that get all participants moving and exercising. Everyone chooses a different movement or exercise for the group, and everyone does it together.

Unified Hangouts

A group of Unified partners and athletes schedule an online video meeting. There are plenty of social activities you can do virtually to stay connected!

Examples: Trivia, game or movie watch party, bingo, pictionary, show & tell, etc.

Unified Esports

Unified esports allow teammates with and without ID to participate in competitive or recreational gaming. Gameplay can happen recreationally, through a club social event or competitively through campus recreation or national tournaments or leagues.

Recreation example: A Special Olympics College Club organizes a Friday night Mario Kart tournament.

Competitive example: Campus recreation offers a Unified Rocket League season. Teams within the school compete against one another. The winning team advances to NIRSA Esports National Championships.

Setting up a Unified esports tournament or game night

- 1) Schedule a day & time to play, and determine game and location of play
- 2) Recruit Unified teams
- 3) Create matchups or tournament bracket
- 4) Set up private matches in the game and keep track of which teams win

Virtual Events (cont.)

Inclusion Week

Use social media platforms to highlight a week of inclusion and awareness. Plan activities for athletes and Unified partners to do with one another virtually or in person and share them on social media! Connect with other areas on campus to help share posts. Consider posting videos, stories and testimonials.

Day of Giving

An online fundraiser with one day of focused giving. Students and athletes post messages on social media with a link to an online giving portal. Followers of the post are encouraged to share the message as well.

Example: A Special Olympics Unified Team is planning to attend a NIRSA Regional Flag Football Tournament and needs to raise funds for registration and travel. They work with their state Program to develop an online fundraiser. Each player on the team records a 30 second video asking for donations to help the team go to the

	Time for Planning	Frequency	Platforms
Unified Activity Night	1-3 weeks	Once or regularly	Virtual meeting platforms
Unified Esports	1-3 weeks for social events 10+ weeks for intramural or intercollegiate leagues/tournaments	Weekly	Games: Rated E for Everyone (Rocket League, Smash Bros, Mario Kart, Madden, FIFA)
Inclusion Week	4-6 weeks	Once	Social media, school website
Day of Giving	3-4 weeks	Once	Social media, school website

Special Olympics Young Athletes

What is Special Olympics Young Athletes?

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities ages 2-7 years old. Young Athletes programs introduce basic sports skills like running, kicking, and throwing. The program also offers leadership opportunities to those who want to share the joy of sports with all children. Young Athletes is designed to easily be implemented in any community, including college campuses.

Programs offered:

8 Week Young Athletes Program: The basic structure of a Young Athletes program consists of physical activity sessions that take place **two or three times a week for 30-45 minutes**. Though 8 weeks is the suggested minimum for the program, year-round programming is preferred for everyone involved to receive maximum benefits. Curriculum and supplies are provided by your local Special Olympics state Program. The college students responsibilities include providing students to run the program, and sometimes identifying facility space.



Developmental Sports: Developmental sports is a new feature of Special Olympics that provides an age-appropriate introduction to sports for children with and without ID, **ages 6-12 years old**. It can be run exactly like an 8 week Young Athletes Program with the only difference being the **focus on sport-specific skills**. You may also choose to host a developmental sports program that changes which sport is taught every week/few weeks. This could also allow the program to switch up its volunteers based on sport experience. See our [Developmental Sports Implementation Guide](#) for sport-specific teaching resources.

Unified Field Days: A Unified Field Day is a **recreational one-day event** planned and hosted by students or faculty at the university. Special Olympics Young Athletes are invited to participate in a variety of stations that encourage movement, social inclusion, and skill development.

Who can carry out these programs? There are many leaders on a campus who can plan and host Young Athletes programs. A first step for any of these groups is to connect with your local Special Olympics state Program.

- Special Olympics College Clubs
- Sports teams
- Fraternity and Sorority life
- Academic programs

Find an Event Partner

Events can take a lot of time, resources, and people, so it might be worthwhile to partner up with another group on campus with similar interests. This will build awareness for both groups and the event. In addition, partnering provides an opportunity to connect like-minded groups with similar goals or missions on campus – potentially leading to a partnership lasting well past the date of the event.

