

Special Olympics North America Overview

Special Olympics





Our Mission

Our mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Our Vision

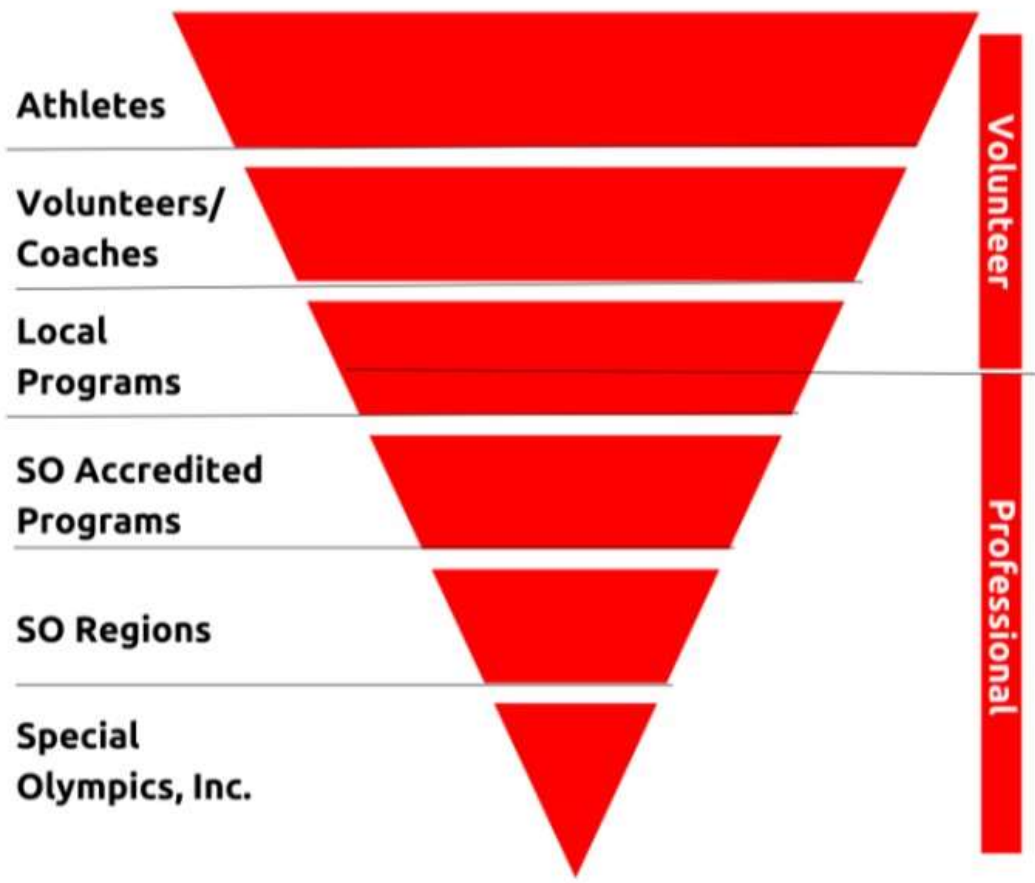
Our vision is an inclusive world for all, driven by the power of sport, through which people with intellectual disabilities live active, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our Purpose

Through collaboration, guidance, and direct support, SONA serves as a catalyst for and champion of Program quality and growth.

