

Dear Volunteer,

We are excited to be contacting you regarding the 2025 Special Olympics PA – Area M Youth Games!

Area M Games will be held at **Bishop McDevitt High School Stadium 1 Crusader Way Harrisburg, PA 17111** on **Wednesday, April 16, 2025 from 8am to 2:30pm** (there is NO rain date for the event). Area M Games offers competition in Track and Field events.

This year, we are expecting around 800 local Special Olympics athletes and will need numerous volunteers to make this day a success! There have been some changes to the training and t-shirt pick up process, as well as continued rules we must follow. Please read the following carefully.

There are many volunteer jobs offered on the day of the games. It is important for you to register! I

Please Note: Many of you have signed up through your employer in the past. We have also notified the businesses that the games have returned. Many of the contacts we had at the games in the past are no longer valid – please forward this to your community coordinator and ask them to respond to me at spolvolunteer@gmail.com so I can update your corporate contact information.

Registration information:

- Link to 2025 Community Volunteer Registration form:

<https://volunteers.partnershipplanners.org/register/70834849-5ee4-4005-bc82-ca9b4eef5f4d>

All volunteers that sign up to be Buddies are asked to create a Partnership Planner account on the above website.

- The Registration link takes you to the login page. Once you sign in or create an account, you will see Your Clearances and Registration Form sections.
- For those who sign up for a Buddy Position; and only a Buddy position you will have to upload clearances. See below for instructions.
- Some volunteer positions are limited and will be filled on a first-returned, first-assigned basis.
- We will do our best to group people together, but cannot guarantee your group will be together.

- **Volunteer reporting time is 8:00am on Game Day and you must be available until 2:30pm.**

T-shirts

All volunteers MUST purchase a t-shirt specially designed for Area M Games volunteers. This is a low-cost \$5 souvenir of Area M Games and your participation. **These shirts MUST be worn on Game Day** and should be purchased at our t-shirt pick up days. If you are volunteering with a group, please check with your coordinator if they will be picking up the shirts for your group and distributing them.

T-Shirt pick-up information:

Capital Area Intermediate Unit

55 Miller Street

Summerdale, PA 17093

April 10th 3:30- 5:30 pm in the Dauphin Room

April 14th 3:30- 5:30 pm in the Dauphin Room

Please DO NOT send money now.

Cash and checks made payable to SOPAM will be accepted at pick up

No corporate t-shirts may be worn.

Please contact us with any questions. We look forward to your participation and help in making the 2025 Area M Games truly “Special”.

**** For those who sign up for a Buddy Position; and only a Buddy position you will have to upload clearances on the same website you register as well as complete a training session. See below for instructions. *****

2015 PA Volunteer background check law:

As many of you may be aware, Pennsylvania enacted a new law in July 2015 aimed at protecting Pennsylvania's children from abuse and neglect. Keep Kids Safe PA requires certain background checks for volunteers that work with minors. The majority of our athletes competing at Area M Games are school-aged children and therefore are minors. Special Olympics PA also requires these background checks for anyone working closely with any of our athletes, regardless of their age.

Required clearances and forms:

- PA State Police Criminal History
- PA Child Abuse Clearance
- Disclosure Statement for Volunteers if you have been a continuous resident of PA for the past 10 years
- FBI fingerprint based federal criminal history if you have lived outside of PA during the past 10 years

What does this new law mean for you?

- Because Buddies work 1-1 with our athletes on Game Day, anyone choosing to be a **BUDDY** will be creating an account and uploading your forms to the Community Volunteer Registration portal

<https://volunteers.partnershipplanners.org/register/70834849-5ee4-4005-bc82-ca9b4eef5f4d>

Please upload copies of the required clearances/forms into the Community Volunteer Registration portal **no later than April 1st**.

Criminal Background Check Link - link also on the registration page

<https://epatch.pa.gov/home>

Child abuse Clearance link- link also on the registration page

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/keep-kids-safe/child-abuse-clearances/pa-child-abuse-history-clearance.html>

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

- If you register as a BUDDY and do not upload your clearances by April 1st you will be contacted about other volunteer opportunities.

- We realize that many of you may already have your clearances due to other volunteer activities. We are encouraging ALL volunteers to upload their clearances regardless of your Area M Games volunteer position.
- The 2025 Community Volunteer Registration portal allows you to create an account and upload your clearances into your account.

Training

All **Buddies MUST** complete the below online buddy training. We have created a training video that you will be able to watch at your convenience. This training video is available for ALL volunteers, not just the buddies.

Video 1 – To the Races <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOHAK83gY5I>

Thank you,

Tim Diehl/Wendy Eppley

Area M Games Volunteer Coordinators, spolvolunteer@gmail.com