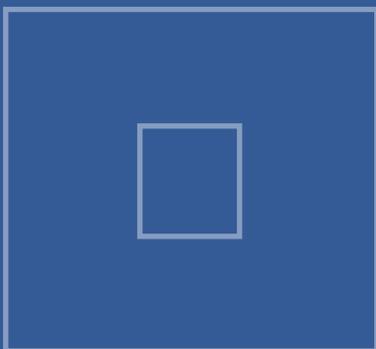
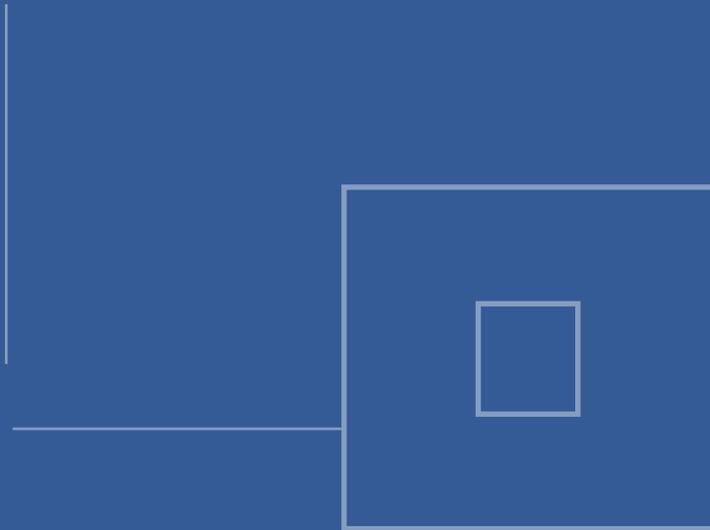


# Canadian Code For Volunteer Involvement





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# Canadian Code For Volunteer Involvement

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# 1. Background

## The Voluntary Sector in Canada

The size and scope of the voluntary sector in Canada is extensive. There are currently over 175,000 charitable and not-for-profit organizations providing a range of services in health care, arts, culture, recreation, human services, sports, education, environment and international development. These range from small and all-volunteer organizations to large organizations with multiple layers of staff and volunteers working in partnership. Less than half of these organizations (78,000) have charitable status.

*Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector* (1999), a report by the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, describes the economic importance of the voluntary sector.

*Although we think of the sector as consisting of volunteers, it is, in fact, a major employer: when the learning institutions and hospitals are included, it produces over 1.3 million jobs. And with annual revenues of \$90 billion and assets of \$109 billion, it is comparable in size to the entire economy of British Columbia.*

(Taken from Panel Report)

*While the economic scope of the voluntary sector in Canada is considerable, there is a significant imbalance between organizations. Two-thirds of charities have annual revenues of less than \$100,000 and a further half of the charities have annual revenues of \$50,000 or less. There are a large number of charitable and non-profit organizations that have both small budgets and are either entirely operated by volunteers or have a small staff complement.*

(Taken from Panel Report)

## Volunteers

The 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating identified that 7.5 million Canadian volunteers over the age of 15 formally contributed their time and talent to a voluntary organization. Annually, the average volunteer donates more than 149 hours of service to a cause or causes they believe in. While the 1997 survey determined that more individuals were volunteering, the actual number of volunteer hours had declined compared with a previous survey conducted 10 years earlier.

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## What is volunteering?

*Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbour, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. By caring and contributing to change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self-esteem, and change their lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbours and, in return, enhance their own. (Making a Case for Volunteer Centres—Volunteer Ontario, 1996.)*

A volunteer offers his or her time and skills to a community while receiving no monetary benefit for this involvement. Individuals who volunteer come from all walks of life—from the unemployed to the professional. All age groups are represented, as are individuals from diverse cultures, abilities and backgrounds.

Volunteers are involved in an equally diverse set of activities such as sitting on the boards of directors, providing counselling services, participating in fund raising and special events, and befriending seniors or youth. Across our country, volunteers are routinely engaged in enriching the lives of others and our communities.

## Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada is a national organization engaged in the promotion of volunteerism across Canada. A national leader, Volunteer Canada strives to ensure that volunteer efforts are promoted, recognized, supported and safeguarded. Volunteer Canada works in partnership with a network of over 100 volunteer centres in communities across Canada.

The United Nations has designated 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers (IYV). Volunteer Canada, in partnership with Heritage Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, are coordinating the national efforts around IYV 2001. Five key themes have been identified for IYV 2001 including:

- Celebrate volunteerism
- Promote volunteering for all
- Expand the definition of volunteerism in Canada
- Improve the voluntary organization infrastructure
- Develop the voluntary sector knowledge base in Canada

Developing and distributing a *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* is an integral part of the IYV 2001 initiative. The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* is targeted to boards of directors of voluntary organizations to prompt discussion about the role volunteers play in their organization. IYV 2001 provides an important opportunity for all of us to reflect on volunteers and voluntary efforts.

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The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* was developed by a task force of individuals from the voluntary sector including volunteer centre staff, managers of volunteer programs, and consultants. Preliminary versions of this document were also reviewed and tested by a number of individuals within the voluntary sector. Development of the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* was supported in part by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation through the McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders.

## Why a Code of Volunteer Involvement and Why Now?

Volunteers and the voluntary sector play a vital role in Canadian society. Volunteers across Canada are engaged in delivering services and programs that improve and enhance the life of the community.

While Canadians are proud of this contribution, there has never been a clear articulation of the important values and benefits received from volunteer involvement.

Broadly defined, a code can provide a framework for decision making by an organization. The code can specify organizational values, guiding principles and the specific rules or standards, which align with these values. It can help an organization make decisions based on the organization's values and principles.

The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* is designed to present a setting in which organizations can discuss how their volunteers are engaged and supported. The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* consists of three important elements:

- **Values for Volunteer Involvement**

*Core statements of the importance and value of volunteer involvement in voluntary organizations and Canadian society*

- **Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement**

*Principles detailing the exchange between voluntary organizations and volunteers*

- **Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement**

*Standards that organizations should consider in developing or reviewing how volunteers are currently involved*

The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* will initiate the important strategic discussions about the role volunteers can and do play in helping an organization achieve its purpose or mission. This resource will provide a framework to start these discussions.

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# CANADIAN CODE FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

## VALUES FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

**Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society.**

It fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.

**Volunteer involvement strengthens communities.**

It promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs.

**Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organization.**

It increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals, and provides volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute.

**Volunteer involvement is based on relationships.**

Volunteers are expected to act with integrity and be respectful and responsive to others with whom they interact.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

**Voluntary organizations recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.**

The organization's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement.

The organization commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers.

**Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.**

Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and community.

Volunteers will act responsibly and with integrity.

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## ORGANIZATION STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

The boards of directors and senior management acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose or mission.

Policies and procedures are adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.

A qualified person is designated to be responsible for the volunteer program.

A clearly communicated screening process is consistently applied.

Volunteer assignments address the purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways—reflecting their various abilities, needs and backgrounds.

Volunteer recruitment and selection reaches out to diverse sources of volunteers.

Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures, and receive training for their volunteer assignment.

Volunteers receive appropriate levels of supervision according to their task and are given regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.

Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valuable and integral members of the organization's human resources.

The contributions of volunteers are regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods.

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### 3. Thinking and Talking about the Code

*The following information and questions are suitable for prompting discussion about the Code.*

#### **The Mission or Purpose of a Voluntary Organization**

Voluntary organizations work to achieve goals such as alleviating poverty, protecting the environment, providing recreation and sports opportunities for youth and counselling the vulnerable.

Whether formal and structured, or informal and grassroots, individuals come together to work towards achieving the purpose or mission of the organization or cause they believe in.

Questions to ask about the organization's purpose or mission:

- What is our organization trying to accomplish?
- How does it do this?
- What are its programs or services?

#### **The Power of People**

Voluntary organizations accomplish their goals through their human resources. Individuals come together to make a positive change in their communities, and are a critical resource to the voluntary sector.

