



Social Media Overview

As with websites, social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be helpful for communicating essential information and up-to-date news about your Local Program with mass reach. But again, as with websites, they must be carefully created and maintained attentively in order to work effectively.

Think first about what you and your fellow Program Management Team members will have time to maintain, and what you are trying to accomplish in having a social media account.

- Do you want to create a greater sense of community for your athletes and volunteers?
- Do you want to share schedules and program information?
- Do you want to present a source of news for community members trying to learn more about Special Olympics?
- Will you have time to deal with the comments that will come into a Facebook page without approval?
- Will you have time to update your accounts regularly?
- Has a member of your community already started a page/account about your program, and you need to take it over?

Addressing questions such as these will help you determine what you want to do in the realm of social media, what you can do and what your most effective channel will be. (For example, if you don't have time to do Facebook, Twitter and Instagram effectively, just choose the right one for you and maintain it well, instead of spreading yourself too thin.)

Starting a Facebook Page, Twitter or Instagram account:

- When creating your Facebook Page, please make its name consistent with Special Olympics PA style – i.e. name it “Special Olympics PA – Philadelphia” or “SOPA – Philadelphia” (if you don't like the length of the former).
- In creating your Twitter account, Twitter has limited characters for your handle (account name), so you will need to go with something like @sopaphilly (upper case/lower case doesn't matter in Twitter handles).
- In creating an Instagram account, highlight your local program's name if possible – i.e. “SOPA_Montgomery” or “SOPA_Lycoming.”
- These conventions help establish your page as an authoritative source, and help maintain a strong Special Olympics presence by programs across the province, country, and globe.
- Please fill out the “Info” sections for your page/Twitter/Instagram account with material relevant to your local program and the mission and spirit of Special Olympics. Please see Special Olympics PA's accounts for guidance (Facebook: www.facebook.com/specialolympicspa | Twitter: [@specialolympipa](https://twitter.com/specialolympipa) | Instagram: [@specialolympicspennsylvania](https://www.instagram.com/specialolympicspennsylvania)) and don't hesitate to ask Nick Cammarota, SOPA's Digital Manager, if you have any questions. (ncammarota@specialolympicspa.org)
- On Facebook, please bear in mind the fact that you may have comments appearing frequently on your site without your approval, and someone/multiple people from your program (as you choose to designate) will need to monitor your page to make sure that all of the dialogue there is respectful and appropriate. We also recommend putting a disclaimer in place on your page (see below for sample text*). The SOPA page's disclaimer is contained in the “About” section.

- Before you upload photos from your events, think about whether any of the people in your images would mind if you shared photos of them. Do any of them have any publication restrictions? If in doubt, please check before posting.
- Profile Pictures: Both Facebook and Twitter require a square image as a profile photo. SOPA has two square templates to serve as profile photos to maintain a global standard. Please contact Nick Cammarota or your local program manager to get these, and please do use them – the logo itself does not fit easily into profile photo boxes, and the resulting stretching of the logo is unprofessional and counter to our brand look.
- Facebook “Cover Photo”: In the new timeline format for Facebook Pages, you can have a great creative cover photo to capture the spirit of Special Olympics. The ideal size for a cover photo is 850 pixels wide by 315 pixels tall. Feel free to contact Nick Cammarota for photo support.
- For effective content creation, keep posts in your social media accounts relevant to the world of Special Olympics. Post about your local events and programs; post about local SOPA athletes, achievements and innovations; share posts from SOPA’s page or the great stuff coming from Special Olympics International (www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympics). Personal messages and non-unique content will be irrelevant and will turn people off.
- Administrative Access: In addition to having representatives from your local programs, you need to grant administrative access to a SOPA representative at the State and Regional level. Contact Nick Cammarota if you are unsure who to give access to.

***Sample disclaimer**

SOPA Facebook Page Info: Special Olympics PA's Facebook page is intended to be a fun, supportive space for you and other Special Olympics PA (SOPA) fans to share stories and celebrate the spirit of Special Olympics. Please note that SOPA does not necessarily endorse nor is responsible for the accuracy of information, opinions, claims or advice shared here by Special Olympics PA fans. SOPA strongly encourages users of this page to respect Special Olympics PA, SOPA athletes and volunteers, your fellow community members and the posting guidelines of Facebook. This page is not to be used as an open forum for personal debate, and anything posted should be in good taste and promote a positive tone and/or message. SOPA reserves the right to remove postings that are: (a) abusive, defamatory or obscene; (b) fraudulent, deceptive or misleading; (c) in violation of any law or regulation; (d) disrespectful to Special Olympics PA or any other companies/organizations or any of its volunteers and athletes; (e) otherwise offensive. Anyone repeatedly posting material that falls into the above categories will be banned from participating in this Page. Thank you for respecting these guidelines and sharing your stories and comments here!