Center of Excellence (COE) – FAQs

Eligibility & Deadlines

Q: Do current athletes need to register in the COE now?
A: Only if their Health History or Athlete Registration form expires before their next event, or if they're brand new. All athletes competing on or after December 1, 2025, must be registered and valid in the COE.

Q: If a current athlete's paperwork expires before an upcoming event, do they need to use the COE?
A: Yes. All renewals must go through the COE. Paper forms will no longer be accepted once your agency is phased in.

Q: What if athletes qualify for a State event after December 1, 2025?
A: They must be valid in the COE by the State event eligibility deadline. Plan ahead if regionals are before December 1 but State is after.

Registration & COE Zone Access

Q: I'm a coach and didn't get my COE email. What should I do?
A: Check your spam/junk folder. If it's not there, contact your regional staff to resend it.

Q: Can one COE profile be used for multiple roles (coach, volunteer, parent)?
A: Yes. You can "Select Volunteer Role" in your account to add other roles.

Q: I already registered as a volunteer. Do I need a new account to coach?
A: No. Do not create a new account. Just "Select Volunteer Role" to add coaching access.

Q: What if a parent/guardian submits a COE entry before I collect a paper form?
A: That's fine if it was submitted correctly. Your region can assign them to your agency. However, please wait to instruct families to register until they have received official guidance from your agency.

Q: I can't log in. Should I create a new account?
A: No. Contact your region staff for help. Creating another account will cause duplicate profiles and delays.

Coach Zone

Q: What's the difference between "Register New Participant" and "Add Participant"?

- **Register New Participant:** For brand-new athletes who don't have a COE profile yet.
- **Add Participant:** To invite an existing COE athlete to your agency's roster.

Q: I can't see an athlete in my Coach Zone, but they have a COE profile. What should I do?
A: Use "Add Athlete" to invite them. They'll appear on your roster once the athlete accepts.

Q: If a coach/SOAD leaves, what happens to their COE account and athlete information access?
A: Special Olympics Illinois will remove Coach Zone access but keep Volunteer Zone access. Athlete information is no longer visible to them.

Forms, Signatures & Group Homes

Q: Do forms still need a guardian signature?
A: Yes. Forms require the athlete (if their own guardian) or their legal guardian to sign. E-signatures are accepted.

Q: How do group homes handle registration and signatures?
A: Contact your region to make a plan. Options include:

- Creating a guardian profile to manage multiple athletes.
- Fill out Health History information and send e-signature requests to guardians.
- Printing, mailing, and uploading signed forms.

Q: What if a guardian doesn't have email or computer access?
A: Options include:

- Agencies assisting with in-person signing.
- Downloading, printing and mailing forms for signature, then re-uploading.
- Working with your regional staff for other solutions.

Q: Can guardians write restrictions (e.g., no photos) on forms?
A: No. The standard form language is required for participation.

Q: If medical info is updated, is a new signature needed?
A: Yes. Any updates to the Health History Form require a new signature. The expiration date will be reset for 365 days from the update.

Using the COE in Practice/Events

Q: Does the COE store medical forms like our binders did?
A: Yes. It acts as a digital file folder accessible by coaches/admins. You can also print copies if needed.

Q: Will sports entries be submitted through the COE?
A: Not yet. Sports entries (e.g., bowling scores) will still be submitted the usual way for now.

Q: Can athletes be listed under multiple agencies?
A: Yes. Your region can tag them to multiple agencies, and each agency will see them on their roster.

Other Situations

Q: I'm not listed in the system yet. What should I do?
A: Contact your regional staff to verify your role and update your access.

Q: When should I start registering my athletes in the COE?
A: As soon as your agency is phased in. Even if paperwork is current, starting early will make the transition smoother for everyone.