Here are potential groups on your campus that would make good partners for a Special Olympics event:

Special Olympics College Club

Student organization that connects college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities through sports, events, and leadership.

Ideal partner for:

- Partner and athlete recruitment
- Connection to state Program
- Student input

Campus Recreation/Intramural Sports

Department on campus that organizes recreational activities and sports.

Ideal partner for:

- Unified Sports
- Facility and equipment rental
- Officiating

National Partners:

- NIRSA

Intercollegiate Athletics

Department on campus that coordinates varsity athletics. A potential partner for Unified Sports events. Within intercollegiate athletics there are student-athlete leadership councils that are great to get connected to Special Olympics.

Ideal partner for:

- Sports instruction
- Unified Sports

National Partners:

- NCAA Division III
- NAIA



Finding an Event Partner (cont.)

Greek Organizations

Greek organizations are very connected and engaged organizations that have a social and service component.

Ideal partner for:

- Partner recruitment
- Whole campus engagement/attendance

National Partners:

- Sigma Tau Gamma
- Alpha Phi Omega

Academic Programs

Partnering with academic programs either in coordinating the event or promoting the event can be beneficial. Instructors might see co-curricular value of the event or even make it a part of their curriculum.

Ideal partner for:

- Event attendance
- Bringing specific skill, expertise or knowledge to event

Academic Programs to consider:

- Special Education
- Sports Management
- Health and Fitness
- Athletic Training

Other groups to consider:

- Club Sports teams
- Best Buddies
- Honors organizations
- Education student groups
- Sport related student groups





SECTION 3:

Additional Resources and Toolkit



Special Olympics
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Student Resources Toolkit

After deciding on your event, it is important to create a few planning documents to get moving in the right direction. Download, save, and edit to customize these documents to fit the needs of your club and school.

[Pre-event timeline](#) - planning involved the months and weeks leading up to your event

[Day of event timeline](#) - action steps to stay mindful of on the day of your event

[Post-event timeline](#) - a list of stakeholders you may want to thank, or send a recap of the event to

[Press release template](#) - when you have an event coming up that you'd like to share with the greater community, this can be used to send to local media

[Equipment checklist](#) - a list of anything and everything you need to host your event

