



Special Olympics
Florida

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY**

&

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLORIDA
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

August, 2005

Revised, July, 2007

SPECIAL OLYMPICS U.S. VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY

(AS OF MAY 10, 2005)

I. VOLUNTEER CLASSIFICATIONS

A. Class Volunteers

1. Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes
2. Volunteers in a position of authority or supervision with athletes
3. Volunteers in a position of trust of athletes
4. Volunteers who handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets of the Program

B. Class B Volunteers

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

II. TYPE OF SCREENING

A. Class A Volunteers (Adult)

1. Completion of a volunteer registration form, screen using a national vendor, photo ID check at the time of registration and photo ID check or identity verification check at events.

B. Class A Volunteers (Minor)

1. Completion of a volunteer registration form, two personal/professional references, who are not related to the minor or the minor's legal guardian (one of whom is from the volunteer applicant's school, church, civic group, etc.), photo ID check at the time of registration and photo ID check or identification verification check at events.

C. Class B Volunteer (Adults and Minors)

1. 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).

III. MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE BACKGROUND SCREENING

A. 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, Programs may conduct a statewide criminal background check.

B. Motor Vehicle Record checks are required if the applicant answers yes to the question regarding suspension or revocation of driver's license, on the Volunteer Application or if the Program has received information through the screening process that the applicant may have motor vehicle related convictions.

IV. PHASE IN AND FREQUENCY

A. New Volunteers

1. Programs shall not permit a New Class A Volunteer applicant (a person who applies after December 31, 2004) to participate as a Class A Volunteer after July 1, 2005, until that person has been screened and approved by the Program.
2. Volunteers registered on or after January 1, 2005, must be re-screened at least every three years.

B. Existing Volunteers

1. Programs must screen all existing volunteers (those registered prior to January 1, 2005) no later than July 1, 2008.
2. Volunteers registered prior to January 1, 2005, must be re-screened every three years following the date of initial screening.

V. DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should fill out a form that meets the requirements as set forth below. Please note that prior to utilizing the volunteer registration forms, each Program should have its legal counsel review the forms to ensure compliance with State laws and regulations.

A. Class A registration form must include:

1. Full name and other information necessary to conduct the required check under the policy
2. The following four questions:
 - a) Do you use illegal drugs?
 - b) Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense?
 - c) Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault?
 - d) Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked in any state or other jurisdiction?
3. A legally sufficient authorization to conduct the necessary screening
4. A release that protects the Special Olympics movement from liability in connection with the Program's conducting the screening
5. Consent to use the volunteer's name and likeness to promote and publicize the purposes of Special Olympics

B. Class B registration materials must include:

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

VI. RESULTS OF BACKGROUND CHECK USING NATIONAL VENDOR

A. Automatic disqualifiers with no appeals process

1. Conviction for crime of:
 - a) child abuse
 - b) sexual abuse of a minor/adult
 - c) causing a child's death

- d) neglect of child or any other individual for whom the potential volunteer had/has responsibility
- e) kidnapping
- f) murder
- g) manslaughter
- h) felony assault
- i) arson
- j) criminal sexual conduct

B. Automatic Disqualifier for Driving on Behalf of Special Olympics (for offenses that have occurred within a specified time frame)

- 1. DWI, DUI, or comparable offenses within seven years of application
- 2. Three or more moving violations within the past three years of application

C. Potential disqualifiers for which a Program may establish an appeals process

- 1. Adverse judgment for damages or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor
- 2. Conviction for
 - a) theft of funds
 - b) fraud
 - c) larceny or other financial crime
 - d) prostitution-related crime
 - e) controlled substance crime
- 3. Being the subject of any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor that restricts contact with a minor
- 4. Each Program has the authority to make the final decision as to any volunteer or applicant in the potential disqualifier category.



VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Revised 7-07)

I. VOLUNTEER CLASSIFICATION

A. Class A Volunteers

1. **Question:** Who typically falls into the Class A Volunteer category?

Answer:

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

b) 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.

c) 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 would meet the definition of Class A Volunteer and would be subject to the screening requirements.

d) Please note that a parent who serves as a Special Olympics coach for his or her child will be considered a Class A volunteer and is subject to the required screening (even if the only child who is being coached is the parent's own child).

2. **Question:** With respect to volunteers who handle a substantial amount of cash or other Program assets, what is the definition of "substantial"?

Answer: \$5,000. However, SOFL sub-programs may set lower thresholds for their program, as appropriate.

B. Class B Volunteers

1. **Question:** Who typically falls into the Class B Volunteer category?

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

C. Minors

1. Question: Who is a minor?

Answer: Depending on the context of the application, it may be a person 18 years of age or younger or a person 21 years of age or younger. For the application of the Volunteer Screening Policy (in Florida), it is 18 years of age, as they are at that point legally able to enter into a binding agreement/contract.

2. Question: What happens when a Unified Partner or Class A Volunteer, who is a minor, turns 18?

Answer: All Unified Partners and/or Class A Volunteers who began participation as minors, must, upon turning age 18, fill out a Class A Volunteer Registration form and will be subject to a criminal background check and must take and successfully complete the Special Olympics Protective Behaviors Training.

3. Question: At what age does a minor volunteer not require adult supervision?

Answer: Anyone over the age of 18 may volunteer without adult supervision, as a Class A or Class B Volunteer. Anyone over 15 years of age, yet under 18 years of age, may volunteer without adult supervision as a Class B Volunteer only. Those under 15 years of age must have adult supervision when volunteering as a Class A or B Volunteer.

D. Drivers for Athletes

1. Question: Are hired drivers considered Class A volunteers?

Answer: No. Programs are 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, Programs should 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.

2. Question: 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?

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

E. Miscellaneous

1. Question: When does a person become a Special Olympics volunteer?

Answer: A person is not considered a Special Olympics volunteer until a person has submitted a completed volunteer registration form, and in the case of Class A Volunteer, 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 a Special Olympics Program, then those persons are not Special Olympics volunteers until their activities are recognized by the Accredited Program and they have complied with the volunteer screening policy.

