



# Cop-on-Top

*Where Officers with the Law Enforcement Torch Run partner with a popular shopping venue to dedicate their time, resources and creativity raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics MA athletes and teams*



A Law Enforcement Torch Run Event

**Special  
Olympics**  
Massachusetts



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Special Olympics Massachusetts provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for over 13,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, prepare for entry into school and community programs, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

For more information about Special Olympics in your community, please visit [www.SpecialOlympicsMA.org](http://www.SpecialOlympicsMA.org).

## WHAT IS THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN?

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The mission of the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR), in partnership with our communities, is to support Special Olympics programs through raising funds and public awareness, while enhancing the quality of life of our athletes.

A global event, Law Enforcement Torch Run sees participations from all 50 States and over 35 foreign countries, generating over \$55 million for Special Olympics programs around the world in 2016 alone. Since its inception in 1981 the Law Enforcement Torch Run has raised over \$100 million worldwide.

Law enforcement personnel from Federal, Military, State, County and Local agencies participate in the Massachusetts Torch Run campaign. Funds are raised through a variety of activities such as Cop on Top, Polar Plunge, Truck Pulls, Cruiser Convoys and so much more. In June, hundreds of law enforcement personnel carry the Special Olympics Torch, the Flame of Hope, through counties all over Massachusetts culminating at the Opening Ceremonies of the Summer Games.

For more information about the Law Enforcement Torch Run in your community, please visit [www.MassTorchRun.org](http://www.MassTorchRun.org).

## WHAT IS A COP-ON-TOP?

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As the name implies, a Cop-on-Top is a unique and successful fundraising event in which law enforcement officials sit on top of a building for a period of time, or even overnight, in an attempt to raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics. Local and State Police, Sheriff's department, military, and other law enforcement officials collect donations from customers and general public as they are perched on the rooftops of a building. These personnel "cannot" come off the roof for a certain number of hours/days or until the fundraising goal has been met. Volunteers (officers, athletes and coaches) are also on the ground, outside of stores, restaurants and safe intersections of a shopping plaza accepting donations from customers. LETR officers and Special Olympics MA provide the necessary insurance, equipment and volunteers to run the event – at no additional cost to the shopping plaza. Some stores and restaurants will choose to participate and run their own promotions during this time. Although not required, this is appreciated greatly.

## HOW DOES A COP-ON-TOP RAISE MONEY?

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As mentioned, law enforcement officials are charged with raising funds by sitting up on the roof of a local store. Officers will often use a megaphone or microphone to attract attention and request that people give donations to additional volunteers standing at street level. Through effective interaction with the media, and counting on the charity of the general public, thousands of dollars can be raised!

Ideally, Cop-on-Top events should be held at high traffic locations. The events that raise the most money also have other attractions beyond the law enforcement officials on the roof. These events have included bounce houses, DJs, static displays, dunking booths, clowns and other costumed characters, corn hole tournaments, car seat checks, etc. The more elements you use to attract visitors, the more funds you can raise.

## BENEFITS TO THE HOST VENUE

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We recognize that potential host venues are approached often from many charities looking for similar partnerships. Please see below for some of the comments we've received from other Cop-on-Top host sites.

- "We love supporting two well-deserved organizations at the same time. We value the commitment our local Law Enforcement agencies give to our community, AND the benefits Special Olympics offers to our shoppers, this is a no brainer for us."
- "Whether it's intended to or not, the presence of dozen of officers on our property has reduced theft on Cop-on-Top days."
- "We built this plaza as a service to our community. Partnership with a well-known charity like Special Olympics allows us to invite even more customers to shop with us on event days who may normally go elsewhere. But because they want to see the excitement, attention and give back to their favorite charity, they choose to shop with us."
- "It's like free press! The planning committee does radio and TV spots, sends out press releases, and other marketing materials months prior to the event. Our name and address is on everything they send out and say."

## STRUCTURING YOUR TEAM

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A successful Cop on Top event uses, ideally, 8-10 law enforcement personnel volunteers on the ground, and an additional minimum of 2-3 on the roof during the event. Volunteer roles for the law enforcement personnel include:

- (1) Event lead – responsible for overall logistics of event
- (2) Class A volunteers to count and process the money (Special Olympics staff)
- (4-5) Ground support – responsibilities include but are not limited to coordinating food/beverage supply at event, communication to parking lot and roof over the mic, collecting donations on the ground, etc.
- (4-5) "Toll Booth" workers – responsible for collecting money along the perimeter of the parking lot. Ideally, pair each worker with a Special Olympics athlete to help collect donations and spread the mission
- (2-3) Roof volunteers – responsible for communicating to parking lot and ground crew over the mic, collecting donations in the bucket, and generally being the faces of the event

# SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES

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Cop on Top fundraising events are intended to be collaborative efforts between the local law enforcement, building partner, and Special Olympics. Responsibilities can be shared between all three planning partners to ensure a successful event.

