



# Special Olympics Ontario Volunteer Management

**Special  
Olympics**  
Ontario



# *Welcome & Purpose*

- Thank you for your commitment to our athletes and communities
- Today: Strengthen volunteer recruitment together
- Focus: What's working, community challenges, leaning into the volunteer pool, innovative strategies, how we can support the volunteer recruitment and management together
- Share: Open and safe space



Erin Arsenault, CHRL  
Director, People & Operations



# *First thing first!*

- Please write down ONE WORD that best describes what your volunteer journey means to you
- We'll come back to it

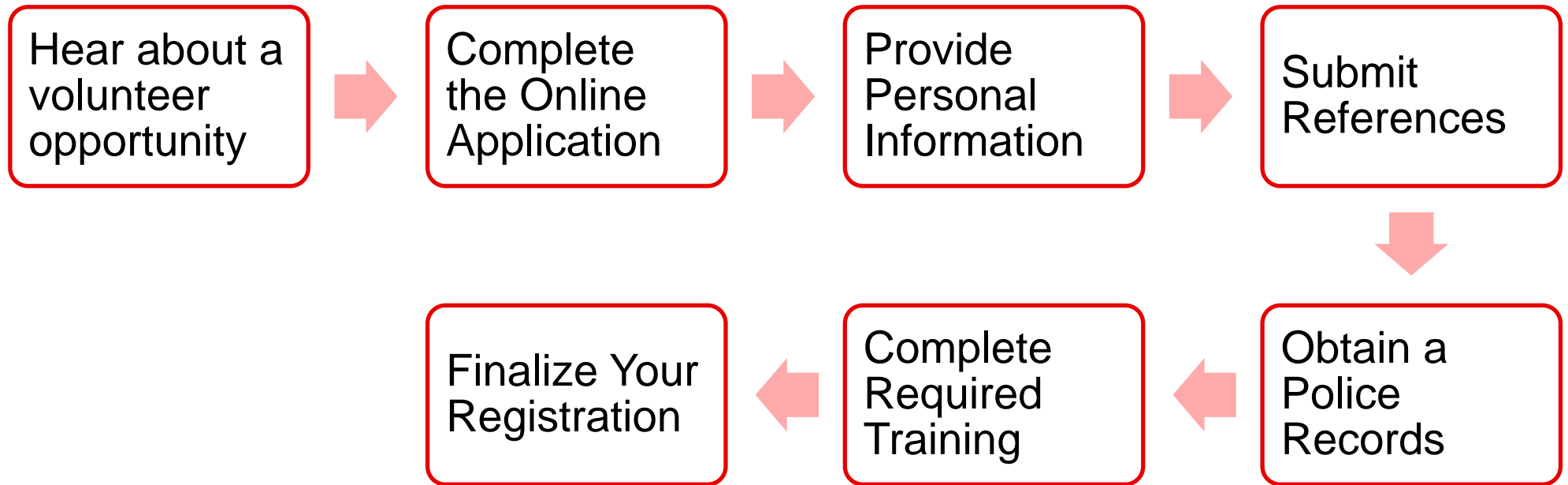


- ❑ Over 7,000 volunteers across Ontario
- ❑ You create inclusion, belonging, and opportunities for athletes
- ❑ What's your story...

