Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide

Special Olympics
College Clubs

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Special Olympics **College Clubs**

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Special Olympics College Club is an environment like no other. In our Special Olympics College Club, Rowan Unified, college students and Special Olympics athletes come together to create a competitive, but a tremendously positive atmosphere.

Our Special Olympics Unified Sports® program is growing every year and we are so grateful for such strong support from our school and local community! We agree that being active and playing sports together is an extremely important part of the club; however, our favorite part is getting to meet new people!

Our athletes love making new friends, especially with college students. The bonds that are built on and off the playing field will last a lifetime. Living Unified is more than just playing a game. We enjoy all the extra activities that come with being a member of the club at Rowan such as our annual Fall Ball and Banquet! Unified has become a way of life at Rowan.

Good Luck as you not only play, but live Unified!

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

The contents of this "**Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide**" were developed under generous funding from the US Department of Education, #H380W150001 and #H380W160001. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and one should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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SECTION 1:

Introduction to Special Olympics College

Special Olympics
College Clubs

Purpose of Starter Guide & Additional Resources

The Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide was developed to help college students create and establish an official student organization on campus. This resource serves a specific component of the whole Special Olympics College experience. It should be used with other Special Olympics College resources to meet the complete needs of the club. Once the club has been created, the following resources can be utilized:

Special Olympics College : https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/unified-schools/college

- Discover other ways to get involved with Special Olympics at the college level and connect with other clubs.

Special Olympics College Resources: https://resources.specialolympics.org/community-building/youth-and-school-special-olympics-college-clubs

- Find more information about hosting events, logos and branding, and how to bring Unified Sports Intramurals to a college campus, amongst other resources.

- Resources include:
  - Special Olympics College Event Guide
  - Logos and Branding
  - Special Olympics Unified Sports Intramurals Guide

Special Olympic College Club Map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/embed?mid=1-zhVn4vfSJcpKVMXfvqHmmyEGa8&ll=38.16224186406304%2C-95.88917800000002&z=4

- Find out where there are existing College Clubs and Unified Sports Intramurals across the United States.

Generation Unified: https://www.generationunified.org/

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

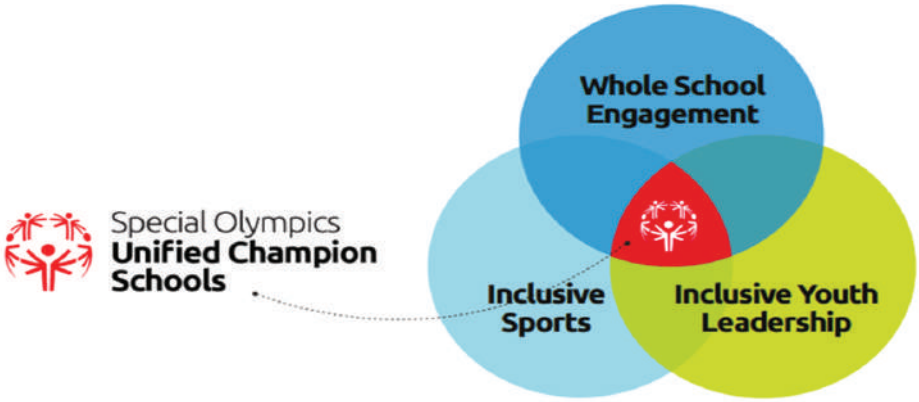
For questions regarding the Special Olympics College Club Starter Guide, or any other related Special Olympics College inquiries, please contact socollege@specialolympics.org

Special Olympics College at a Glance

Special Olympics College Club

A Special Olympics College Club functions as an official student organization on campus that connects college students and individuals with intellectual disabilities through sports, events, and leadership. Through these activities, a Special Olympics College Club can create a campus environment of friendship, respect, and inclusion. The club will support the three components of Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools: Unified Sports, inclusive leadership, and whole school engagement.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools ®



The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program at the collegiate level is aimed at promoting social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change. With sports as the foundation, Unified Champion Schools offers activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sport, classroom and campus climates of acceptance.