**Law enforcement responsibilities** include but are not limited to:

- Working with the building partner to confirm the store's participation in the event and secure use of the rooftop and doorways for the event (this includes confirming date and time of the event)
- Marketing and promotion of the event ahead of time i.e. through social media pages and leveraging local relationships with schools, businesses, residents, etc.
- Collecting any sponsorships, raffle prizes, etc. from local businesses ahead of time
- Recruiting a minimum of 2-3 officers on the rooftop at all times, as well as a minimum of 2-3 officers at each doorway at all times. Law enforcement may create shifts for the rooftop and doorways.
  - Officers should familiarize themselves ahead of time with Special Olympics mission and basic facts, so they can speak to the organization on the event day as they solicit donations from people visiting the store
- Oversee the event (site set-up and breakdown, any additional parts of the event such as raffle, etc.)

**Building partner responsibilities** include but are not limited to:

- Agreeing to let law enforcement and Special Olympics use the rooftop and doorways for the event
- Marketing and promotion of the event ahead of time inside the store, around the plaza, on social media, etc.

**Special Olympics responsibilities** include but are not limited to:

- Helping to recruit local law enforcement agencies to participate in the event
- Helping to recruit local Special Olympics athletes to volunteer for the event
- Providing insurance coverage for the event
- Providing major event supplies i.e. cash boxes, donation buckets, signage, volunteer meals, etc.
- Marketing and promotion of the event ahead of time i.e. through social media pages and leveraging local relationships with schools, businesses, residents, press releases to local media, etc.
- Helping law enforcement to collect any sponsorships, raffle prizes, etc. from local businesses ahead of time
- Staff representative at event for entire time, helping to collect and count funds raised. Staff will take all event supplies and funds at the end of event.
- Sending donation thank you/receipts to all donors who request it after the event

# EVENT EQUIPMENT LIST

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Necessary equipment for the Cop on Top event includes:

- Signage – wall, windows and tabletop – and equipment to hang
- Money lock box or bag with Petty Cash for change

- General administrative supplies: rubber bands, pens, scissors, box cutters, markers, tape, etc.
- Bullhorn or sound equipment (microphones and speakers for ground and roof)
- Contact list for all necessary LETR personnel and volunteers, including shift times and responsibilities. Could be in the form of a sign-in sheet.
- Flashlights, floodlights, etc.
- Plenty of water for volunteers
- Schedule of events/run of show including a list of all sponsors/donors that need to be acknowledged and thanked at the event
- Folding chairs and tables for ground crew and roof sitters
- Donation buckets with SOMA labels and rope
- Batteries (for microphones, bullhorns, flashlights, etc.)
- Volunteer shirts for volunteers
- Inclement weather plan and gear i.e. ponchos
- Ladder for roof access (if necessary)
- (If an multi-day event) Sleeping gear – sleeping bags, cots, tents, heaters, etc.
- Sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.
- Pop-up tents for ground crew and roof sitters
- Food for LETR personnel and volunteers throughout the event
- (Not necessary) Donation-tracking thermometer

## SPONSORSHIP

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While event sponsors shouldn't be considered a guarantee for your event, they can be great for extending and enhancing your overall Cop-on-Top marketing and recruitment, offsetting event costs through in-kind support, and providing prize incentives and raffle items to generate revenue.

When approaching businesses for sponsorship, be sure to do your research. Have an idea of what you want from the sponsor, and what you're willing and able to offer in return. For example, you may approach Dunkin' Donuts to donate coffee and donuts to your event. In return, be prepared to offer them logo placement on your signage, a vendor booth, or other available assets.

Speaking of assets, be sure to discuss your sponsorship goals and plan with your Special Olympics MA liaison. Special Olympics MA will have a number of assets to be offered for sponsorship, such as medal presentation at a future event and other unique volunteer opportunities. If interested, work with Special Olympics MA to develop a sponsorship package for your event.