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

Answer: Individuals who meet the definition of Class A (such as individuals in a supervisory role) or Class B (such as day-of-event) volunteers are required to submit a completed volunteer registration form and are subject to the appropriate screening whether or not they are being paid by their employer while acting as a volunteer.

II. TYPE OF NON-SCREENING CHECKS

A. Motor Vehicle Checks

- 1. Question:** Are Programs required to conduct motor vehicle checks on volunteers?

Answer: No, unless the applicant has answered “yes” to the question regarding suspensions or revocations of the applicant’s driver’s license on the Volunteer Application or if the Program has received information through the screening process that the applicant may have motor vehicle related convictions.

B. Photo ID Checks

- 1. Question:** Does the volunteer screening policy require a photo identification check of volunteer applicants when they submit their volunteer registration forms?

Answer: For Class A volunteers, yes. For Class B volunteers, a photo ID check or a visual identity check (by an approved volunteer) is required.

- 2. Question:** Is a photo copy of the volunteer’s photo identification attached to the original registration form acceptable?

Answer: Yes. Florida law does allow for the photocopying of State-issued Driver’s Licenses; however, SOFL does not require that sub-programs retain a photocopy for their records. The designated screener for each sub-program will confirm on the volunteer registration form that the applicant has provided proof of a valid photo ID.

- 3. Question:** Does the photo ID have to be a government-issued form of identification?

Answer: No. It only needs to be a photo ID.

- 4. Question:** Is a visual identity check (by Special Olympics staff or key volunteers) acceptable in place of a photo ID check of a volunteer at Special Olympics events?

Answer:

a) For Class A Volunteers: Yes. The SOFL Non-athlete Listing Form will serve as the verifying document for State competitions/events.

The Head of Delegation (HOD) may conduct either a photo ID check or a visual ID check of the Class A volunteers with the delegation, either while traveling to the competition/event or upon arriving at the competition/event, to verify the identity of those who are actually in attendance. The form is not to be signed off on until the delegation has arrived at the competition/event and is to be turned in at the competition/event registration.

If the delegation has athletes or coaches serving as day-of help (but not being housed with the delegation) they must be included on the Non-athlete Listing Form as well.

The HOD assumes all responsibility for having verified the identities of the volunteers traveling with the delegation.

b) For Class B Volunteers: Yes. There are three ways to administer photo ID and/or visual ID checks for Class B Volunteers.

- “Walk-on” Class B Volunteer: individual must either show a valid photo ID or an approved volunteer with the program must vouch for their identity at volunteer registration/check-in.
- Groups that pre-register: Group leader has all Class B forms filled out ahead of time, has submitted the forms to the program prior to the event, but has not performed a visual check of all volunteers/volunteer’s photo ID’s – all volunteers must show photo ID upon arriving at venue or approved volunteer with the program must vouch for their identity.
- Groups that pre-register: Group leader has all Class B forms filled out ahead of time, has performed a visual check of all volunteers/volunteer’s photo ID’s, has submitted the forms to the program prior to the event and will vouch for/sign off on everyone who shows up that day to volunteer.

For those sub-programs who work with large civic groups or companies that prefer to handle their own volunteer check-in at games, this is permissible only if they follow the above protocol, so as to be in compliance with the policy.

For returning Class B Volunteers: programs may keep a database of Class B Volunteers so that the volunteer does not have to fill out a new form at each event; however, the volunteer must still show photo ID or an approved volunteer with the program must vouch for their identity, at volunteer registration/check-in, each time they volunteer and sign off on name on list as proof of attendance.

Programs may opt to have Class B Volunteers fill out a new form each time they volunteer - either way, proof of identity must be verified and attendance documented.

C. Reference Checks

1. **Question:** Are reference checks required for minor volunteer applicants?

Answer: Yes, but only for Class A Volunteers. The policy requires a volunteer registration form, two personal/professional references (one of whom is from the volunteer applicant’s school, church, civic group, etc.), photo ID check at events (for minors, IDs are only required to the extent available) are required for minor volunteer applicants.

The SOFL form for the two references can be found as part of the Class A Volunteer Registration form and the Unified® Partner Registration form.

In the event the student is home-schooled, the reference may come from a community or civic group leader, church leader, or the home-school teacher (assuming the teacher is not the student's parent/guardian).

- 2. Question:** Are Programs and sub-programs required to check both references provided by a minor, as part of the Class A Volunteer Registration form and/or the Unified[®] Partner Registration form?

Answer: No. There is language included in the reference form which replaces the need to do so.

- 3. Question:** Are Programs required to obtain a letter of reference or personal references for applicants other than minors?

Answer: No. Programs and sub-programs are no longer required to obtain and check two personal references for adults.

III. FREQUENCY

A. Phase-In (Existing and Applicants)

- 1. Question:** When must Programs begin screening new and existing volunteers?

Answer: The policy is effective July 1, 2005.

- 2. Question:** By what date are Programs required to have completed all screenings of existing volunteers?

Answer: July 1, 2008. However, SOFL has committed to having all existing Class A volunteers screened by the end of 2005.

B. Screening and Re-Screening

- 1. Question:** How often will Class A volunteers be re-screened and how?

Answer: All Class A volunteers will be re-screened every three years from their initial screening date. For existing Class A volunteers, SOFL will implement a 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 process for re-screening so as to reduce the tremendous logistical and financial impact of re-screening all existing Class A volunteers at once. Volunteers will be re-screened every subsequent three years from that point on. SOFL reserves the right to re-screen any Class A Volunteer at any time.

Because SOFL was a pilot program for this policy, nearly 1/3 of our existing Class A volunteers were screened in 2004. However, determinations as to said volunteers' status will not be completed until late 2005.