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 and 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 basic building blocks remain the same.

Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Unified Sports joins college students without intellectual disabilities (Unified partners) and college students or community members with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) on the same team - playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

At the college level, Unified Sports functions as:

- Unified Sports Intramurals
- Club Sports
- Tournaments/ competitions against other college teams
- United Fitness

Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership occurs when people of all abilities are given opportunities to be leaders -on their campus. These leadership activities help individuals, both with and without intellectual disabilities, to find their voices and become change agents in their communities by promoting equity and acceptance.

At the college level, , Inclusive Leadership functions as:

- Special Olympics College Clubs
- Student-Athlete leadership council (NCAA & NAIA Institutions)

Whole Campus Engagement

Awareness events bring the whole college community together, bringing attention to the need for meaningful inclusion. These events impact numerous stakeholders in a campus community and are great entry points to introduce more students to the Special Olympics movement.

At the college level, Whole Campus Engagement functions as:

- Attending local Special Olympics events as volunteers or Fans in the Stands
- Campaigns such as Spread the Word Inclusion and rallies for respect
- Fundraisers like Polar Plunges or on-campus events

	Roles & Responsiblities		
3 Components of a Unified Champion School	Special Olympics College Club	State/ Local Program	College/University
Special Olympics Unified Sports	• Recruits partners and athletes • Communicates with Campus Recreation to reserve fields, get officials, and select league night	• Provides club with appropriate contacts to reach athletes • Advises on administration of Unified Sports (rules, partner education, etc) • Verifies participant eligibility • Informs of advancement opportunities with state events	• Campus Recreation delivers intramural league experience (schedule game, officials, awards) • Verifies student eligibility • Informs of advancement opportunities with NIRSA or Athletics
Inclusive Leadership	• Includes membership opportunities and leadership roles to both partners and athletes • Meets at least once a month • Discusses relevant topics and business to move towards meaningful inclusion	• Provides advice and guidance regarding Special Olympics related questions • Informs college/members of off-campus Special Olympics leadership opportunities • Works with other student leader groups (student-athletes, Greek organizations)	• Provides opportunities and funding given to all student organizations • Guides clubs to appropriate designation (sport club v. general club) • Encourages students with intellectual disabilities towards involvement on campus
Whole Campus Engagement	• Plans and organizes events • Partners with college departments and other groups on campus	• Provides guidance regarding state level campaigns and events that campuses can join • Attends and supports events • Connects with campus groups (outside of club) that can engage with Special Olympics • Assists with risk management for events	• Provides facility/ venue and staff for event • Promotes and reports on events • Attends and supports events • Assists with risk management for events

Special Olympics National School Recognition Program

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 standards across the three components – Special Olympics Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole-School Engagement – and are sustainable annually.

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

- College/University Standards

Special Olympics College Club Role:

- Complete or assist school representative with the National School Recognition application when the application cycle is open
- Work with the State Program and college to plan and host the banner recognition ceremony

State Program Role:

- Approve or decline application for National School Recognition
- Work with the club and college to plan and host the banner recognition ceremony

College Role:

- Complete or assist club leader with the National School Recognition application when the cycle is open
- Work with the State Program and club to plan and host the banner recognition ceremony

Terms to Know

The following are definitions of specific terminology is used in this document. With each situation being unique, colleges and state programs might use different terminology to describe the same thing.

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.

Athletics: The department on campus that is responsible for intercollegiate athletics and student-athletes.

Campus Recreation: The department on campus that is responsible for intramural and/or club sports. This department is usually responsible for fitness/wellness and the operations of the recreation center and fields.

club: A shortened version of Special Olympics College Club that is used in this resource.

college: 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 club 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 Special Olympics State Program that is used in this resource. For colleges in countries outside of the United States, this could be local or provincial program.

Student Activities: The department on campus that is responsible for the intake and registration of all new student organizations/clubs.

