

Volunteers are essential to our ability to serve our communities and without them some of our programs could not exist. That being said, our responsibility to provide our participants with a safe experience means that we must do everything we can to see that our volunteers are well qualified and well trained. Analyze staffing needs to understand which roles you will need volunteers to fill, how often they will be needed and what tasks they will need to perform.

When recruiting, be clear about what is expected through written job descriptions which include information on the volunteers roles and level of expertise required. It is important that regular volunteers be interviewed by phone and/or in person, complete an application, sign the [Disabled Sports USA/Chapter Waiver & Release of Liability](#) and permit to a background screening.

Proper training ensures that volunteers are qualified to assist those that we serve. It is important that the training provides the volunteer with the skills and insight needed to adequately fill their position. The nature of the position will dictate the type and amount of training that a volunteer should complete. The process should be well documented and the volunteer's successful completion should be recorded.

Sixteen (16) is the minimum age requirement for a volunteer supporting the adaptive sport and/or recreation activities (i.e. cycling, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, waterskiing, fishing, hiking) of chapters participating in the Disabled Sports USA Group Insurance Program.

Eighteen (18) is the minimum age requirement for instructors leading the adaptive sport/and or recreation activities (i.e. cycling, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, waterskiing, fishing, hiking) of chapters participating in the Disabled Sports USA Group Insurance Program.

Younger volunteers can be used for other activities that are age and skill level appropriate as long as they are properly trained, well supervised and protected from endangerment.

In addition it is important that the parent/legal guardian of volunteers under the age of 18 understand the risk involved and read, sign and date the current [Disabled Sports USA/Chapter Liability Waiver & Release of Liability Form](#). Up to date files should be kept on all regular volunteers which include:

- Completed application
- Original [signed waiver](#) – updated annually
- Copy of up-to-date background screen results
- Documentation of volunteer registration
- Copies of appropriate certificates (i.e. first-aid, PSIA, etc.)
- Documentation of all completed trainings