



CASE STUDY

Special Olympics Southern California

Organization Background

Special Olympics Southern California offers year-round sports training and athletic competitions in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Participants are given continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Background

Special Olympics Southern California is composed of 9 regional offices and works with a network of more than 15,000 volunteers in both urban and rural communities. The 501c3 nonprofit had been working with a screening provider that abruptly raised the cost of its background checks by more than 700%. It also ended integration capability with the Special Olympics Southern California volunteer database, which required the organization's Manager of Volunteer Systems to waste hours each week making double database entries to complete screens. The burden on the organization's budget and its personnel was too much and it began investigating alternatives.

Solution

Based on industry recommendations and its own due diligence, Special Olympics Southern California approached Sterling Volunteers. It was impressed with the organization's comprehensive criminal record search, which goes far beyond the one-size-fits-all national database searches that other providers employ. Sterling Volunteers also made it easy to re-integrate screening back into the organization's volunteer database.

Results

Sterling Volunteers was able to provide Special Olympics Southern California with not only cost-effective volunteer screening but also more comprehensive and accurate background checks. For the first time, the organization's checks included a pull of criminal records from Los Angeles County, which allowed their volunteer managers to make informed decisions about volunteer applications. The organization was also pleasantly surprised by the willingness of its volunteers to pay for all or some of their own background checks—an option not offered by Special Olympics Southern California's previous provider. Of the 1,200 background checks performed for the organization, more than 20% of the cost was paid by the volunteers themselves, allowing Special Olympics Southern California to preserve its precious budget.

Key Highlight

Special Olympics Southern California was unaware that its prior screening provider did not include Los Angeles County criminal records in its background checks—a huge gap that was leaving the organization and its constituents open to many risks.



We liked that Sterling Volunteers was tailored specifically for volunteer organizations and the service works exactly as promised. We're very happy."

**- Scott Evans, Director of
Volunteers for Special
Olympics Southern California**