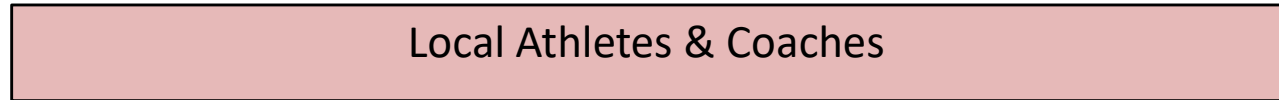


Our Structure

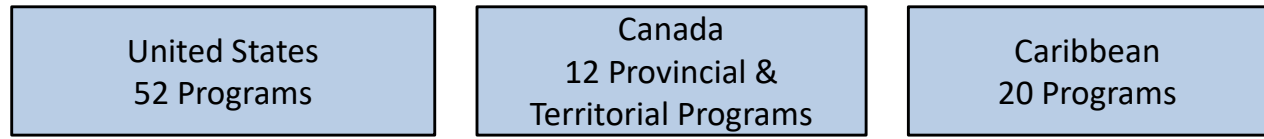


SOWI & SO North America/SOI

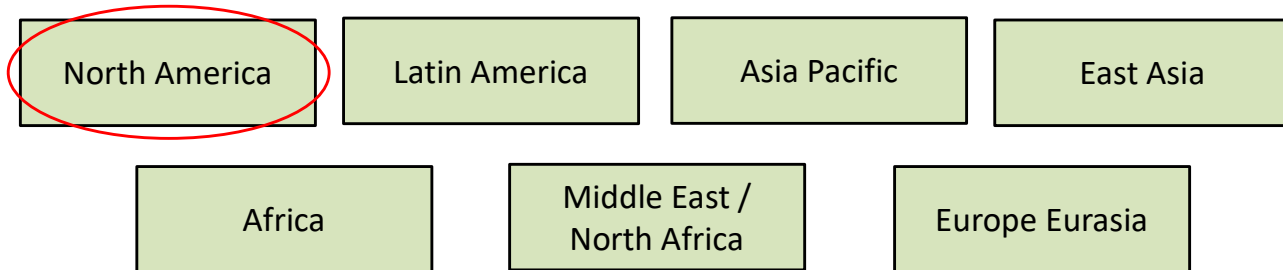
Community:



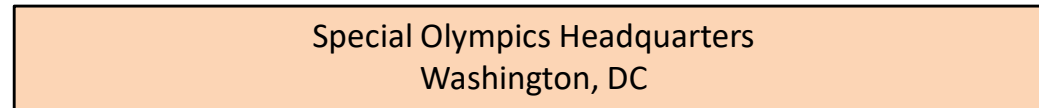
National:



Regional:



Global:



2025-2026 REGIONAL PRIORITIES



- 1. Program Development:** Advance Program quality, growth, and sustainability through meaningful initiatives, enhanced resources, and heightened awareness.
- 2. People:** Equip and enable all people in our Region for meaningful roles with continuous leadership and learning opportunities.
- 3. Culture:** Operate as ONE SONA in an integrated, people-centric fashion as experienced through exceptional customer service and assistance.
- 4. Data and Technology:** Drive greater strategies and stronger technical support through streamlined digital platforms and the use of impactful data.



Two key questions for Local Programs

1. How can we do all the work that needs to be done – and done right?
2. What does “doing it right” look like?

What do Local Programs look like in 2025?

- Sports training & competition remains
- Increased focus on:
 - Health & Fitness
 - Unified Champion Schools
 - Athlete & Unified Leadership
 - Young Athletes
 - Virtual programming

What do Programs look like in 2025?

- Supporting your Local Program:
 - Coaches and volunteers – Having enough, and training them well
 - Administration & paperwork
 - Fundraising
 - Financial Management
 - Communications – Keeping the public informed, and representing SO well
 - This is NOT a complete list!

Area/Local Management Teams

- Covers crucial Local Program areas
- Increase buy-in from all members
- Sustain Local Program beyond one person's involvement & tenure
- Benefit from skills & experiences of many
- Help to avoid burnout!

Ensuring quality through accreditation

- WHAT: Process for understanding Local Program operations
- WHY:
 - Ensure quality programming throughout your state
 - Establish transparency for Local Programs, and data that can be helpful in goal setting

What does Accreditation look like?

Per SO General Rules:

- Strong organization and governance
- Effective training and competition
- Progress in increasing # of participants
- Efforts in involving families and volunteers
- Fundraising activities
- Fiscal soundness and accountability
- PR & public education efforts
- Other criteria which the Accredited Program considers essential