Many voluntary organizations have roots in the imaginations and passions of individuals to make a difference in their community. Individuals can become involved in organizations as board members, staff or volunteers. Each individual—whether staff or volunteer—contributes to the organization, thereby achieving its purpose or mission.

Questions to ask about the organization's human resources:

- Who helps our organization accomplish its purpose?
- What roles do they play?
- Do we respect and honour the contributions of our staff and volunteers?
- Do we have enough human resources to achieve our purpose?
- Are the skills and talents of our board members, staff and volunteers employed in the best possible way to achieve our organization's purpose?
- How could we more effectively utilize the skills and talents of individuals in our organization?

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## The Board of Directors

Board members are volunteers. They are, however, a different type of volunteer. The board assumes both legal and fiduciary responsibilities for the organization and act as trustees. It is the board that establishes the purpose or mission, values and governing policies for the organization. The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* is applicable to both board members and volunteers engaged in service delivery within the organization.

Questions to ask about the board of directors:

- How does our board of directors help our organization achieve its purpose?
- How does our organization support board volunteers?
- Could our organization utilize the skills and talents of board volunteers more effectively?
- What values are essential for an effective board of directors?

## Staff

Volunteer departments or programs do not exist in isolation within an organization. For volunteer involvement to be effective, there must be both acceptance and support from staff within the organization. Many voluntary organizations already have designated staff to manage volunteer resources. Whether or not there is a manager of volunteer resources, it is still important to engage all staff in a dialogue about the potential of volunteer involvement in the organization.

Questions to ask about staff:

- How can our staff effectively involve volunteers in our programs and services?
- What do volunteers contribute to our organization?
- What do we expect from our volunteers?
- How does the work of our staff differ from that of our volunteers?

## Volunteers

Volunteers are an important human resource to an organization. They bring a passion for the cause, a commitment to the purpose and are motivated by their choice of involvement. While they may not receive a wage for their service, volunteers do receive multiple benefits from being linked to a community organization.

In introducing the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*, it is important to determine what draws volunteers to your organization and how can you best maximize this vital human resource.

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Questions to ask about volunteers:

- Why do volunteers choose our organization?
- What do our volunteers contribute?
- How do our volunteers benefit?
- What can our organization expect from volunteers?
- What can volunteers expect from our organization?

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## 4. Implementing the Code

### How to Make the Code Relevant to Your Organization

The *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* is designed to provide a framework for discussion. Some organizations may choose to adopt the *Code* as part of their philosophy or use the framework and implement certain sections, while others may develop their own *Code*.

Volunteer Canada encourages all voluntary organizations to use the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* to initiate discussion about the role and relevance of volunteer involvement within the organization. Our goal in 2001 is to have 2001 organizations engaged in a dialogue about volunteer involvement.

The following suggestions will help make the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* relevant to your organization.

#### Boards of Directors

1. Review the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*.
2. Discuss whether the values are consistent with the board's vision for volunteer involvement at your organization.
3. Review the *Organization Standards Checklist*. Discuss whether the organization currently fulfills these standards or identify any gaps.
4. Make a commitment to adopt the code as part of your organization's strategy for the International Year of Volunteers 2001.
5. Identify some strategic directions your organization can take to enhance volunteer involvement in 2001.
6. Communicate to your volunteers and staff your organization's commitment to making effective volunteer involvement an integral part of achieving your purpose.

#### Staff & Volunteers

1. Discuss the role and expectations about volunteers in your organization.
2. Review the *Organization Standards Checklist* and identify both the strengths and gaps in your volunteer resources program.
3. Identify potential strategies for increasing the effective engagement of volunteers. Strategies may be directed at either staff or at volunteers.
4. Make a commitment to enhance the involvement of volunteers during the International Year of Volunteers 2001.
5. Communicate to your volunteers and staff your organization's commitment to making effective volunteer involvement an integral part of achieving your purpose.