- 2. Question:** Will Class A volunteers now have to fill out a new Class A Volunteer Registration form every three years?

Answer: Yes. This is a new procedure to help accomplish several goals:

- To help keep volunteer information current
- To make sure all volunteers have agreed to the most current terms of participation.

- c. To let SOFL and sub-programs know if a volunteer is truly active or not. Since there was never an “expiration” on volunteer forms (like there is for athlete forms), there was no accurate way to know who was acting on behalf of SOFL, with SOFL’s authorization.
- d. To ensure that the volunteer has taken the most current version of the Protective Behaviors Training.

3. Question: How will sub-programs know which volunteers will be due for re-screening and when?

Answer: The first re-screenings will occur in 2007, so beginning in December of 2006, SOFL will distribute a list to all county programs with the names of their county’s volunteers who will have to submit a new volunteer registration form in that coming year.

SOFL will handle all re-screenings, including notification to volunteers. County programs may be asked to assist with follow up on non-respondents.

Any forms not received within said timeframe will be considered inactive volunteers, ineligible to volunteer for Special Olympics, unless a new form is submitted.

B. Requirement to conduct screening prior to allowing individual to volunteer

1. Question: Are Programs permitted to allow a volunteer to begin serving as a Class A volunteer prior to completion of the appropriate screening?

Answer: No. Programs are required to conduct the screening prior to allowing the individual to serve as a Class A Volunteer for Special Olympics. Note, however, that a person who has completed the registration form and provided proper photo ID may serve as a Class B Volunteer pending completion of appropriate background screening.

Furthermore, per SOI, “Programs shall not permit a new Class A Volunteer applicant/staff member to participate as a Class A Volunteer until that person has completed the online Protective Behaviors training.”

IV. TYPE OF CHECK

A. Period Covered

1. Question: Are Programs required to ensure that the screening covers a specific minimum number of years or minimum number of counties in which the volunteer has lived?

Answer: No. The requirement is to screen potential volunteers using a national vendor that checks the volunteer’s name against a database that includes the sex offender registry for each State in which the registry is available electronically.

B. National Vendor

1. Question: Are Programs required to use a specific national vendor to conduct the required screening?

Answer: No. However, a Program must use a vendor that has been evaluated and approved by Special Olympics and American Specialty, so as to ensure their services meet the requirements of the policy. SOFL uses IntelliCorp, an approved national vendor.

C. Criminal Background Checks Conducted by Employers

- 1. Question:** Will a criminal background check conducted by a volunteer's employer satisfy the screening requirement?

Answer: No. To ensure that we are obtaining consistent data, each Program is required to conduct its own screening on existing and new Class A Volunteers as outlined in the volunteer screening policy.

- 2. Question:** Are Programs 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?

Answer: Yes. Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers acting in a Class A 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.

V. RESULTS OF THE SCREENING

A. Automatic Disqualifiers:

- 1. Question:** What types of criminal offenses are considered "automatic disqualifiers?"

Answer:

- a) child abuse
- b) sexual abuse of a minor/adult
- c) causing a child's death
- d) neglect of child or any other individual for whom the potential volunteer had/has responsibility
- f) kidnapping
- g) murder
- h) manslaughter
- i) felony assault
- j) arson
- k) criminal sexual conduct

Automatic Disqualifier for Driving on Behalf of Special Olympics (for offenses that have occurred within a specified time frame):

- DWI, DUI, or comparable offenses within seven years of application
- Three or more moving violations within the past three years of application

- 2. Question:** Are individuals who have been disqualified from driving on behalf of Special Olympics eligible to reapply to drive on behalf of Special Olympics once the specified time limit has passed?

Answer: Yes. In the case of DUI/DWI or comparable offenses, once the offense is more than seven years prior to a new application, an individual may apply to drive on behalf of Special Olympics. The same would be true of the moving violations once the three year period has passed.

IntelliCorp's Motor Vehicle Record information goes back to 1998, covering the requisite seven year period in the policy.

B. Potential Disqualifiers:

- 1. Question:** What types of criminal offenses are considered "potential disqualifiers?"

Answer:

- Adverse judgment for damages or civil penalty involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor
- Conviction for
 - a) theft of funds
 - b) fraud
 - c) larceny or other financial crime
 - d) prostitution-related crime
 - e) controlled substance crime
- Being the subject of any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor that restricts contact with a minor.

The above potential disqualifier list does not cover all offenses that may render an applicant ineligible to volunteer. SOFL has the authority to make the final determination as to any volunteer or applicant in the potential disqualifier category.

- 2. Question:** Are individuals who are not eligible to volunteer in a Class A Volunteer capacity (due to his/her criminal history) permitted to volunteer as a Class B Volunteer?

Answer: No. Once a Program 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 capacity, the individual is no longer eligible to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics in any capacity.

C. Notification of Denial/Approval

- 1. Question:** How will applicants/existing volunteers be notified of their "approved" or "denied" status, after being screened?

Answer: SOFL will issue notification letters of approval or denial to all new applicants. For existing volunteers, SOFL will only issue letters to those volunteers whose status is being terminated/revoked.

- 2. Question:** How will sub-programs be notified of an applicant's/existing volunteer's "approved" or "denied" status?

Answer: SOFL will send to sub-programs a status report (electronically) every second week of each month indicating an "Approved," "Pending," or "Not approved" status for their applicants/existing volunteers.

3. **Question:** Will SOFL notify schools or agencies that host registered local training programs if a volunteer working for them has had their volunteer status denied or revoked?

Answer: Sub-programs are asked to identify to SOFL any denied applicants or terminated existing volunteers who work for schools or agencies, so that proper notification may be sent, as an applicant's/volunteer's place of employment may not be fully known to SOFL, based on the information provided on their volunteer registration form.