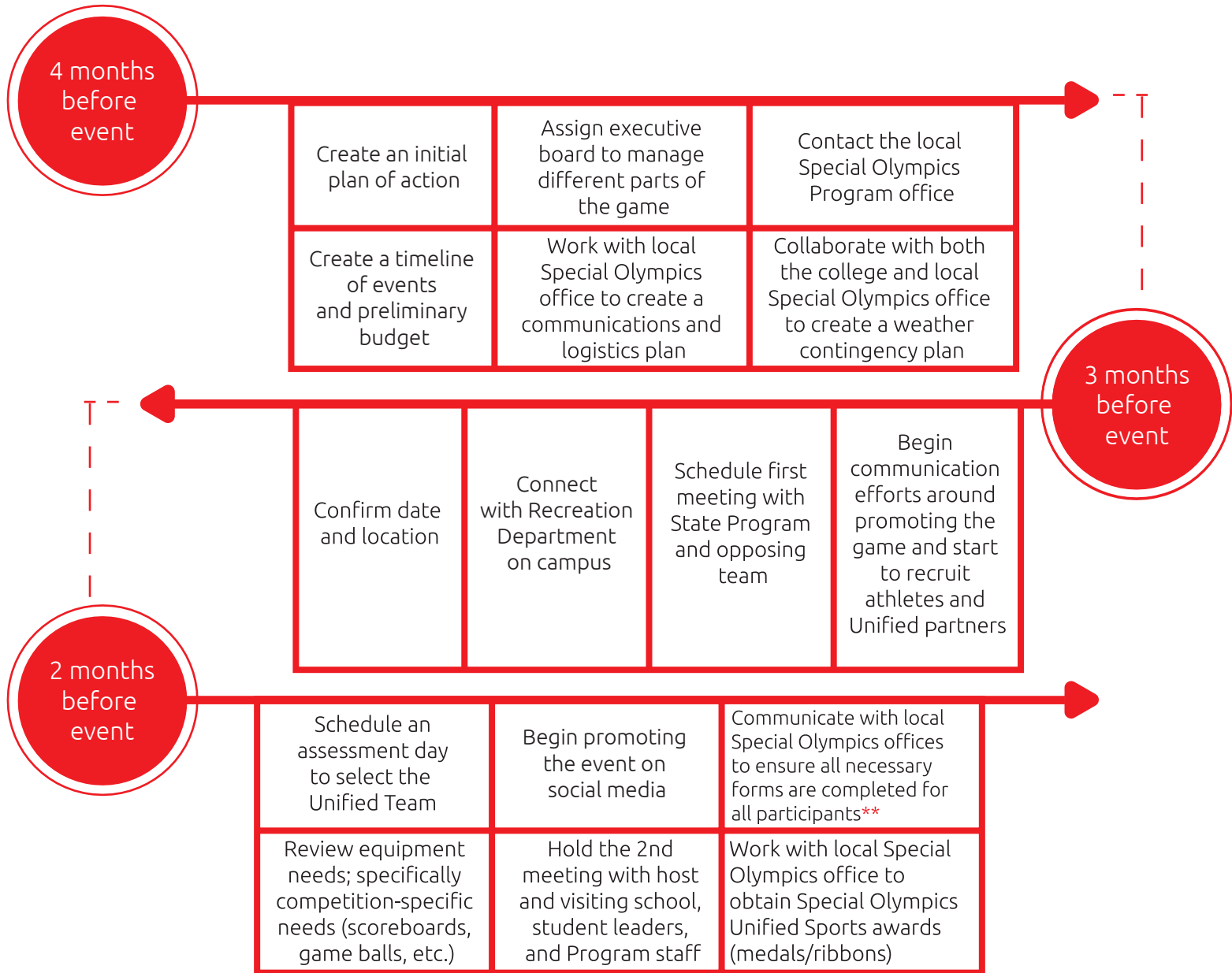
[Event budget](#) - a plan to be sure all event costs are accounted for

[Making an ask](#) - templates to ask for donations, event space and meetings

[Access the Sample Resources Toolkit here](#)

Sample Event Timeline

The below is a sample event timeline for hosting a Unified basketball game against another college



**Forms can be required for athletes, partners, volunteers and officials. The forms can include, but are not limited to, Athlete Release Form, Athlete Medical Form, Class A Volunteer Form, Special Olympics Unified Sports Partner Application Form, and Protective Behaviors Training. The college may require additional waivers as well.

1.5 months
before
event

Start advertising on campus and in local businesses:

- Be sure to follow Special Olympics Branding Guidelines

Establish potential game day extras to enhance the experience:

- Ask if the college cheerleaders and/or band will perform at the event
- Contact local mayor to see if he/she will sign a proclamation for the game

Collaborate with the college recreation department and local Special Olympics office to schedule officials for the game

1 month
before
event

Schedule third meeting with host and visiting school, student leaders, Program staff

Continue to promote game on campus by hanging flyers, publishing an article in the school newspaper, and through social media

Recruit volunteers and spectators for game and identify roles and responsibilities for all volunteers

3 weeks
before
event

Confirm game "extras"

