NWANA Participant Guide

Nordic Walking Association of North America (NWANA) · Answers to frequently asked questions for participants · Generated as a PDF from nwaofna.org on November 16, 2026

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to common questions about NWANA, Nordic Walking, education, licenses, groups, competitions, partnerships, sponsorships, donations, safety, and policies.

What is NWANA?

The Nordic Walking Association of North America (NWANA) is a U.S. nonprofit organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and classified as a public charity. NWANA is the continental governing and sanctioning body for competitive Nordic Walking across North America.

What does NWANA do?

NWANA develops Nordic Walking education, professional pathways, licenses, local NW Groups, competition rules, events, results, rankings, safety standards, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising programs, and public resources. NWANA connects participants, athletes, professionals, communities, organizations, organizers, partners, sponsors, donors, and volunteers through one developing Nordic Walking system.

Where does NWANA operate?

NWANA's primary geographic responsibility is North America, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the wider North American region. Some virtual competitions, educational resources, and other programs may also be available to participants outside North America when stated in the applicable program information.

Where should I begin?

Start with the Choose Your Path page.

I am completely new to Nordic Walking. Can I participate?

Yes. You do not need previous Nordic Walking experience to begin. You may explore introductory education through NWANA Academy (academy.nwaofna.org), join an NW Group, or participate in an activity or competition that is open to beginners.

Is NWANA education only for instructors and coaches?

No. NWANA Academy offers education for many audiences, including beginners, participants, athletes, leaders, instructors, coaches, judges, race directors, officials, organizers, and other roles.

What is the difference between a course, certification, and license?

A course is an educational program. A certification confirms successful completion of specified education and assessments. A license is a separate NWANA authorization connected with a defined role, category, level, or scope. Completing a course or receiving a certificate does not automatically activate a license.

What types of licenses does NWANA provide?

NWANA's licensing system includes several separate areas: Athlete Licenses for competitive participation when required; Professional Licenses for instructors, coaches, judges, Race Directors, and Competition Technical Officials; and a voluntary Individual License for members who choose to hold one. Joining an NW Group is free and separate from licensing. Each license has its own purpose, eligibility requirements, scope, term, and activation process.

Where can I find Athlete Licenses?

Athlete Licenses are available through license.nwaofna.org. An Athlete License is required only when the rules for a particular competition expressly require one.

Is an NW Groups Individual License an Athlete License?

No. The Individual License is a voluntary NWANA license, separate from Athlete Licenses. Joining an NW Group is free and requires no license. If an Athlete License is required for a particular competition, it is obtained separately through the NWANA athlete licensing website.

What professional pathways does NWANA offer?

NWANA is developing progressive pathways for: Nordic Walking Instructors; Nordic Walking Coaches; Competition Judges; Race Directors; Competition Technical Officials. Each pathway has its own education, practical preparation, assessments, experience requirements, and licenses. Professional Pathways

Where does NWANA professional education begin?

Every NWANA professional pathway begins with the Nordic Walking Instructor – Beginner Level Certification through NWANA Academy. This course establishes the fundamental understanding of Nordic Walking technique, equipment, movement principles, safety, and professional responsibility required before entering more advanced education.

Can I skip professional education levels?

No. NWANA professional education develops step by step. Previous education or experience may be considered, but it does not automatically authorize a person to bypass required NWANA education, assessment, practical preparation, or licensing requirements.

Does completing professional education guarantee a license?

No. Course completion and licensing are separate. After completing the required education, an applicant must satisfy the applicable eligibility, verification, practical, and license-activation requirements.

What is an NWANA Nordic Walking Group?

An NW Group connects people through Nordic Walking within a particular community, organization, territory, or program category. NWANA can establish a dedicated group page and provide tools for registrations, communications, activities, events, fundraising, ticket sales, donations, and continued group development. NW Groups

Can I join an existing NW Group?

Yes. If an appropriate group already exists, joining is free: find your group and join it. Every territory and category also carries its FORMING group in the registry: join it free and receive updates as NWANA builds it toward launch.

Does joining an NW Group require me to lead a group?

No. Joining is free and carries no obligation to create or lead a group, organize activities, or conduct events. Members who want to become involved in those activities are welcome to do so through the applicable pathways.

Can an NW Group carry the name of an organization?

A group connected with a specific company, school, university, government agency, healthcare organization, faith community, sports organization, homeowners association, or other established organization is created and owned by NWANA, in coordination with that organization. The use of another organization's name, logo, facilities, communication channels or other resources runs through that organization's own approval.

What statuses can an NW Group have?

NW Groups have two statuses, FORMING and ACTIVE. A FORMING group is in its build phase in its territory: NWANA is appointing its prescribed roles and preparing its launch, and its page carries the launch schedule as it is set. An ACTIVE group holds regular activities. All NW Groups are created and owned by NWANA, and group money is accounted inside NWANA by territory. Participation is free: residents join their territory group on the NW Groups site. NWANA runs the association and its groups through its appointed officers and prescribed group roles.

What competitions does NWANA currently offer?