SECTION 2:

Starting a Special Olympics College Club

Special Olympics
College Clubs

7 Steps to Starting a Special Olympics College Club

This checklist will help get a College Club up and running in no time! This section will provide detailed information on each of these steps.

1. Complete the Special Olympics College Club Interest Form

- Visit the Special Olympics College site and complete the interest form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYzK78cZrjq0mvNUABQF8JAwCkXln0_lccRCpOnAIX3MIkmQ/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dGlaTVg4azhnS19jUTNlRTB6MjNzRGc6MA..#gid=0

2. Connect with the Special Olympics State Program

- Use either the Special Olympics Program Locator: https://www.specialolympics.org/programs or email socollege@specialolympics.org to find your state contact person
- Formalize a relationship with and get approved by State Program

3. Contact the Student Activities Office on Campus

- Complete the process of becoming a registered student organization on campus
- Develop name/logo, constitution and contact information for the club
- Determine how the club will manage finances

4. Establish an Executive Board

- Fill the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer to lead the club
- Decide any additional leadership positions for the club

5. Get Others Involved and Raise Awareness on Campus

- Recruit partners to join
- Recruit athletes to join
- Connect with other groups/departments with similar interests

6. Plan Events

- Plan a club activity or event
- Connect with Campus Recreation to start Unified Sports Intramurals

7. Communication

- Create social media accounts
- Share club information with local and national outlets

Steps 1-3: Establishing the Club

Step 1: Fill out the Special Olympics College Club Interest Form

The first step to becoming an official club is to fill out the online interest form.
Each student, college, and club are unique and come with starting points, so make sure to fill out each section of the interest form and include information specific to each situation. Use contact information that is maintained regularly. Once an interest form is submitted, the following process occurs:

Interest form submitted online ▷ Unified Champion Schools team will connect with the listed contact on the interest form to further discuss interest ▷ Unified Champion Schools team will provide contact information with your State Program and access to College Club resources

The Unified Champion Schools team will also provide information on any Special Olympics activity that already might be taking place at the college.

Step 2: Connect with the State Special Olympics Program

The second step is to contact the State Program staff. Regarding Special Olympics information and resources, the State Program will serve as the club's main contact. Only State Program-approved clubs can use the Special Olympics name and branding. Note that the State Program staff may work directly with the club or have a local community Special Olympics staff work directly with the club. To obtain a State Program contact, email socollege@specialolympics.org.

Each State Program has a different strategy and approach to Special Olympics College, and it is important to have a discussion early in the process about how the club fits in the statewide plan..

Step 3: Contact the Student Activities Office on Campus

The third step for establishing a club is to reach out to the college to find out the necessary steps to become a registered student organization. The steps for each college may be different, but overall the process is similar. The department/area within a college that should be contacted is the Student Activities Office, Student Government Association, or equivalent to gather the information necessary to start a club. When registering a club, most colleges will require the following:

- Club Name/Logo
- Constitution
- Contact Information
- Faculty/Staff Advisor
- Finances

Below are requirements and/or recommendations for each.

Club Name/Logo

To help ensure clubs are in alignment with Special Olympics branding guidelines and to avoid possible trademark issues, please follow these guidelines:

Correct Club Names:

- Special Olympics College Club at [College/University Name]
- Special Olympics Club at [College/University Name]
- Special Olympics [College/University Name] College Club

Incorrect Club Names:

- SO College at [College/University Name]
- [College/University Name] Special Olympics Club
- Special Olympics [College/University Name] College Club

When registering a club, a college may ask for proof of permission to use the name Special Olympics and any associated logos. If a college does require permission, contact the State Program. The State Program can provide permission and all guidelines associated with logo usage.

For proper use of the logo, please refer to the Special Olympics College Clubs Branding Guidelines.

Constitution

A college will probably require the club to have a constitution. A constitution provides the foundation and guidelines for how the club will function. A club should follow the letter of the constitution when conducting business. For a template to create a constitution unique for the club, please refer to this sample constitution.

