

About the Special Olympics

What are the Special Olympics?

A: Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, providing year-round training and competitions to 4.9 million athletes and Unified Sports partners in 172 countries. Special Olympics competitions are held every day, all around the world—including local, national and regional competitions, adding up to more than 100,000 events a year.

Are the Special Olympics and the Paralympics the same? What is the difference?

A: No. The Special Olympics is focused on using the power of sports to help people with intellectual disabilities discover new strengths and abilities, skills and success. Intellectual disability is a term used to describe a person with certain limitations in cognitive functioning and other skills, including communication and self-care. Athletes involved in the Paralympics are mainly those with physical disabilities.

What are the SOUSA Games?

A: The Special Olympics USA (SOUSA) Games is a premier, national sports competition that showcases the power and joy of sports at the highest levels. The USA Games take place every four years with previous host cities being: Ames, Iowa (2006); Lincoln, Nebraska (2010); and Lawrenceville, New Jersey (2014). Now, in its fourth running, the next Special Olympics USA Games will take place in Seattle in July 2018. From July 1-6, 2018 more than 4,000 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will descend upon Seattle and the surrounding region.

What sports will be offered?

A: In 2018, the Special Olympics USA Games will offer 14 sports: Athletics (Track and Field), Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Golf, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, Soccer, Softball, Stand-up Paddleboard, Swimming, Tennis and Volleyball.

How many people are expected at the SOUSA Games?

A: The Special Olympics USA Games will be the biggest sporting event to hit the Seattle area in more than 25 years. 10,000 family members and friends and 70,000 spectators are expected to attend.

Are all of the events free and open to the public?

A: The Young Athletes Festival, the Fan Zone, the Closing Ceremony and all of the sports competitions are free and open to the public. We encourage the community to attend any or all of the competitions and events and cheer on the athletes. Tickets are required for the Opening Ceremony and are \$20.

<https://www.specialolympicsusagames.org/plan-your-visit/>

Dates and Venues

When are the 2018 SOUSA games?

A: The 2018 SOUSA games will take place July 1 – 6, 2018.

What University of Washington facilities will be used?

A:

- Husky Stadium – Opening Ceremony, Fourth of July party for athletes and guests
- Areas north of Husky Stadium – Fan Zone, music, exhibits, and entertainment
- Alaska Airlines Arena at Hec Edmundson Pavilion – Basketball
- Marv Harshman Court – Basketball
- Dempsey Indoor Facility – Bocce
- Husky Track
- Intramurals Activities (IMA) Building - Volleyball
- IMA Sports Fields – Flag Football
- Bill Quillian Tennis Stadium - Tennis
- Meany Hall - Powerlifting
- Kane Hall (one auditorium) - youth leadership summit
- Husky Union Building – Athletes access only
- Several residence halls and dining facilities, parking lots, etc.

What other Seattle venues are being used?

A: In addition to the University of Washington, events will be held at Seattle University; Seattle Pacific University; King County Aquatics Center and Celebration Park in Federal Way; Angle Lake in SeaTac; Willows Run Golf in Redmond; and Kenmore Lanes.

When are the opening and closing ceremonies?

A:

OPENING CEREMONY | JULY 1 | HUSKY STADIUM | 12:30 PM | GATES OPEN - 11:00 AM

Parade of Athletes and entertainment including the 2,018 member choir who will serve as the living backdrop. Plus, the lighting of the Special Olympics Cauldron to open the 2018 USA Games. Tickets are just \$20.

CLOSING CEREMONY | JULY 6 | LAKE UNION PARK | 7:00 PM

Celebration and culmination of the 2018 USA Games. OPEN TO EVERYBODY

What if it rains? Will the outdoor special events and sports competitions still take place as planned?

A: Absolutely! The weather in Seattle is typically at its best in July, but if a little rain should happen to fall it will help contribute to a true Seattle experience.

University Involvement

When did the University decide to be part of the 2018 Special Olympics?

A: The Special Olympics approached then President Michael Young in 2012 about the UW serving as a venue for the 2018 USA Games. Over the next several years, the UW departments worked with Special Olympics to define the extent of facilities and services for the 2018 USA Games.