NWANA currently conducts scheduled virtual distance competitions through the NWANA Open Nordic Walking Series. Participants can register, complete the published distance, submit the required evidence, and follow official results and standings. Competition Calendar

Is NWANA also developing in-person competitions?

Yes. NWANA is establishing a broader competition system that includes Stadium, Road, Cross-Country, and Relay competition. A particular event or championship is confirmed only when NWANA publishes its official name, date, location, registration information, rules, and competition designation. NWANA Nordic Walking Sport

What is the difference between an NWANA Event and a competition?

NWANA Events may include clinics, workshops, education sessions, community programs, fundraising events, recognition events, partner gatherings, forums, and other organizational activities. Competitive events involving official rules, judging, results, rankings, qualification, or sanctioning belong within the NWANA Sport system. See the Events page.

Can my organization host an NWANA Event?

NWANA may work with organizations, venues, municipalities, schools, universities, companies, nonprofits, clubs, community groups, and other qualified hosts. The event format, responsibilities, branding, registration, financial structure, safety requirements, and organizational relationship must be agreed upon with NWANA.

Can my group or organization conduct a Nordic Walking competition?

Yes, but an independently organized competition does not automatically become an official NWANA competition. Contact NWANA before presenting or promoting an event as affiliated with, recognized by, approved by, or sanctioned by NWANA.

What is the difference between a partner and a sponsor?

A partner works with NWANA to develop programs, locations, education, groups, events, community access, technology, outreach, or other practical initiatives. A sponsor primarily provides financial or material support and receives recognition appropriate to the supported program, audience, and sponsorship arrangement. An organization may serve as both a partner and a sponsor when appropriate.

How can my organization become an NWANA partner?

Review the partnership opportunities and contact NWANA with information about your organization, audience, resources, location, and proposed area of collaboration. Partner with NWANA

How can a company or organization sponsor NWANA?

Sponsors may support education, instructor development, competitions, events, awards, technology, local groups, community access, safety programs, athlete opportunities, or broader organizational growth. Sponsorship arrangements are developed according to the supported program, geographic reach, audience, visibility, and level of involvement. Sponsor NWANA

How can I donate or raise funds for NWANA?

You may make a donation, support a designated fund, create a personal fundraiser, organize a team fundraiser, ask about employer matching gifts, or sponsor a specific NWANA program. Support and Funds

Are donations to NWANA tax-deductible?

NWANA is a U.S. nonprofit public charity recognized under IRS Section 501(c)(3). Donations may be tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Donors should consult their tax advisor regarding their individual circumstances.

Can I volunteer or serve within NWANA?

NWANA may offer opportunities involving events, committees, regional development, technical work, public outreach, professional programs, organizational projects, and other areas. Opportunities depend on current organizational needs and may require relevant experience, qualifications, screening, review, selection, or appointment.

Does NWANA create medical, treatment, or rehabilitation programs?

No. NWANA does not diagnose medical conditions or create medical, treatment, or rehabilitation programs. NWANA provides Nordic Walking education, technical standards, professional pathways, and sport expertise. Healthcare professionals and authorized healthcare organizations remain responsible for any medical or rehabilitation programs they develop or supervise.

Does NWANA support adaptive and inclusive participation?

NWANA seeks to expand Nordic Walking opportunities for people with different abilities, backgrounds, ages, and participation needs. Specific accommodations depend on the program, competition, location, available personnel, and safety requirements. Contact NWANA before registering if you require an accommodation or need help identifying an appropriate pathway.

What protections apply when minors participate?

NWANA activities involving minors must follow applicable participant-protection, supervision, consent, communication, reporting, and safety requirements. Professional roles involving participants under age 18 may require additional education, authorization, screening, or program-specific approval.

Where can I find NWANA Safe Sport information?

NWANA's Safe Sport Policy addresses participant protection, youth safety, misconduct prevention, reporting expectations, adult-youth boundaries, and safe program culture. Safe Sport Policy

Where can I find NWANA policies and public documents?

The Governance & Policies page provides access to legal policies, conduct and safety standards, Safe Sport, Anti-Doping information, public resources, forms, brand materials, press resources, and official contact pathways.

May I use the NWANA name or logo?

The NWANA name, logos, marks, and official identity materials may not be used in a way that suggests authorization, endorsement, recognition, partnership, sponsorship, or sanctioning without permission. Review the applicable brand resources or contact NWANA before using NWANA identity materials publicly. Brand assets

Where can media representatives find information about NWANA?

Media representatives may use the NWANA Press Kit and Contact for Media / Partners pages for approved descriptions, background information, public materials, and interview or media requests.

What should I do if I cannot find the right pathway?

Review all pathways on the Choose Your Path page. If none clearly fits your interests, community, organization, or proposed activity, contact NWANA and describe what you want to do. NWANA will help direct you to the most appropriate existing pathway or consider whether another approach is needed.

How do I contact NWANA?

For general questions, use the Contact page or email info@nwaofna.org. Please identify the program, license, course, group, competition, event, partnership, sponsorship, donation, or policy connected with your question so it can be directed appropriately.