



Special Olympics Iowa Housing and Overnight Stay Policy

Arranging housing for overnight events involves the consideration of a variety of factors. Although it is not possible to avoid all risks, we must always consider ways to avoid or minimize identifiable risks when practical. Therefore, Special Olympics Iowa has established a housing policy. SOIA's housing policy is not intended to and cannot foresee all possible situations that might arise. In the event a situation arises that is not specifically provided for in the Policy, a resolution of that situation in keeping with the spirit and other provisions of the Policy will be implemented after appropriate review and approval by SOIA's President and CEO. The Delegation Manager for each local delegation is responsible for implementing the Housing Policy at events and ensuring that volunteers and chaperones are familiar with and carrying out the Policy. This includes pre-event housing assignments. This overview document is intended as a guide to help delegation managers, staff and other interested persons better understand SOIA's housing policy and how to implement it.

Who is eligible for housing at Special Olympics Iowa's competitive events?

Housing is provided to delegations attending designated State-level competitions. Special Olympics Iowa believes this provides an equitable and practical way to ensure that it is not a hardship for teams to participate in State-level events.

Many Special Olympics programs do not provide housing for their delegations to attend state games. Instead, rooms are blocked and delegations call, reserve rooms, and pay for individual housing. Special Olympics Iowa is not obligated to provide housing but chooses to do so in order to assist delegations with games costs.

If your delegation has a particular issue or situation that may need special consideration, please contact the State Office for additional information or to make a special request.

Gender

- Gender – Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex. Local Programs may allow the following exceptions:
 - Married athletes who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply to the spouse of an athlete who is not participating in the event but attending solely as a spectator.
 - Married volunteers who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple's child), if this scenario will create a situation whereby an athlete is housed with a volunteer of the opposite sex.
 - Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one-to-one chaperone for the related athlete.
 - Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space (such as a condominium or dormitory). Both males and females may be assigned

to one condominium, if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by individuals of the opposite sex. Coaches must also be housed in the condominium and the coach/athlete ratio (as outlined in the supervision section of the policy) must be maintained.

- All reasonable efforts will be made to house athletes (or Unified Partners) of appropriate age ranges together.

Supervision

The coach/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered coach to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a coach present in the room at all times. All coaches must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Iowa's Class A Volunteer policy.

- **All coaches, volunteers, or other chaperones staying overnight in the same facility with SOIA athletes MUST have an up-to-date Class A Volunteer Form on file (to include a current Criminal Background Check).**
- Strive to always have at least 2 volunteers present and minimize the likelihood of a volunteer being alone with an athlete. A chaperone/athlete ratio of at least one properly registered and screened chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Note: Proper supervision can be maintained without having a chaperone present in the room at all times.

Specific considerations in hotels/motels/dorms:

- In hotel/motel environments, a maximum of two (2) athletes/Unified Partners under age 18 may share a bed (double size or larger). Athletes/Unified Partners age 18 and older will not share beds. Coaches/volunteers will not share beds, regardless of age.
- In dorms, no one will share beds. In hotel/motel situations described above when sharing a bed is permitted and the number of persons assigned to a room exceeds the number of available beds, delegations should promote the use of sleeping bags, request cots from the hotel/motel, use pull-out beds or couch cushions to fashion additional makeshift beds (if permitted by fire ordinances), and/or use additional bedding in an "over/under" arrangement (with one athlete under the covers and the other on top of the covers with the additional bedding) to maximize potential sleeping arrangements.
- For state events, Programs are required to assign as many athletes to each room as possible while adhering to the requirements of these new guidelines. **All coaches are to be assigned two to a room unless an odd number of coaches creates a need to assign a single person to a room.**

Delegations must notify the State Office prior to an event if their housing list has changed.