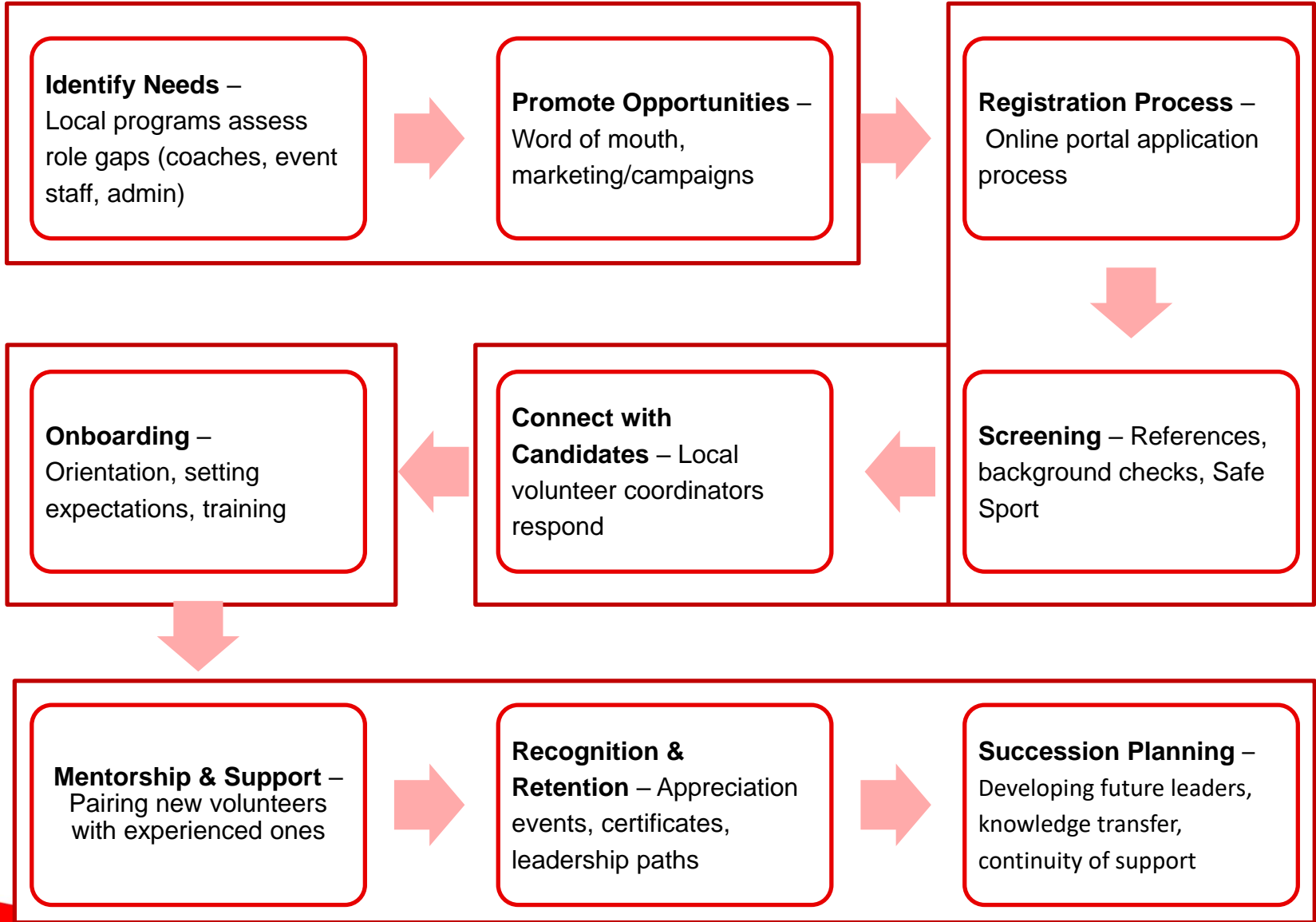


# What People *Think* Volunteer Recruitment Is...

## The Volunteer Registration Process



**What  
Volunteer  
Recruitment  
Really Is...  
Volunteer  
Management  
  
Part of a  
Lifecycle**



# Promoting Volunteer Opportunities

Community Website Post Secondary Institutions

Radio Campaigns Families SOO Website

Community Events

## WORD OF MOUTH

Healthy Athletes Partners Community Partners  
Social Media



Word of Mouth will  
always be a  
strong recruitment  
method

Innovation  
and exploring ways to  
connect



# Promoting Volunteer Opportunities

## Open Discussion

Tell us about barriers you have faced in reaching and promoting volunteer roles?

Where do you see opportunities?

# Reach: Multi-Generational Volunteers

**Gen Z** Looking for skill development, shorter-term opportunities, social impact and connection.

**Millennials** Value purpose-driven work, networking, flexibility.

**Gen X** Value family-friendly volunteering; Leadership skillset

**Baby Boomers** Bring experience, time, mentorship, and consistency. Long tenure and valuable information.

**Silent Generation** Many are retired, often in advisory roles. Motivated to volunteer when they feel their contribution is truly needed and valued.



# Innovative Recruitment Opportunity

## LinkedIn


- Expand reach
- Post volunteer opportunities as “volunteer jobs”
- Generic Volunteer Postings or Target professionals with specific skills
- Encourage Board, staff, and volunteers to share opportunities for maximum reach

Would Communities Appreciate this?


# Registration, Requirements & Screening Process, Initial Communication

## Open Discussion

The process is prescribed, and each community has responsibility, but how can SOO's Provincial Office support?



# Importance of Onboarding

- Sets the Tone
  - Clarity of Role & Expectations
  - Build Confidence through Training and Guidance – Continues with Mentorship
  - Fosters Connection
  - Supports Retention
- 



# Importance of Mentorship and Support and Engagement

- New volunteers thrive when guided by experienced mentors.
- Build confidence and stronger commitment.
- Creates a culture where ideas are welcomed.
- New Volunteers will feel included and valued.
- Mentorship is about listening to new ideas and fostering new approaches.
- Conduct check-ins, communicate regularly and foster open communication and provide feedback

# Mentorship: Multi-Generational Volunteers

**Gen Z** Seek mentors who can help them grow skills and navigate early career/life paths.

**Millennials** Value mentorship that combines professional networking with purpose-driven guidance.

**Gen X** Often bridge generations, serving as both mentors to younger volunteers and learn from seasoned leaders.

**Baby Boomers** Bring deep experience and consistency, offering steady mentorship and legacy-building support.

**Silent Generation** Value passing down wisdom, traditions, and practical skills, often serving as steady role models who mentor through experience and quiet guidance.



# Importance of Recognition

## Open Discussion

What makes you feel recognized and valued as a volunteer?

# Recognition: Multi-Generational Volunteers

**Gen Z** Appreciate public, social-media-friendly recognition and shoutouts that highlight their impact.

**Millennials** Value authentic, purpose-driven recognition that ties back to the mission.


**Gen X** Prefer practical recognition like flexibility, family-inclusive appreciation, and visible acknowledgment of their reliability.

**Baby Boomers** Respond to formal recognition such as certificates, service awards, and being honored for long-term commitment.

**Silent Generation** Appreciate respectful acknowledgment of their lifelong service, often preferring traditional, formal recognition over public fanfare.



# Importance of Succession Planning

- Continuity
  - Knowledge Transfer
  - Leadership Development
  - Sustainability
  - Community Trust
- 
- A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide consisting of two overlapping wavy lines. The top line is a light beige color, and the bottom line is a vibrant red color. They curve upwards from left to right, creating a modern, abstract footer design.



# Round Table Discussions

What barriers, pain points and struggles are you experiencing in recruiting and keeping volunteers?

Competing for Volunteers – What makes Special Olympics Special...  
How do you show it?

What could you use more support with?

What are two actionable items we can each take with us after this conference to help bring in at least one new volunteer each?



"That was one of the most amazing opportunities"

Erin Arsenault

*2012, Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Spring Games, Kingston, Opening Eyes*



Thank you for watching!

**Special  
Olympics**  
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