This is so a proper replacement may be found so that the clients/participants/students at the agency/program/school may continue their participation in Special Olympics. SOFL will not share the results of the criminal background check, but will state that the denial/termination "is the result of findings from Special Olympics' Volunteer Screening procedures, which produced information indicating a failure to meet the qualifications for being a Special Olympics Florida Class A Volunteer."

4. **Question:** Are there any quick-reference illustrations on the Class A and Class B Volunteer application, determination, notification and appeals process?

Answer: Yes. See the "SOFL Class A Volunteer Registration Process Chart" and "SOFL Class B Volunteer Registration Process Chart" found at the end of this FAQ.

5. **Question:** How will sub-programs know who is ineligible to volunteer, with respect to walk-on volunteers (Class B) at local or area games?

Answer: SOFL will distribute a list to sub-programs, on a quarterly basis, of those individuals not eligible to volunteer, based on prior disqualification (list will be on-going and cumulative).

For the first six to nine months of the policy implementation (in 2005), the list will only reflect new applicants, as of July 1, 2005. Existing volunteers will be added as screenings are completed.

List will give name, address and DOB in order to provide sub-programs with key identifiers to verify if the name on the list and the person wishing to volunteer are one and the same. List will not state reason for denial/revocation of volunteer status.

Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained within these lists, it is recommended that only trusted volunteers/staff be given the responsibility of maintaining, checking and possessing the list(s), as well as explaining the denial to the applicant.

D. Appeals Process

1. **Question:** What type of appeals exists to allow individuals with certain criminal histories the opportunity to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics?

Answer:

a) Automatic Disqualifiers: For instances where the offense is considered an "automatic disqualifier," there is no appeals process. The applicant is ineligible to serve as a Class A or Class B volunteer for Special Olympics.

The only exception to this determination is if erroneous information exists on the applicant's criminal record and therefore, IntelliCorp's findings would reflect this error. It is the responsibility of the applicant to work with IntelliCorp or the proper authorities directly to correct their record. SOFL will not serve as an intermediary. Should the information indeed be found to be erroneous, proof of such must be provided to Special Olympics Florida from IntelliCorp. The applicant may then be re-screened and Special Olympics Florida will review the information and make a new determination, either upholding or overturning the denial/revocation of Class A status.

During the appeals process, the applicant is not eligible to serve as a volunteer, in any capacity.

b) Potential Disqualifiers: For limited instances where the offense is considered a "potential disqualifier," there may be an appeals process. SOFL will let the applicant know if the nature of their disqualification can be appealed.

The first basis of appeal would be if erroneous information exists on the applicant's criminal record and therefore, IntelliCorp's findings reflect this error. It is the responsibility of the applicant to work with IntelliCorp or the proper authorities directly to correct their record. SOFL will not serve as an intermediary. Should the information indeed be found to be erroneous, proof of such must be provided to Special Olympics Florida from IntelliCorp. The applicant may then be re-screened and Special Olympics Florida will review the information and make a new determination, either upholding or overturning the denial/revocation of Class A status.

The second basis for appeal would be if the applicant agreed that the information on their record is accurate, but believes they should still be provided with the opportunity to volunteer, they must submit a written request for an application review to SOFL. The request for review should include the following items:

- a) statement about why they should be allowed to volunteer for Special Olympics Florida;
- b) description of the matter, and circumstances surrounding the matter;
- c) sentence rendered and served, if any;
- d) description of their rehabilitation and current life situation; and
- e) name, address and telephone number of two non-family individuals, as character references

A decision regarding their request for review will be rendered within 30 days of receiving the request. During the appeals process, the applicant is not eligible to serve as a volunteer, in any capacity. Should SOFL not receive a request for review, their denied/terminated status will remain permanent.

2. Question: How does a volunteer/applicant contact IntelliCorp?

Answer: 1-888-946-8355
6001 Cochran Road, Suite 200
Solon, Ohio 44139

3. Question: Are Special Olympics Programs required to conform to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)?

Answer: No, Special Olympics does not believe that the FCRA applies to Special Olympics' volunteer selection process; however, it has been recommended that U.S. Programs use a similar procedure, as set

forth in the FCRA, to eliminate the Program from having to act as “middleman” between the applicant/volunteer and the reporting agency, and as a courtesy to applicants/volunteers.

Special Olympics Florida’s adverse action letters (denial letters) include the elements that:

- a) Indicate denial based on screening results
- b) Explain what to do if applicant believes information to be erroneous
- c) Explain how to appeal (if it is an option, based on nature of offense)
- d) Provide applicant with information on how to contact the reporting agency for disputes.

4. Question: Will there be an appeals process for Class B volunteers on site?

Answer: No. SOFL will not have an appeals process for Class B volunteers on site. Anyone who answers “yes” to questions 1, 2, 3, 5 or 6 on a Class B form will be automatically disqualified from volunteering that day. The applicant/volunteer should be given the “SOFL Class B On Site Denial Form Letter,” provided to all sub-programs in the Sports Information Guide and Administrative Manual, explaining the SOI Volunteer Screening Policy and the opportunity to apply as Class A Volunteer.

Volunteers who answer “yes” to question 4 (“Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked in any state or other jurisdiction?”) will be allowed to volunteer in a Class B capacity, but may not drive on Special Olympics’ behalf (including equipment transport).

All Class B volunteer registration forms that have had a volunteer check “yes” to questions 1, 2, 3, 5 or 6 must be sent to SOFL immediately after the event, so that we may cross-check information, should the denied Class B volunteer wish to utilize the opportunity to apply as a Class A volunteer.

E. At-Will Nature of Organization

1. Question: What does it mean that participation in Special Olympics is “at-will”?

Answer: Participation in Special Olympics, for athletes and volunteers alike, is a privilege, not a right. SOFL reserves the right to deny or revoke any athlete or volunteer’s eligibility status, if it feels it is in the best interest of the Program, its athletes, and/or volunteers. Conversely, any volunteer or athlete may end their participation with Special Olympics, without cause.