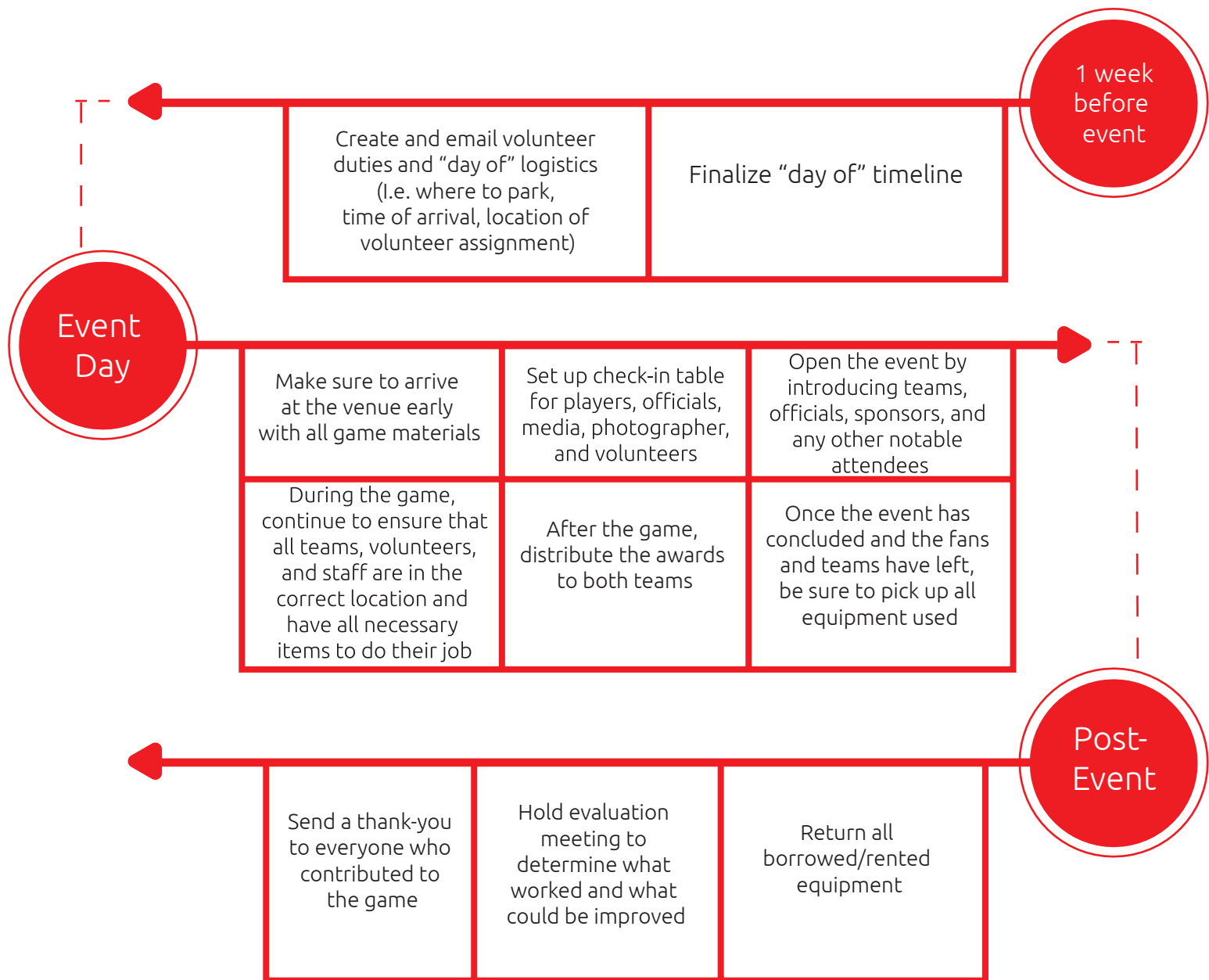
Train officials on Special Olympics Unified Sports and specific sport rules:

- Rules can be found on the Special Olympics Resource Page
- Confirm all rules with the local Special Olympics office

2 weeks
before
event

Final meeting with host and visiting school, student leaders, Program staff

Print any promotion materials being used and distribute where needed



Sample Equipment Checklist

The day of the event can be overwhelming and it can be easy to forget things. Creating a checklist of items prior to the event will help ensure that nothing is left behind. Create a list that includes every necessity, the quantity, and who is responsible for the item.

*This is just a sample equipment checklist. Depending on the number of people and type of event, the items and quantity will change.

