**Summary**

- People trying to complete CSOs have a difficult time finding positions, largely because they don't know where to start and they can't find positions that fit with their schedules.
- Although people completing CSOs sometimes encounter prejudice when looking for positions, often they find that volunteer managers are open to engaging them when asked directly.
- Volunteer managers may be hesitant to actively recruit people completing CSOs, because they don't know enough about the program and its requirements, and because they have concerns about the motivations of people who are forced to "volunteer".

## Community Service Orders (CSOs) - Frequently Asked Questions

**What are Community Service Orders?**

CSOs are a form of alternative sentencing designed to be less costly and punitive, providing an opportunity for individuals to develop pro-social behaviour. It's considered a form of "diversion" sentencing.

> "CSO is a court ordered sanction that directs a probationer or conditional sentence offender to perform a specific number of hours of community service work within a specified time period not exceeding 240 hours. Upon sentencing, the Judge will specify the number of hours to be completed on the Probation Order or Conditional Sentence." From St. Leonard's Community Services

**Who might get a Community Service Order?**

Individuals who receive CSOs are often first-time offenders involved in a non-violent crime. While this isn't the case for all individuals with CSOs, it is usually determined under these circumstances. Since a CSO is an alternative to incarceration, the associated crimes are usually less severe.

**How do I engage volunteers with CSOs?**

You should acknowledge the risk factor of all your volunteer roles, regardless of the potential volunteers in them. If you require police reference checks or vulnerable sector screenings for a role, then an individual with a CSO applying to the role would have the same requirement. You're not required to know what caused their court order, but you may need to know the number of hours they need to complete to satisfy the order.

**What can I do to show volunteers with CSOs that our program is right for them?**

- Ask if a potential volunteer has a specific number of hours to complete
- Have roles associated with specific project lengths that have a consistent number of hours
- Acknowledge that all potential volunteers are welcome to apply, regardless of their motivation
- Explicitly invite volunteers with CSOs to apply to applicable roles
- Ensure screening of all volunteers only asks for relevant information related to the role