Contact Information

Most colleges will require contact information for the club. While a personal email may be preferred for contacts between club leaders, advisors, college administration and State Program, it is highly recommended that a general organizational email is created through any email service. This email can then be passed on each year without changing due to transition of leadership. It is also recommended that one of the officers be responsible for maintaining and managing the organizational email.

Faculty/Staff Advisor

Most colleges require a faculty or staff member to serve as an advisor for the club. Find an advisor that will show an interest in and work productively with the club. Look for an advisor with experience related to Special Olympics, sports, events or inclusion. The advisor can be consulted on any challenging club business, help a club connect to different departments on campus, and should be invited to meetings and events.

Finances

Work with the policies from the college and the State Program when establishing club finances for the first time. Here is an important checklist of things to consider:

- Many colleges require that clubs create an annual budget. This basic template can be used to track revenues, expenses and profits.
- Work with your college and State Program to decide if a club bank account should be created. Bank accounts are recommended for any clubs that manage their own finances. They also may be required if the club is to receive any funding from the college. Some helpful tips when creating a bank account:

1. Create an organizational bank account instead of using a club member's personal bank account

2. At least two club members should be able to access bank accounts and use any checks or cards (recommended President and Treasurer)

3. Work with your college and bank to complete any required forms (i.e. direct deposit or tax information). If an Employee Identification Number (EIN) is required, it can be acquired at no cost via this online application below* :

https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online

* For type of organization, select View Additional type and choose either Community or Volunteer Group, School Organization , or Sports Teams (community)

4. Discuss with the State Program how club revenues/profits are to be used and any expectations when it comes to fundraising

5. Always be transparent and up to date on finances

Step 4: Building the Team

An executive board should lead the club. Know which positions the college requires and fill those first (i.e. President, Treasurer, etc). After that, identify the needs of the club as a team and add any additional positions. The following are examples of executive positions the club could have, complete with a general description of duties and estimated time commitment.

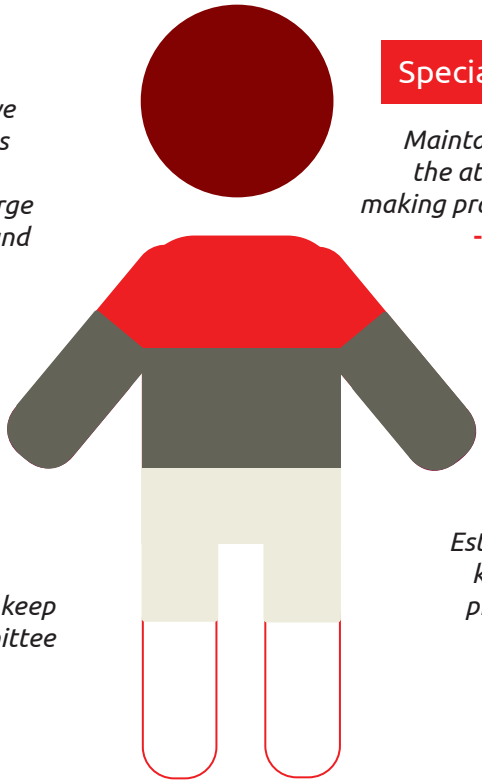
Be sure to strive for Inclusive Leadership in the club and have both partners and athletes eligible to fill executive board and other leadership positions! Most colleges require a faculty or staff member to serve as an advisor for the club. Find an advisor that will show an interest in and work productively with the club. Look for an advisor with experience related to Special Olympics, sports, events or inclusion. The advisor can be consulted on any challenging club business, help a club connect to different departments on campus, and should be invited to meetings and events.

Executive Board Positions

President

Oversees chapter logistics and all executive board positions; organizes, plans, and runs meetings; acts as a point of contact with State Program, college, and advisor; in charge of submitting all paperwork to the school and local/national Special Olympics offices when necessary.

- Time Commitment: 7-10 hours/week



Special Olympics Athlete Representative

Maintains relationships with athletes and provides the athlete voice and perspective during decision making process. Meets with committee chairs/liaisons.