SOFL shall not deny an applicant or revoke a volunteer’s status for reasons of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or age.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

A. Confidentiality of Results

1. Question: How should Programs protect the confidentiality of the data received through the screening process?

Answer: Special Olympics and American Specialty have identified recommended practices for U.S. Programs, which SOFL has incorporated into its Volunteer Screening Policy implementation.

2. Question: Will sub-programs be notified of the nature of the offense that has rendered an applicant/existing volunteer ineligible?

Answer: No, for purposes of confidentiality.

B. Confidentiality of Personal Information

1. **Question:** Who should be required to sign the SOFL Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Agreement?

Answer: Anyone who has access or potential access to personal information (e.g., volunteer applications, athlete medical forms, financial records, etc.). It is the recommendation of SOFL that any County Management Team members who may have such access sign the agreement. The agreement does not need to be sent to SOFL, but should be retained in the sub-program records.

2. **Question:** What steps can sub-programs take to protect the confidentiality of personal information (volunteer and athlete)?

Answer:

a.) **Paper records:** SOFL recommends keeping all sub-program records and sensitive information stored in a locked and/or protected area. Access to said documents and information should be restricted only to those essential volunteers who must utilize this information for Special Olympics activities. Such volunteers should be required to sign the SOFL Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Agreement, prior to being allowed to access said documents and information.

b.) **Electronic Files:** similar procedures should be implemented with respect to any sensitive information kept electronically (e.g., knowledge of passwords, access to back-up disks, etc.).

VIII. UNOFFICIAL SOURCES AND COMPLAINTS

1. **Question:** What if a Sub-program is notified of an individual's alleged criminal history from a source other than an approved vendor's screening of the individual's background (such as from another volunteer or organization)?

Answer: Sub-programs should be extremely cautious about relying on such information, unless it is highly credible. Even so, in all cases, sub-programs should notify SOFL immediately and SOFL will handle such instances on a case-by-case basis.

2. **Question:** After the volunteer registration form is submitted and the volunteer has been approved, do sub-programs have any additional responsibilities or requirements with regard to the screening process?

Answer: Yes. The "screening" of volunteers is a continuous process. The background check only establishes that the volunteer does not have a past criminal history, which renders them ineligible to volunteer.

If a Sub-program becomes aware (through a news story, personal conversation, personal knowledge, or some other reliable source) that a Special Olympics volunteer has been arrested or indicted for a criminal offense or has been served with a court order involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor that restricts contact with a minor, sub-programs should notify SOFL immediately and SOFL will handle such instances on a case-by-case basis.

IX. REGISTRATION FORMS

A. Class A and B Forms

1. **Question:** Are sub-programs required to use the Class A and Class B Volunteer Registration forms distributed by SOFL?

Answer: Yes. So that we can ensure consistency of information and adherence to the policy, all sub-programs must use the forms provided by SOFL, as is (barring the sections on the Class B form that have been intentionally left for sub-program customization).

2. **Question:** How long will SOFL continue to accept the existing (prior to July 1, 2005 version) Class A Volunteer Registration form?

Answer: Recognizing that the “old” version of the Class A Volunteer Registration form has been disseminated throughout the state, we will have a grace period until December 31, 2005, during which either form will be accepted.

Any applicant submitting an “old” form must be notified by the sub-program that they will be subject to a criminal background check. The sub-program must then obtain written authorization from the applicant, affirming their consent to a criminal background check and provide to SOFL, before the application will be processed.

After January 1, 2006, old forms will not be accepted; they will be sent back to the sub-program and the applicant will not be screened until the proper form is submitted.

3. **Question:** Do Unified Partners who also serve as Class A Volunteers in other capacities (in addition to their role as a Unified Partner) have to fill out both forms?

Answer: Yes. Serving as a Unified Partner and a Class A Volunteer (in capacities additional to that of a Unified Partner) are two separate roles within the organization and therefore, the Unified Partner must also fill out a Class Volunteer Registration form if they perform additional volunteer duties within the organization. This also helps expedite the annual census process. The volunteer will not undergo a second criminal background check, as they would have already been subject to one as a Unified Partner.

B. Missing Information

1. **Question:** What if a volunteer or applicant does not provide a Program with information that is required to conduct the appropriate screening (such as a social security number or driver’s license number)?

Answer: Any incomplete forms will be returned to the sub-program or applicant for completion, should the omission have been in error.

If the omission was intentional and the individual refuses to supply the necessary information to either the sub-program or SOFL, the individual shall not be permitted to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics.

C. False Information Provided

- 1. Question:** What if an applicant provides false information on their Class A Volunteer Registration form?

Answer: Providing false information regarding one's criminal background may automatically disqualify an individual from volunteering or may revoke an individual's current volunteer status, regardless of the degree or nature of the criminal offense.

Should the omission be an error and not an intentional obfuscation of their criminal record, SOFL will give the applicant the opportunity to complete a new form with the correct information, before making a final determination on their volunteer status.

Any individual providing false information regarding crimes against children or vulnerable populations will automatically be disqualified from acceptance or will have their current Class A status revoked.

Furthermore, per Florida State Statute (Title XXXI, Chapter 435, 435.11), "It is a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, for any person willfully, knowingly, or intentionally to (a) Fail, by false statement, misrepresentation, impersonation, or other fraudulent means, to disclose in any application for voluntary or paid employment a material fact used in making a determination as to such person's qualifications for a position of special trust."

D. Refusal to Undergo Criminal Background Check

- 1. Question:** What if an applicant refuses to have a criminal background check conducted?

Answer: SOFL recognizes that some applicants may view a criminal background check as an invasion of privacy; if that is their prerogative, we respect that.

However, the health and safety of our athletes and volunteers is of the utmost importance and SOFL reserves the right to automatically deny their application if they will not submit to a criminal background check, which is requisite of the Volunteer screening Policy.

X. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Last Minute Substitutions

- 1. Question:** How do we handle last minute volunteer substitutions?

Answer: If a Class A Volunteer is unable to attend an event and sends a substitute who has not been screened, the substitute is permitted to volunteer at that event only if a screened Class A Volunteer supervises that individual for the duration.

B. Training Requirements

- 1. Question:** Now that we are conducting screenings of all our Class A Volunteers, are we still required to continue with the training requirements in the General Rules, Sports Rules or other Special Olympics policies?

Answer: The Volunteer 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 SOI policies. Specifically, the Protective Behaviors training continues to be required for all Class A Volunteers and may be taken on-line at www.specialolympics.org/protectivebehaviors.

C. Athletes With Criminal Histories

- 1. Question:** Will athletes with known criminal histories be subject to criminal background checks?

Answer: No. Per Special Olympics Inc.'s current policy, Special Olympics athletes with criminal histories will not be subject to a criminal background check, unless they are also serving as, or seeking to serve as, a Class A Volunteer.

D. Use of Volunteers Fulfilling Court-Ordered Community Service Hours

- 1. Question:** How should sub-programs process volunteers who are fulfilling court-ordered community service hours as part of their sentence and/or probation?

Answer: Sub-programs are to have the applicant fill out a Class B Volunteer form. Then the sub-program or SOFL must speak with the applicant's parole officer to determine if the nature of their conviction would prohibit them from volunteering with Special Olympics or if it would place restrictions on the types of volunteer duties they could perform. Sub-programs should consult with SOFL to make determination as to the applicant's suitability.

E. Driving for Special Olympics

- 1. Question:** Is there a policy regarding Unified Partners under 18 years of age driving other athletes to or from Special Olympics events and activities?

Answer: No. However, it is strongly suggested that Unified Partners under 18 years of age not be responsible for transporting other athletes to from Special Olympics activities. It should be noted that transporting athletes is not a part of the Unified Partner roles and responsibilities, regardless of the Partner's age.

Regardless of age or volunteer status (Class A or Unified Partner), all sub-programs should exercise due diligence in using only responsible drivers for transporting athletes.

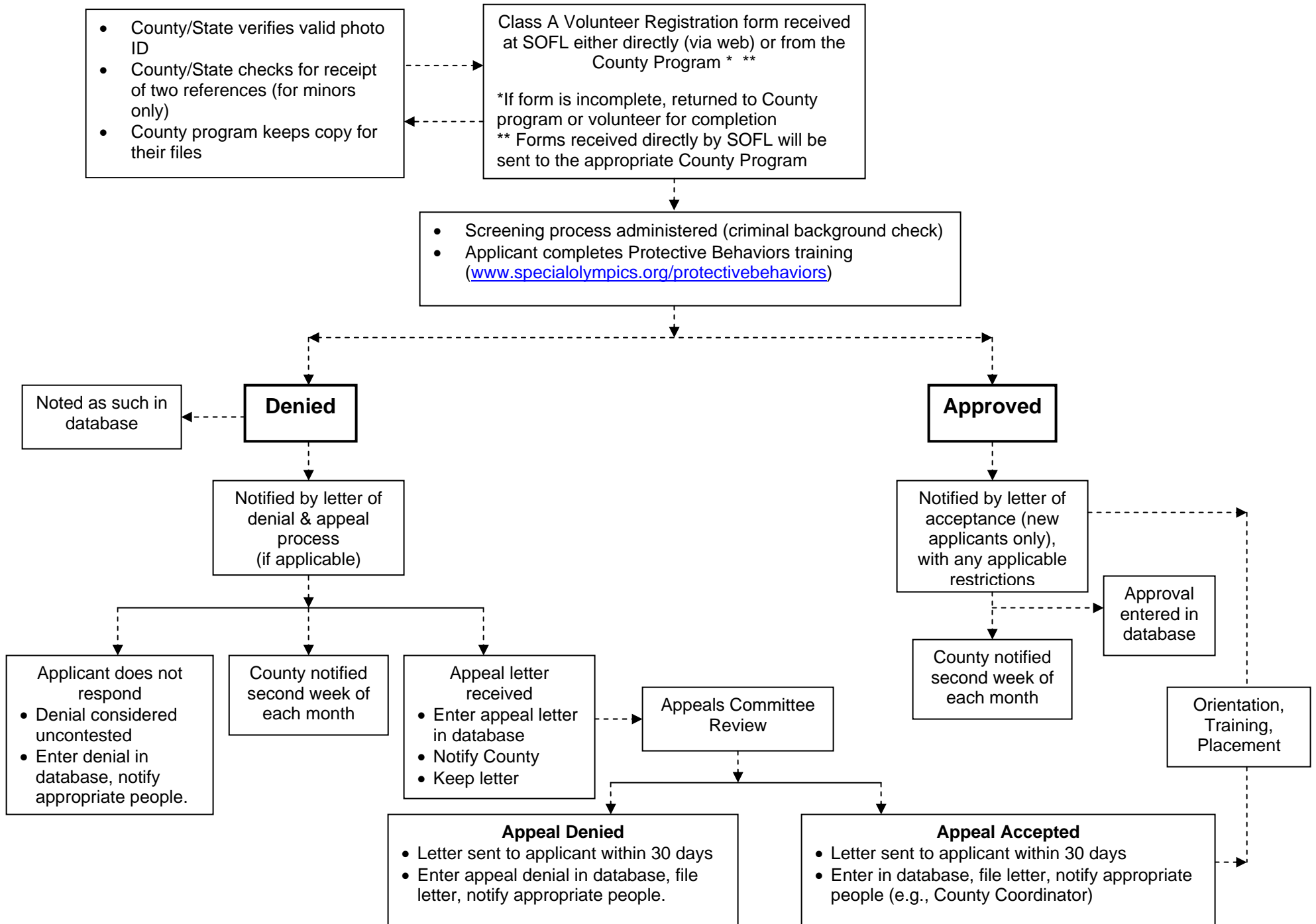
F. Potential Volunteers from Countries outside of the United States

- 1. Question:** Are Programs required to screen potential volunteers that have recently moved to the United States from another Country?

