



Introduction to Planning and Recruitment

Volunteer
Toronto



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This resource guide contains tools and templates to help you get started with planning for volunteer roles, recruiting new volunteers and starting the screening process. For more information on these topics, the “Planning for Volunteers” and “Recruiting & Selecting Volunteers” resource guides provide more details.

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What to Include in the Volunteer Handbook

Part of planning for volunteer involvement is ensuring your volunteer program has a systems, policies and/or procedures in place for volunteers. Creating a volunteer handbook will help you and your volunteers grasp the full extent of the organization's programs and effectively serve its goals. The information you include in your volunteer handbook will depend on the way your organization approaches volunteer involvement and the nature of the roles that volunteers will be fulfilling. Below are some of the things that you should consider.

Mission, Vision and Values

Your organization's mission, vision and values will help new volunteers gain a better understanding of the goals and purpose of your organization, and how their contribution to your organization will make a difference.

Structure of the organization

Information about the structure of your organization can help volunteers understand where their role and their program fit into the bigger picture. It will help them understand the reporting structure of the organization, and who else is involved in the development or delivery of the programs they contribute to.

Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures relevant to volunteer involvement in your organization can be included in the handbook itself, or information about where they can be found when volunteers need to refer to them can be provided. This will help volunteers understand both their rights and their responsibilities as a volunteer in your organization.

History of the organization

Knowing the history of your organization can help volunteers understand the context of their work, the importance of your organization in the community you serve, and the impact your organization has had over the years.

Programs and roles

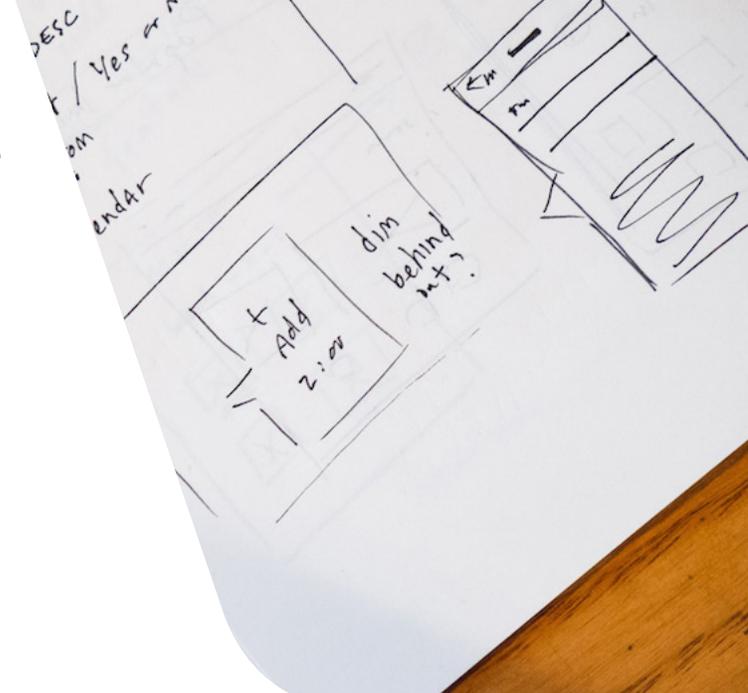
Information about your organization's current programs, and the volunteer roles within those programs, can help volunteers identify the roles that would be a good fit for them. It also provides them with the information they need to accurately represent your organization in the community.

Volunteer code of conduct

Including a volunteer code of conduct in your handbook will help volunteers understand what sort of behaviour is expected of them, and what the consequences are if they don't meet those expectations.

Contact information

Including the name and contact information of the people who supervise and support volunteers will help the volunteers feel supported by the organization and will make volunteer involvement run more smoothly for everyone involved.



Position Description Template

To help you structure your position description, this template indicates the most common elements volunteer recruiters include. Be sure to identify everything a potential volunteer might need to know so that they can determine if they are the right fit for your organization.