- Time Commitment: 2-3 hours/week

Vice President

Supports the chapter President as needed to keep the club running smoothly, meets with committee chairs/liaisons.

- Time Commitment: 3-5 hours/week

Treasurer

Establishes and maintains club's bank account; keeps records of all expenses and deposits; prepares budgets; communicates budgetary necessities to college and Program.

- Time Commitment: 2-4 hours/week

Secretary

Keeps detailed minutes from each meeting and records member attendance; emails chapter minutes after each meeting; distributes club announcements & reminders, maintains club email account.

- Time Commitment: 2-4 hours/week

Potential Committees & Chairs

Fundraising Chair - Time Commitment: 2-3 hours/week

- *Plans and executes all the chapter's fundraising events; contacts clubs and organizations to partner on with events.*

Marketing Chair - Time Commitment: 2-3 hours/week

- *In charge of club's social media pages, markets events; designs marketing material (submits designs to local Special Olympics office for approval); contacts local and campus media outlets to secure coverage for the club's events.*

Relationship Chair - Time Commitment: 2-3 hours/week

- *Establishes relationships with campus Greek life, outside clubs and organizations, athletes, parents, schools and community to build inclusivity, invite to and collaborate on events and develop partnerships.*

Unified Sports Chair - Time Commitment: 2-3 hours/week

- *Recruits partners and athletes for Unified Sports leagues; communicates with Campus Recreation regarding schedules, rules and other league considerations; proposes new Unified Sports opportunities based off needs and wants.*

Recruitment Chair - Time Commitment: 1-2 hours/week

- *Engages with students who express interest in joining the club; communicates with Special Olympics athletes for participation in upcoming events; informs students of upcoming meetings and events.*

Awareness Chair - Time Commitment: 1-2 hours/week

- *Plans and executes the chapter's awareness events such as Spread the Word Inclusion®, Polar Plunge, etc.; works with other officers to ensure awareness is incorporated into all events.*

Volunteer Chair - Time Commitment: 1-2 hours/week

- *Engages with clubs and organizations to participate in volunteer opportunities; works closely with Relationship Chair for recruitment; ensures events have the appropriate number of volunteers and keep record of their attendance.*

Step 5: Recruiting Others

Once the club has been approved and the executive board is in place, it is time to begin recruiting other students.Colleges are full of students looking to get involved, and it is important to get the word out about the new club. Below is a quick Q&A to help:

How to recruit partners to join?

- Recruitment table during various involvement fairs
- Speak in classrooms
- Reach out to faculty members (Sports Marketing, Special Education, etc.)
- Meet with Campus Recreation
- Meet with Athletics
- Volunteer in the community and/or with other clubs

How to recruit athletes to join?

- Connect with State Program
- See if there are any other clubs on campus that focus on promoting inclusion and acceptance of individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Meet with Office of Disability Services on campus
- Find out if your college offers a postsecondary inclusive education program – visit ThinkCollege https://thinkcollege.net/college-search for a list of schools and program contacts

How to collaborate with others to grow club?

Below is a list of organizations/groups that already have a national partnership with Special Olympics. They will be a great place to start because the relationship and shared goals have already been determined and outlined at the national level.

- Campus Recreation
  - NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation - Since 2015, Special Olympics and the NIRSA have formed a partnership to bring Unified Sports to more college campuses.
  - When looking at a staff directory, look for either the coordinator or assistant director of Competitive Sports, Intramurals, or Club Sports
  - Great connection for:
    - Unified Sports Intramural leagues
    - Unified Sports tournaments off-campus
    - Partner recruitment
    - Facilities, equipment, and officiating

- Athletics
  - If the college is part of the NCAA DIII athletics or NAIA athletics, make sure to connect with the student athlete leadership council to work together. Special Olympics has national partnerships with both of those associations and the student athletes should be interested in putting on events together.
  - When contacting Athletics, ask to meet with the student athlete leadership council. The council names are:
    - NCAA DIII – Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)
    - NAIA – Association of Student Athletes (ASA)
  - Great connection for:
    - Unified Sports partners
    - Whole campus engagement events
    - Facilities and equipment