What is UW's role?

A: UW's role is to provide facilities and services for Special Olympics USA including lodging and meals for 4,200 athletes, coaches and officials, and rental of various athletic facilities/venues and affiliated services.

How much will it cost the University to do this?

A: The Special Olympics are responsible for all direct costs for utilizing UW facilities.

What will the impacts be for everyone on campus, especially traffic and parking?

A: Since the Games are occurring in the summer, the impact should be minimal. The Opening Ceremony on Sunday, July 1 is expected to be the most significantly attended event, but will be limited to 24,000 people, similar to commencement. As with any major event, the campus will receive advance notice and special instructions as needed.

For the competition events on east campus, Special Olympics anticipates a total of 5,000 spectators each day over all of the competition venues.

Are any UW programs partnering?

A: UW Sustainability is partnering with Special Olympics to set a new standard for environmental and social sustainability, applying the best practices of eco-friendly sporting events worldwide, and modeling the ideals of inclusion and respect the Special Olympics movement represents. They will focus on waste and recycling; transportation; diversity and inclusion; food and beverage; sourcing; and education and legacy.

For questions about SOUSA use of UW facilities and services, please contact:

Kerry Kahl
UW Project Manager
kkahl@uw.edu
206-685-4900

Ways to get involved (volunteer, attend, support)

The Special Olympics is a great activity; how can I volunteer to help?

A: The Special Olympics USA Games will build a force of 10,000 volunteers to support the games. Opportunities are available in sports, special events, support services, medical roles, Fans in the Stands and more.

If you are interested in getting involved, many volunteer positions are still available and you can register at: <https://www.specialolympicsusagames.org/uw-volunteers>. Volunteer registration is open through April 15 (pending volunteer numbers).

If you are interested in volunteering for medical and emergency management roles please visit: <https://2018sousagamesapps.my-trs.com/>.

FOR UW FACULTY AND STAFF

HR Disclaimers

Absence requests to volunteer during work hours need to be requested by the employee and approved by their supervisor just like any other time off request. Supervisors are encouraged to be flexible in granting requests, however the operational needs of departments must be considered. As is true throughout the year, if the requested time off would impair departmental operations, the supervisor may deny the request. If time off is approved, the employee may use vacation time off, compensatory time, discretionary time off and holiday credit to cover the absence.

Please contact your HR Consultant with questions related to time off policies.

UW Medicine Staff

As is the case with all other medical activities carried out outside of UW Medicine, physicians need to get approval from their chairs and the sites of practice committee.

Is there an age requirement to volunteer?

A: Age requirements will vary by position and duties needed. Typically, volunteers with the Special Olympics should be 14 or older, but there are many jobs that are appropriate for volunteers of all ages, including Fans in the Stands, and the Opening Ceremony Cheer Line.

Do I need any special skills to volunteer?

A: No special skills are required for most volunteer positions. Training and orientation sessions will take place prior to the USA Games, job specific training will take place at all venues, and video training will be available online.

Can I request a specific volunteer position?

A: Volunteers will be able to select general categories of jobs including sports, special events, operations or emergency management. Within each you will be able to select from field of play, sports administration, Spectator services, or production. You will be placed in the area of most need within those general areas.

Do volunteers need to attend training?

A: Volunteers are required and encouraged to attend one of approximately a dozen volunteer orientation and training sessions being offered in the Puget Sound Region. These training sessions are also the opportunity to obtain your volunteer uniform kit and credential. If you are absolutely unable to attend, there will be online training tools available and you will be required to come to the Volunteer Service Center during the Games to pick up your uniform and credential.

How can I get engaged or my unit get engaged?

Please contact:

Paul Strohmeier
UW Special Olympics Engagement Coordinator
pstrohme@gmail.com
(360) 561-4747

How do I get tickets?

A: Visit the Special Olympics USA Games 2018 to plan your visit and get tickets.

<https://www.specialolympicsusagames.org/plan-your-visit/>

Other FAQs

<https://www.specialolympicsusagames.org/faq>

<https://www.specialolympicsusagames.org/faq#anchor-link-volunteering>