**Check with the State Program or campus recreation to see if you can borrow items for your event before buying them.

Event: Special Olympics Unified Sports Field Day

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air pump | <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Flag belts | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer ball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cones | <input type="checkbox"/> Water cooler | <input type="checkbox"/> Cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash can |

Event: Spread the Word Inclusion Campaign/Rally

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Table | <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs | <input type="checkbox"/> STW Banner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Markers | <input type="checkbox"/> Stickers | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters |

Event: Hosting a Special Olympics Basketball Game

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air pump | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Shirts | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Banner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club display at entrance | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketballs | <input type="checkbox"/> Benches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water cooler / cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Medals/ Medal Tray | <input type="checkbox"/> PA Script |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College/ State Program tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Announcers Table | <input type="checkbox"/> Emcee/Script |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waivers/ Releases | <input type="checkbox"/> Pens | <input type="checkbox"/> Check-in table |

Sample Budget

It is important to create a budget prior to hosting an event. Knowing how much funding is available and having all costs planned out helps ensure there will be enough funding to make the event happen. Be sure to track all your expenses and follow the state programs accounting guidelines.

*This is just a sample budget and does not reflect the actual costs. Actual costs will vary.

**Once equipment is purchased, it can be reused for future events. This will help reduce expenses for other events.

Sample Budget: Special Olympics Unified Sports Field Day

Air pump: \$5.00	Football: (2) \$20.00	Flag belts: (10) \$50.00	Soccer ball: (2) \$30.00
Cones: (20) \$30.00	Water Cooler: Borrowed	Cups: \$5	Trash can: Borrowed

Sample Budget: Spread the Word Inclusion Campaign

STW Banner: \$50.00	Permanent Markers: \$10.00	Stickers: \$30.00
Promotional Materials: \$125.00	Table: Donated	Chairs: Donated

Making an Ask

Asking for something - whether it be donations, event space, or simply a meeting - can be intimidating! Below are a few tips and a sample email to get you started. If you never ask for something, you will never receive it!

Why: First, understand why you are asking. Is your goal to create a more inclusive community for those with intellectual disabilities? Do you want to get connected with someone who can help you do that? Do you want to create an experience for your partners and athletes? Why are you passionate about Special Olympics? When you have answered that question, your asks will seem more genuine and meaningful.

Who: If you are not sure who is the best person to reach out to about your specific need, ask your local Special Olympics staff or even your campus advisor to see if they have anyone in mind! Understand who the person is and think about how your ask can also benefit them.

What: When you are making the initial ask, be sure to articulate exactly what you are asking of the person as far as what their specific duties would be to make the event happen! People like to have as much detail as possible before signing on to anything. Also, do not diminish what you are asking for because you are afraid of asking for too much. It's okay to ask for what might seem like a lot, you might be pleasantly surprised by the response!

When: Keep in mind that each ask needs to be done in advance for the best outcome. If you are proposing a Special Olympics event on campus, do your research to make sure it is not colliding with any other large campus happenings!

How: When making the initial ask, it is appropriate to do so over email or a phone call. However, if they would like more information or want to discuss options further, it is always best to meet in person. That way, conversations are organic and it is harder to say no!

Below is a sample email containing an initial ask to use the campus recreation center as a space for a Special Olympics Unified Field Day.

Dear _____,

I hope this email finds you well! I am reaching out on behalf of the Special Olympics College Club at _____. We are devoted to promoting inclusivity on campus and unifying those with and without intellectual disabilities through sport and fun! In order to engage more students and athletes, we would like to host a Special Olympics Unified Field Day on campus on (insert date/times). This would consist of athletes and partners participating in a series of activity stations or informal team games. If possible, the recreation center would be a great place to host this event so we can set up different sports stations.

If you are interested in allowing us to use this space for this event, I would love to find a time to chat more. Thank you so much for your time and consideration!

Regards,

Name

Position within SO College Club

Thanks for reading through our Event Guide Resource! Best of luck in your future endeavors. Should you have any questions, reach out to your local Special Olympics office. For additional help, email socollege@specialolympics.org.