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## A Closer Look at Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers are a vital human resource. By adopting the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*, voluntary organizations make a public statement about the importance of volunteers and the necessity to manage this important resource effectively. They also make a commitment to help volunteer programs achieve and maintain the Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

The Organization Standards were developed by Volunteer Canada in consultation with a variety of voluntary sector partners. They provide a basic set of standards to which all organizations should aspire. Standards of practice for managers of volunteer resources have also been developed by the Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR). Although these standards are directed at paid managers of volunteer resources, they are also an important reference for voluntary organizations where there is no staff support.

To help voluntary organizations work through these standards, support is available from the following organizations:

- Volunteer Canada
- Volunteer centres in many Canadian communities, and
- Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR).

Information about Volunteer Canada and CAVR can be found in the Resources section of this handbook.

### Organizational Standards For Volunteer Involvement

#### **1. The board of directors and senior management acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's mission.**

Volunteers help the organization achieve its mission and objectives. Volunteer involvement must be aligned with the organization's goals and resource allocation. The board and senior management should understand and approve of the direction of the volunteer program.

The organization's budget should consider the funding allocations necessary for the salary and benefits of paid staff. Providing appropriate space for volunteers to work, as well as tools, equipment and uniforms (if required). The budget must also take into account recognition events and items, and funds to replace any out-of-pocket expense volunteers may incur.

The organization must also allot for appropriate insurance coverage, the cost of professional development, membership fees, and any other resources that will support volunteer effectiveness. In recognition of the value of the volunteer program, it is vital to ensure its effectiveness.

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Volunteer involvement should be evaluated regularly. An evaluation of volunteer involvement includes:

- reviewing goals and objectives
- identifying results achieved
- obtaining feedback from current volunteers and clients
- collecting and reviewing both quantitative and qualitative data about volunteer involvement
- assessing the performance of volunteers, and
- conducting exit interviews for departing volunteers.

**2. Policies and procedures have been adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.**

Policies and procedures help clarify responsibilities and ensure consistency. They should be developed and documented on a broad spectrum from volunteer assignments and screening mechanisms to grounds for dismissal. The organization's board of directors needs to ensure volunteer policies are congruent with other agency policies. The manager of volunteer resources, or staff working with volunteers, is responsible for identifying the specific policies and procedures required.

Administrative procedures guide and support the volunteer program. Standard forms for assignment descriptions, applications, interviews, reference checks, police record checks, performance appraisals and exit interviews provide a framework for treating all volunteers equally.

Accurate records provide a means to keep track of individual volunteers and the program as a whole. Policies and procedures should be communicated to all staff and volunteers and then followed consistently and equitably.

The organization's policies and procedures should be consistent with national and provincial *Human Rights Codes*, comply with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and provincial employment standards legislation. Volunteers deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. Specifically, everyone has the right to equal treatment in employment without discrimination because of:

- race
- ancestry
- place of origin
- colour
- ethnic origin
- citizenship
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- age
- record of offences
- marital status
- same-sex partnership
- family status
- handicap

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Although provincial *Employment Standards Acts* may not cover volunteers, organizations should be familiar with the Act and treat volunteers in line with its guidelines.

**3. A qualified person is designated to be responsible for the volunteer program.**

Managing volunteers is both an art and a science. The job demands a wide range of skills with a high level of complexity. Regardless of the size of the organization, it is vital to ensure that individuals responsible for volunteers have the necessary skills, experience and support to do the job well.

Organizations with full-time paid positions should expect their staff to have relevant training and association membership. A written position description should be developed to define the parameters of the position. If other staff members work with volunteers, their position descriptions should specifically include key functions and responsibilities related to volunteer involvement.

The person designated to manage the volunteer program is responsible for an essential element of the organization's human resources. This person should work collaboratively with other staff and consult with them when considering any new directions within the volunteer program. Regular performance reviews of this person will ensure that they, and their programs, are on track. Performance reviews offer an opportunity to commend employees for work done well and to highlight areas requiring improvement. Feedback from other staff and volunteers should be solicited to round out the information on their work.