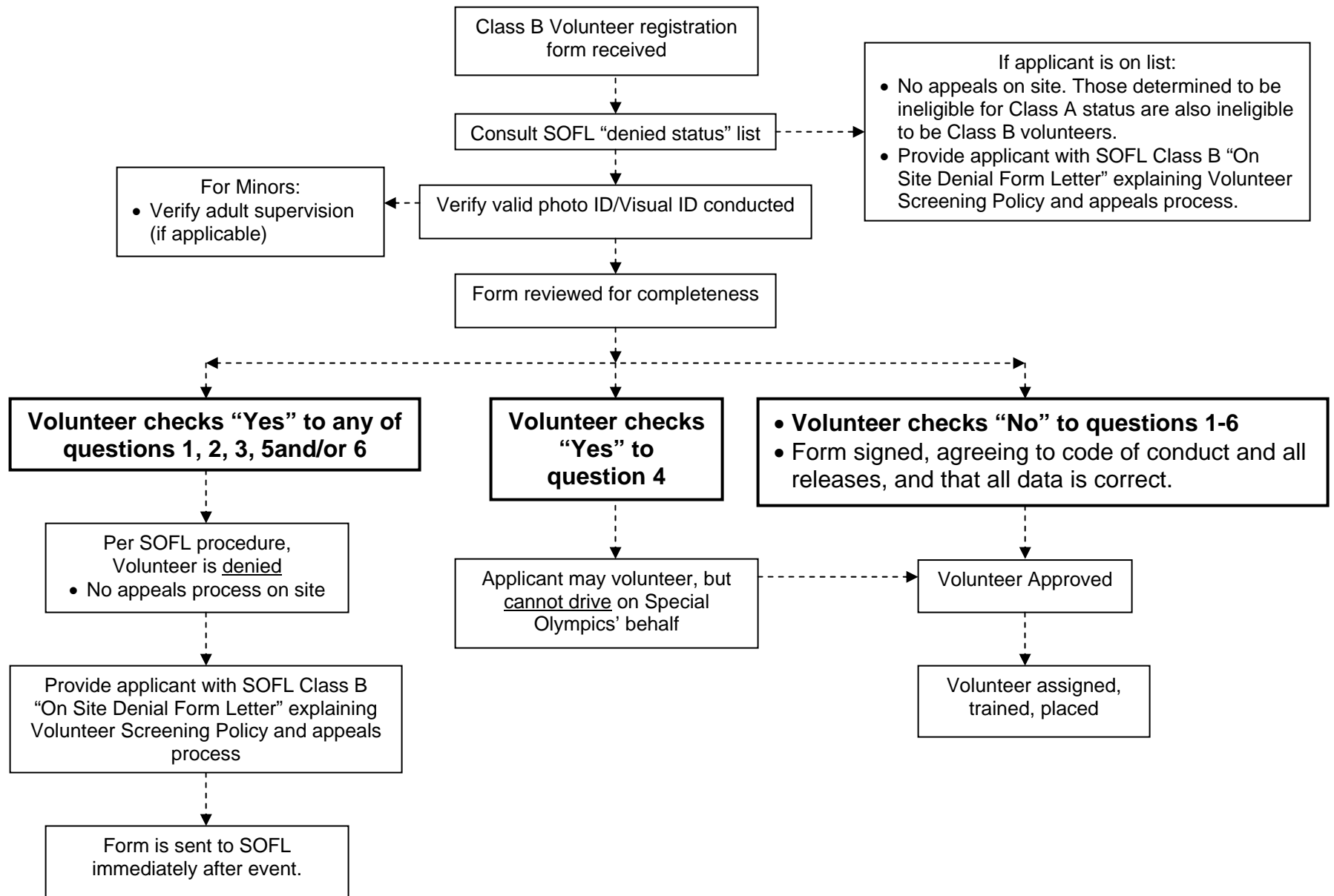
Answer: Programs should conduct the required check through one of the approved vendors if a check can be conducted without a social security number. If the check can not be conducted without a social security number, the Program must confirm the following prior to allowing the individual to volunteer. Please note that the following should be considered for all potential volunteers who recently moved to the United States from another country, but required for those individuals on which a Program is unable to conduct a check on through an approved vendor.

- At least three references have been obtained from the potential volunteer and checked by the Program.
- A volunteer application 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 Program representative.

SOFL Class A Volunteer Registration Process



SOFL Class B Volunteer Registration Process





SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLORIDA
CLASS A VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM – Version 7.07

ALL APPLICANTS MUST SHOW A PHOTO ID AT TIME OF REGISTRATION

Form must be filled out completely – incomplete forms will be returned. Please print legibly.

Part I – General Information

COUNTY VOLUNTEERING IN:		School/Agency (if applicable):	
Male / Female <i>Please circle answer</i>		Coach? Yes No <i>Please circle answer</i>	
Last Name:		First:	Middle:
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip Code:
Daytime Phone:		Evening Phone:	
Fax:		E-mail:	
Driver's License #: <i>Must provide License # to drive on behalf of Special Olympics. No learner's permits allowed.</i>			Issuing State:
Social Security #:		Date of Birth:	
Emergency contact:		Emergency Phone:	

Special Olympics Florida reserves the right to deny any applicant who will not provide the necessary data required (Social Security Number and/or Driver's License Number) to conduct a criminal background check and/or driving record check.

