



**Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA)
Athlete Leadership University Registration Information**

Virtual Pre-requisite: Saturday, March 11th, Saturday, March 25th **OR** Saturday, April 8th from 9:00 AM-12 PM

In-person: Saturday, April 22nd at the Double Tree Philadelphia West (640 Fountain Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462)

The Special Olympics athlete is capable of pursuing leadership opportunities beyond competition. Athletes have the ability to become a Health and Fitness Coordinator. In 2021, SOPA put a greater emphasis on Health and Fitness Coordinators offering year round health and fitness clubs within their local programs/teams. **This session is not only open to new Health and Fitness Coordinators, but also ones trained from 2016-2020 that would like a refresher.**

Athlete Leadership University starts with the courses of Introduction to Athlete Leadership and Understanding Leadership, which is a requirement of all attendees regardless of past experience. Introduction to Athlete Leadership and Understanding Leadership will take place on Zoom on a Saturday from 9:00 AM-12 PM. The tentative dates are March 11th, March 25th and April 8th. Attendees will be asked to select which date(s) work best for them. The session they mark as their first choice will be the one they receive a meeting appointment for shortly after they register. If none of these dates work, attendees will be followed up with to identify other options.

COVID-19 Protocols Update:

Pre-event testing for overnight events is not required unless there is "significant" COVID-19 Community Transmission. Community Transmission will be based on the higher of the state-wide rate or the rate where the event is being held. Pre-event testing for overnight events will be for all delegation participants regardless of vaccination status. Testing must be done within 48 hours prior to departure for overnight events. It is highly recommended that participants use a rapid at-home antigen test. PCR test will be accepted with the required 48-hour timeframe. Pre-event testing is not required for training or single day events.

Registration Fee:

All Athlete Leadership University attendees require a mentor to attend. The cost for each local program will be \$80 per team (1 athlete and 1 mentor) to help offset the costs of training. Should anyone require housing Friday or Saturday evening after the session has concluded, it will be an additional \$119 per team (\$199 in total). Local programs will be billed at the completion of the Athlete Leadership University session. If a local program cancels less than 24 hours prior to arrival, they may still be billed. **Please note this only applies to the local programs in the regions yet to be established (3, 6 and 8). SOPA will cover the costs of all established regions and Philadelphia.**

Online Registration:

All Athlete Leaders and Mentors may register themselves [here](#).

The first question will ask you to submit your Manager/Team Leader’s email address. This is so they know you have registered yourselves. If you do not have a Manager/Team Leader, please provide the email address of your Regional Executive Director. SOPA reserves the right to follow up with Regional Executive Directors and Managers/Team Leaders for any questionable Athlete Leaders and Mentors.

Registration Form Deadline: Friday, March 24th (available on a first come, first serve basis).

Tentative Schedule:

Saturday, April 22nd	
9:00-10:00 AM	Arrivals
10:00-11:30 AM	Healthy Lifestyles
11:30-12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30-4:30 PM	Healthy Lifestyles
4:30-5:15 PM	Closing Session
5:15-9:00 PM	Departures (and room check-ins for anyone staying overnight)

Attire:

- All attendees are highly encouraged to dress in athletic attire as there will be some physical activities involved.
 - Example: Athletic shorts and sneakers.

Lodging Accommodations:

- Lodging is available at the Double Tree Philadelphia West for anyone that requests it in advance.
 - 640 Fountain Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
- Lodging will be assigned by SOPA with the Housing Policy strictly adhered to.
- All attendees must indicate on their registration form if they need housing.
- If you have housing requests such as early arrival or preferred roommate, please indicate within the Registration Form. These requests are not guaranteed and may be an additional cost.
- You will receive confirmation of lodging accommodations at the close of the Registration Form.

Meal Accommodations:

- Saturday Lunch will be provided at the Double Tree Philadelphia West as a buffet.
 - If you have dietary requests, such as gluten free or vegetarian, please indicate within the Registration Form. These requests are not guaranteed...
- Saturday Dinner athlete/mentor pairs will receive a \$50 WaWa gift card to cover dinner that evening and/or any other food/beverage/gas costs while traveling back from the session.

Course Descriptions:

- **Introduction to Athlete Leadership (Taking Place on Zoom):** This course gives a broad overview on Athlete Leadership and what all Athlete Leaders, Mentors and Instructors should expect throughout the weekend. Since this is the first year this course is being offered, attendance by all attendees is required.
- **Understanding Leadership (Taking Place on Zoom):** This course focuses on different leadership skills that Athlete Leaders can apply to the new skills they learn in their role specific courses. Attendance is also required by all attendees.

- **Healthy Lifestyles (In Person):** Training to become a Health and Fitness Coordinator. A Health and Fitness Coordinator is an athlete committed to promoting healthier lifestyles for athletes, unified partners, coaches and families. Their primary responsibility is offering year round health and fitness clubs at least once a month to people of all ages and abilities.
- **Closing Session (In Person):** Mandatory for all athletes, Mentors and Instructors. Presentation on important SOPA information, evaluations and presentation of certificates and gifts.

Athlete/Unified Partner Requirements:

- Able to read and speak at a 5th grade level or higher.
- Ability to be attentive during instruction.
- 16 years of age or older.
- Up to date Application for Participation (Medical) on file.
 - Any athlete whose medical is expired or will expire before Sunday, April 23rd is to have their doctor fill out a new one ASAP.
- Responsible individuals with good behavior.
- Ability to communicate interpersonally with local management team, other athletes, mentors and SOPA both verbally and electronically (phone, text, email, etc.)
- Represent SOPA professionally in manner and appearance.
- Current Athlete Leaders must have completed the required Leadership Opportunities in their other role(s) before beginning a new one.

Mentor Requirements:

- 18 years of age or older.
- Year round involvement with local program and SOPA.
- Class A Registered Volunteer with valid background checks, general orientation, protective behaviors training and concussion training.
 - Any Mentor that's NOT currently a Class A Volunteer MUST complete the [Volunteer Application Form](#) in order to complete the other requirements listed above.
- Completion of Mentor Training in SOPA's [online portal](#).
 - If Mentor Training is not completed 2 weeks prior to the session, Athlete Leader and Mentor may not be eligible to attend session.

- Parents are acceptable mentors, please keep in mind this is a growing experience for athletes. We do not want the athlete to hold back or to feel limited while exercising independence with a parent’s presence.
- School liaisons for a Unified Champion Schools pair are acceptable mentors, please keep in mind that the role of a Mentor is an indefinite commitment and goes beyond their participation at school.
- Good role model who is patient and supportive.
- Allow the athlete to take the lead, develop and grow.
- Represent SOPA professionally in manner and appearance.
- Ability to travel and to provide athlete with transportation.
- Represent SOPA professionally in manner and appearance.

If you have questions, please contact:

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