Staff should be encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities with time-off granted for courses, conferences or networking with other managers of volunteers. Community colleges, professional associations, conferences and on-line courses are available to deepen volunteer management skills. Associations such as Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR), and other provincial bodies offer support, and increase awareness. Volunteer centres can provide resources, training, and networking opportunities that will lead to new ideas, new approaches, and new techniques.

**4. A screening process is in place that is clearly communicated and consistently applied.**

Screening is an essential process that lasts the duration of a volunteer's involvement with the organization. The 10 steps for effective screening need to be understood and incorporated completely into the planning, recruitment selection, and supervision of volunteers. All volunteer assignments are assessed for level of risk. The higher risk the position, the more in-depth the screening procedures.

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The organization is expected to gather a basic amount of information about potential volunteers. All volunteers should complete an application form and attend an interview. Other information such as reference checks, criminal record checks, and medical checks may also be required according to the risks of the assignment.

Screening procedures are to be delivered consistently with no exceptions made for certain individuals or positions. Screening protocols are assigned to positions because of inherent risks; individuals do not determine screening. Screening should not be viewed as an insult, but as evidence that the organization cares about its programs and its people.

**5. Volunteer assignments address the purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways, reflecting their various abilities, needs and backgrounds.**

In developing new or adapting current volunteer assignments, all those potentially affected should be consulted. Volunteers, staff, and clients may have suggestions. If volunteers are working in a union context, it is essential to ensure that the appropriate union representatives are brought into the discussions.

As with paid staff, volunteers require written descriptions of their assignments to ensure that they are aware of the parameters, including the limits of their duties.

Assignments should be developed to address the needs of the organization and the volunteer. Volunteer assignments should be linked to the organization's mission. Individual needs vary considerably, so successful volunteer programs adapt volunteer assignments to fit these needs when possible. This may involve changing the times, the scope, the duration or the location of the assignment. The more adaptable the volunteer assignment, the easier to recruit and retain volunteers.

Volunteers with special requirements or challenges should be able to become involved with the organization. This may involve changing the scope, duration or even location of the assignment. However, any adaptations must not put the volunteer, clients, other volunteers or staff at risk. All individuals must meet the standards set for screening, and be able to carry out the requirements of their duties.

It is necessary to periodically review volunteer assignments to ensure their relevance and value. Some assignments may need to be adjusted to make better use of volunteers' time or skills.

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## **6. Volunteer recruitment and selection reaches out to diverse sources of volunteers.**

Effective recruitment messages are realistic and clear. They leave an accurate impression of the organization and its needs.

Genuine effort should be made to recruit and select volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds. A healthy organization has volunteers representing a mix of age, gender, ethnicity, and abilities.

Different recruitment messages will reach different groups of people. For example, the Internet, public service announcements on radio and television, posters at community centres, speakers at schools will all reach unique target groups.

## **7. Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures, and receive training for their volunteer assignment.**

Volunteers need information on the policies and procedures that influence their duties and their involvement with others in the organization. Policies cannot be followed if they have not been communicated. The information can be conveyed verbally at an orientation, or in a written format, for ongoing reference.

Volunteers need adequate training for performing their assignment without putting themselves or others at risk. They should be told where to get more information or support in case they need it, and who to report to and how to respond in emergencies. Ongoing training will help improve their current performance, and may lead to increased involvement within the organization. When the organization introduces new procedures or programs, it is important to inform volunteers sensitively to allow them time to adjust.

## **8. Volunteers receive appropriate levels of supervision according to their task and are given regular opportunities to receive and to give feedback.**

Prior to the placement of volunteers, the supervision level should be determined based on the complexity and risk of the assignment. Many volunteer assignments require minimal supervision. However, those assignments that are more complex or involve higher risks require a higher degree of supervision.

As with paid staff, volunteers need to hear how they are doing. If volunteers are performing below requirements, or putting themselves or others at risk, they must be told. Regular, as well as informal, performance reviews also provide an opportunity to commend and to thank volunteers for their efforts. Random spot checks with volunteers (and clients) can also be used to check in on volunteer performance. Volunteers should be given, and encouraged to use, mechanisms for providing input to the organization. This input can be encouraged through suggestion boxes, informal chats, regular check-ins and annual appraisals.