Part II – Background Information

Questions 1-6 must be answered:

1. Do you use illegal drugs?	Yes	No
2. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense?	Yes	No
3. Have you ever been criminally charged with neglect, abuse or assault?	Yes	No
4. Has your driver's license ever been suspended or revoked in any state or other jurisdiction?	Yes	No
5. Have you ever been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse?	Yes	No
6. Have you ever been the subject of a court order involving sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, which restricts or did restrict contact with a minor or minors?	Yes	No
7. Have you ever applied to, volunteered or been employed by any Special Olympics organization?	Yes	No
If you answered YES to questions 1 - 7 please explain (use additional sheets of paper if necessary):		
For Minors Only: Applicants must submit two (2) non-family references for consideration by SOFL. See Page 3 of form.		

SPECIAL OLYMPICS RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

I certify that the information provided is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have not withheld any information that could affect my application unfavorably, if included. I understand that Special Olympics Florida may refuse to allow me to volunteer if I provided any incorrect information or omission.

The relationship between Special Olympics and volunteers is an “at will” arrangement, and I understand that my volunteer service can be modified or terminated with or without notice or cause, at any time, at the option of Special Olympics Florida or at my option and that Special Olympics Florida may, in its sole discretion, decline to accept my application for volunteer with or without cause.

I grant Special Olympics Florida and Special Olympics, Inc. permission to use my likeness, voice, and words in or on television, radio, print, film, and on Special Olympics Florida and Special Olympics, Inc.'s Website(s), or in any other form, format, or media, to promote Special Olympics and its mission and to raise funds for Special Olympics.

The information that I have provided may be verified, and I give ongoing permission to Special Olympics Florida to make periodic inquiry of others, including, but not limited to, a criminal background check to determine my suitability to act as a Special Olympics volunteer, per Special Olympics' Volunteer Screening Policy. If a Minor: I understand that upon turning 18 years of age, I will be subject to a criminal background check (and any subsequent screenings thereafter) per Special Olympics' Volunteer Screening Policy.



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CLASS A VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM – Version 7.07

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I understand that I have the right to be trained and should receive instruction prior to volunteering.

I understand that I cannot commence Class A Volunteer duties until I have successfully completed the Special Olympics Protective Behaviors training: www.specialolympics.org/protectivebehaviors

I understand that in the course of volunteering for Special Olympics, I may be dealing with confidential information and I agree to keep said information in the strictest confidence.

I (and/or my minor child) release, indemnify, covenant not to sue, and hold harmless Special Olympics, its administrators, directors, agents, officers, volunteers, employees, other participants, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, any owners and lessors of premises on which the activity takes place from all liability, any losses, claims (other than that of the medical accident benefit), demands, costs, or damages that I (and/or my minor child) may incur as a result of my participation and/or criminal background check and further agree that if, despite this 'Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement,' I, or anyone on my behalf, makes a claim against any of the Releases, I will indemnify, save, and hold harmless each of the Releases from any litigation expenses, attorney fees, loss, liability, damage or cost which may incur as a result of such claim.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will dress and act at all times in a manner which will be appropriate to my assigned responsibilities and a credit to myself, the athletes and Special Olympics Florida.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved including athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators and media. Profanity and taunting are subject to immediate ejection.
- I will provide for the general welfare, health, and safety of any Special Olympics Florida athlete(s) in my charge during the course of my assigned duties.
- I will respect the property of hotels, dormitories, schools, athletic, recreational and dining facilities.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- I will not take part in the consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances during any Special Olympics training or competition. Nor will I take part in smoking or chewing tobacco at any Special Olympics training or competition site except in designated areas.
- I will not engage in any type of inappropriate behavior, sexual activity, and/or verbal or physical abuse with Special Olympics athletes, staff, officials or other volunteers.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of dating athletes.

The Code of Conduct is designed to assist each volunteer in abiding by the philosophy of SOFL and its mission. Any volunteer who does not follow this Code of Conduct can be prohibited from participation in this event. By signing this form and showing my photo identification I acknowledge that I have read the Volunteer Code of Conduct and all releases and notifications and agree to adhere to said terms.

Volunteer's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian if Volunteer is a Minor – under 18 (form has been explained to minor by parent/guardian):
_____ **Date:** _____

Print Full Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Please fill out all pages of this form and submit to your local county program.
To find your local program, visit our website at www.specialolympicsflorida.org

For County Use Only:	I performed a photo ID check <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	General Orientation Completion Date:
I have been shown proof of valid auto insurance <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Approved driver? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
For Minors: I have received the requisite two (2) references: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Shirt size:	Small Medium Large Extra Large XX Large XXX Large	
Signature of County Coordinator/Volunteer Director:		Date:



SPECIAL OLYMPICS FLORIDA
CLASS A VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM – Version 7.07

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REFERENCES FOR MINORS (APPLICANTS UNDER AGE 18)

Please provide two personal/professional references using the following form. Each reference must be provided by an individual who is:

- not your legal guardian
- not related to you, and
- at least 18 years old.

Reference #1

By signing below, I confirm the following:

1. I know _____ (“Applicant”) in either a personal or professional capacity;
Print Name of Volunteer Applicant
2. I am at least 18 years of age and am not a legal guardian or relative of Applicant;
3. I am not aware of any reason that Applicant should not be permitted to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics, and
4. I do not possess any information that would cause me to believe Applicant would pose any undue risk to Special Olympics athletes or others who participate in Special Olympics.

Signed: _____ Printed Name: _____

Date: _____ Relationship to Applicant: _____

Organization/Institution: _____

Reference #2

By signing below, I confirm the following:

1. I know _____ (“Applicant”) in either a personal or professional capacity;
Print Name of Volunteer Applicant
2. I am at least 18 years of age and am not a legal guardian or relative of Applicant;
3. I am not aware of any reason that Applicant should not be permitted to volunteer on behalf of Special Olympics, and
4. I do not possess any information that would cause me to believe Applicant would pose any undue risk to Special Olympics athletes or others who participate in Special Olympics.

Signed: _____ Printed Name: _____

Date: _____ Relationship to Applicant: _____

Organization/Institution: _____