- Fraternity and Sorority
  - Many fraternities and sororities across the country donate their time, resources, and money to the Special Olympics movement. Four Greek organizations have chosen Special Olympics as their national philanthropy - if your college has a chapter of any of the following organizations, work with them!
    - Sigma Tau Gamma, Phi Sigma Kappa, Alpha Sigma Alpha and Alpha Phi Omega.
  - Great connection for:
    - Unified Sports partners
    - Whole campus engagement events
    - Fundraising

Step 6: Planning Events

Once the club is officially established on campus and more students are on board, it is time to start planning events. It is important not to wait too long after the initial informational meeting to host an event. For event ideas and tips on how to plan a first event, download and review the Special Olympics Event Guide.

Special Olympics Unified Sports Intramurals

One recurring event that promotes inclusion through sport is Special Olympics Unified Sports Intramurals. Coordinating these leagues should be a collaborative effort between the club, Campus Recreation, and the State Program. Use the Unified Sports Intramurals guide for how to best build a quality program.

Step 7: Communication

Social Media

Through social media, clubs can keep members up to date with information as well as share great stories and results with State Programs, Special Olympics, and clubs from other colleges. Be excited about what the club accomplishes and share stories.

There is a Facebook group for approved Special Olympics College Club leadership. When the club is formed, it is encouraged that those members in leadership roles join this Facebook group. This group is a great channel to connect with other clubs as well as get information and updates at a national level.

Share Stories with local and national outlets

Keeping up with the media and sharing a story can be tough. Make sure to connect with the college campus newspaper/television channel as well as work with the State Program to connect with any local or statewide media. Also, check in with the State Program if there is a story that should be shared with the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools team at the national level. This team is always looking for stories and moments of acceptance, achievement and inclusion.

CONNECT with Special Olympics at a national level

Social Media Corner

Twitter

@SpecialOlympics

@SONorthAmerica

Instagram

@specialolympics

@sonorthamerica

Facebook

SpecialOlympics

SONorthAmerica

Snapchat

specialolympics

Links From Document

Special Olympics College: https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/unified-schools/college

Special Olympics College Resources : https://resources.specialolympics.org/community-building/youth-and-school-special-olympics-college-clubs

Special Olympic College Club Map : https://www.google.com/maps/d/embed?mid=1-zhVn4vfSJcpKVMXfvqHmmyEGa8&ll=38.16224186406304%2C-95.88917800000002&z=4

Generation Unified: A shortened version of Special Olympics College Club that is used in this resource.

Special Olympics College Club Interest Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYzK78cZrjq0mvNUABQF8JAwCkXln0_lccRCpOnAIX3MIkmQ/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dGlaTVg4azhnS19jUTNlRTB6MjNzRGc6MA..#gid=0

Special Olympics Program Locator : https://www.specialolympics.org/programs

Special Olympics College Clubs Branding Guidelines: https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/community-building/youth-and-school/so-college/SO-College-Clubs-Guideline-v1-0.pdf?_ga=2.251973449.1102387958.1562098880-592238100.1548541711

sample constitution : TBA

Budget Template: TBA

Employee Identification Number (EIN): https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online

ThinkCollege: https://thinkcollege.net/college-search

Special Olympics Event Guide: https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/community-building/youth-and-school/so-college/Special-Olympics-College-EventGuide.pdf

Unified Sports Intramurals guide : https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/community-building/youth-and-school/so-college/NIRSA-Special-Olympics-Unified-Sports-Resource.pdf?_ga=2.148819831.1102387958.1562098880-592238100.1548541711

Twitter: @SpecialOlympics - https://twitter.com/SpecialOlympics
@SONorthAmerica - https://twitter.com/SONorthAmerica

Instagram: @specialolympics - https://www.instagram.com/specialolympics/
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