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Records should be maintained on every volunteer involved with the organization, using a confidential, secure system. Records should include the application form, record of interview, assignment description, letters of reference, performance appraisals and current contact information. These records are used for references, performance appraisals and emergencies. Simple paper files or sophisticated software programs can help keep track of the organization's volunteers.

Situations requiring reprimand and dismissal should follow policies and procedures fairly and consistently, while respecting the safety and dignity of all concerned. Volunteers need to understand in advance what situations will result in reprimand or dismissal. Dignity and respect are important, but only after the safety and well-being of clients, staff and volunteers are considered.

**9. Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources.**

Input from volunteers should be welcomed and solicited for the organization's planning and evaluation. The perspectives of volunteers add a different dimension that needs to be included during planning and evaluation for the organization. A system that encourages and involves input from volunteers creates a dynamic team spirit that enhances organizational effectiveness.

A healthy organization encourages volunteers to grow. They are given support and encouragement to become involved and to contribute in new ways beyond their initial assignments.

Volunteers need to be included as equal members of the team. The definition of team should not be limited to those who are paid within the organization. Involved and informed volunteers, who feel like one of the team, are far more likely to continue contributing their valuable time and skills.

**10. The contributions of volunteers are regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods.**

It is not enough for the volunteer program to thank volunteers for their participation. It is essential that senior management acknowledge internally and publicly, the importance of volunteers to the organization. This acknowledgement can be made often: during National Volunteer Week, in the annual report, at the annual meeting, and at other organization events.

Not only does this recognize volunteers, but also serves as an effective method to recruit new volunteers.

Formal recognition methods such as awards, gifts and events are delivered consistently with fair and open criteria to avoid favouritism or bias. Many organizations celebrate the contribution of volunteers during National Volunteer Week in April.

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Some organizations also have special events for volunteers at annual meetings or other festive occasions.

An effective volunteer program acknowledges volunteers throughout the year by knowing volunteers as individuals and providing recognition that is meaningful. Some examples are: providing more training and a new assignment, remembering the volunteer's birthday, and telling the volunteer's family about the difference the volunteer is making.

For many volunteers, the most meaningful recognition is a well-timed, genuine expression of gratitude.

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## Organization Standards Checklist

### **1. The board of directors and senior management acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's mission.**

- The board of directors adopts a statement declaring the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's mission.*
- The organization's planning process incorporates volunteer involvement.*
- The board has approved the overall goals for volunteer involvement.*
- A budget is allocated for volunteer involvement.*
- Adequate space and equipment are allocated for volunteers to perform their assignments.*
- Appropriate insurance is purchased to minimize volunteer liability.*
- Volunteer involvement is evaluated regularly.*

### **2. Policies and procedures provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers within the organization.**

- Governance and operational policies are in place and are reviewed regularly with input from board, staff and volunteers.*
- Standardized administrative procedures and records management practices are utilized by the volunteer department or program.*
- Policies and procedures are communicated to all staff and volunteers.*
- Policies and procedures are followed consistently and equitably.*
- Policies and procedures are consistent with national and provincial Human Rights Codes, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and provincial employment standards legislation.*

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**3. A qualified person is designated to be responsible for the volunteer program.**

- The designated person has an appropriate level of education and experience to manage the volunteer program.*
- A written job description for the designated person is developed and reviewed regularly.*
- The designated person is a member of the management or administrative team.*
- The designated person works collaboratively with staff and the local volunteer centre to encourage the effectiveness of the volunteer program.*
- Professional development opportunities are provided on a regular basis.*
- The performance of the designated person is reviewed regularly and includes feedback from staff and volunteers.*

**4. A screening process is clearly communicated and consistently delivered.**

- Screening is considered to be an essential process that continues throughout the volunteer's involvement with the organization.*
- All volunteer assignments are assessed for level of risk.*
- Screening measures are used according to the level of risk of the assignment.*
- All volunteers complete an application form and attend an interview.*
- Screening procedures are delivered consistently with no exceptions made for certain individuals or positions.*

**5. Volunteer assignments address the purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect their various abilities, needs and backgrounds.**

- Volunteers and staff (and unions) are consulted when developing new assignments.*
- Volunteer assignments have written descriptions that include duties, responsibilities, skills needed, time required and benefits.*

- 
- Volunteer assignments are developed to reflect the needs of the organization and the needs of volunteers.*
  - Volunteer assignments are reviewed periodically with staff, volunteers (and unions) to ensure relevance and value.*
  - Volunteers with special requirements or challenges can become involved with the organization.*
  - The level of risk is assessed and minimized for all volunteer assignments.*

**6. Volunteer recruitment and selection reaches out to diverse sources of volunteers.**

- Recruitment messages are realistic and clear about the volunteer assignment expectations.*
- Various techniques are used to recruit volunteers.*
- Recruitment messages advise that screening procedures are in place.*
- Genuine effort is made to recruit and select volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences to represent the community served by the organization.*
- Selection of volunteers is based on actual requirements and pre-determined screening measures.*

**7. Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization and its policies and procedures, and receive training for their volunteer assignments.**

- Volunteers receive information on the history, mission and structure of the organization.*
- Volunteers receive information on the policies and procedures that relate to their assignment.*
- Volunteers are given adequate training for performing their assignment without putting themselves or others at risk.*
- Volunteers are informed of the boundaries and limits of their assignment.*
- Volunteers have ongoing training opportunities to upgrade their skills and to learn of changes in the organization.*

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**8. Volunteers receive appropriate levels of supervision according to their task and are given regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.**

- The complexity and risk of each assignment determines the level of supervision.*
- Volunteers are assigned and introduced to their supervisors at commencement of their assignment.*
- The performance of volunteers is evaluated on a regular basis.*
- Random spot checks with volunteers (and clients) are used to check in on volunteer performance.*
- Volunteers are given and encouraged to use mechanisms for providing input to the organization.*
- Records are kept for each volunteer using a confidential, secure system.*
- Situations requiring reprimand and dismissal follow policies and procedures fairly and consistently while respecting the safety and dignity of all concerned.*

**9. Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valuable and integral members of the organization's human resources.**

- Staff is given training and recognition for working effectively with volunteers.*
- Input from volunteers is welcomed, and is solicited for the organization's planning and evaluation.*
- Volunteers are encouraged to grow within the organization.*
- Volunteers are included as equal members of the team.*

**10. The contributions of volunteers are regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods.**

- Senior management publicly acknowledges the efforts of volunteers.*
- Formal methods of recognition are delivered consistently.*
- Informal methods of recognition are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner.*

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## 5. Additional Resources

### **Universal Declaration on Volunteering: International Association for Volunteer Effort**

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) has adopted a *Universal Declaration on Volunteering* for all voluntary organizations. This declaration is currently under revision and will be released in 2001. The declaration provides broad standards for volunteering that can be adopted by organizations.

### **Standards of Practice: Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources**

The Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) is a professional organization of managers and directors of volunteer programs. CAVR has adopted standards of practice that guide the work of the manager of volunteer resources. As well, there may be provincial organizations that have similar standards. Copies of the Standards of Practice can be obtained by contacting CAVR at <http://www.cavr.org>.

### **Federal and Provincial Human Rights Codes**

Volunteer programs are also governed by the Canadian Human Rights Code and provincial human rights codes. Voluntary organizations should be aware of the content of these codes and ensure that their programs comply with the regulations identified in the codes.

### **National Education Campaign on Screening**

Volunteer Canada has developed a variety of resources designed to assist organizations in assessing and managing risk in their volunteer programs. These resources are available through the National Office or can be ordered online through [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).

### **Organizations**

Volunteer Canada  
430 Gilmour Street  
Ottawa Ontario CANADA  
K2P 0R8  
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