POSITION TITLE	The title should be brief and descriptive.
OBJECTIVE	Briefly describe the service being provided by the volunteer, how it will affect the clients being served, and how it fits in with the organization's mission.
TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	List all the tasks and responsibilities associated with the position. Be specific and break down tasks from beginning to end.
QUALIFICATIONS	Indicate the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience required for the position. Include hard skills (e.g., proficient in the use of Microsoft Office) and soft skills (e.g., works well with others).
COMMITMENT	Specify whether the position is short-term, long-term, occasional or ongoing. Specify the duration of the commitment, and the number of volunteer hours required (e.g., three hours per week for six months).
START DATE	Indicate whether there is a precise start date and if so, when it is.
LOCATION	Indicate the address where the volunteer work will take place and whether or not the location is accessible.
BENEFITS	List all benefits to the volunteer, such as learning new skills, meals provided, volunteer recognition events, and meeting new people.
ORIENTATION AND TRAINING	Indicate when and where orientation and training sessions will take place, and whether or not they are mandatory.
SCREENING REQUIREMENTS	Determine which screening steps to use based on the level of risk associated with the position. Indicate whether personal and/or professional references will be required, and whether or not a police records check will be required.

Why make a position description?

Position descriptions for volunteers make it easy to match the right person to the right person and allow candidates to know the expectations of the role. It can also help you organize and plan the recruitment process since you'll know the start date, screening requirements and anything else that may make the process take longer.

Determining What You're Looking For

Using this tool, you'll be able to identify the skills, attitude and knowledge you're seeking in a volunteer candidate. On this page, you'll find an example already filled out. Look for red flags that might cause an issue for this candidate. On the next page is a blank worksheet you can use when interviewing candidates.

Sample position: Host Program Volunteer

	WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?	BASIC	GOOD	EXCELLENT	WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT HELP ME DISCOVER THIS?
SKILL	<i>Ability to speak French</i>	Can understand words and meaning of questions, spoken slowly with one repetition if necessary. Can understand and ask basic questions on the phone in French. Pronunciation is understandable.	Understands words and meanings of questions with no repetition and mostly correct grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Can answer questions with little time for premeditation.	Speaks French fluently. Can speak very comfortably on the phone. Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and written French are correct.	Pourquoi désirez-vous devenir bénévole? Où avez-vous entendu parler de notre programme? Pourquoi désirez-vous être bénévole avec des personnes nouvellement-arrivées?
ATTITUDE	<i>Patience</i>	Can cite a situation, not related to newcomers, demonstrating patience while offering assistance. Indicates importance of listening to point of view of the other.	Understands culture differences and how these affect basic understanding of certain situations.	Has a 2+ years of experience with this specific type interaction. Mentions using different words or examples to facilitate understanding.	Lead question: Describe a situation where you had to demonstrate patience, particularly in a situation with a person who was a newcomer? Probe: How were you trying to help? What did you do? What were the results?
KNOWLEDGE	<i>Knowledgeable about activities & services in Toronto, particularly those of interest to newcomers</i>	Capable and willing to research information (can name three sources of information and how to access these). Is knowledgeable about and can get around easily with the TTC.	Enhanced knowledge of low cost leisure activities in Toronto (can name 5). Good knowledge of low cost stores and services in Toronto and where to get specialty foods.	Excellent knowledge of free activities in Toronto (can name more than 5). Excellent knowledge of service agencies geared to newcomers. Has positive previous experience helping newcomers to learn about Toronto.	What type of activities do you do with a newcomer that would be low-cost and interesting? How would you go about finding activities that you could do together?

Red Flags - Greater desire to learn French than to help newcomers
- Unwilling to make 6-month commitment

	WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?	BASIC	GOOD	EXCELLENT	WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT HELP ME DISCOVER THIS?
SKILL					
ATTITUDE					
KNOWLEDGE					

Red Flags

Planning, Recruiting & Selecting Checklist

This handy checklist will help you follow all the right steps covered in this workbook and get you engaging with volunteers quickly and efficiently. Following each step will ensure your volunteer program is successful from planning to selection.

Before

- Ensure that the position description is current and complete
- Determine the extent of communication required
- Determine what knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities will be assessed in the interview
- Determine how you will evaluate the potential volunteer's knowledge, attitudes and abilities
- Write questions, create scales and describe desirable answers
- Prepare and pre-test skill tests
- Determine who will be interviewing and how
- Determine if targeted recruitment is necessary and establish where and how to reach this population
- Develop recruitment messages that clearly state requirements of the positions
- Explore option of having open information sessions to recruit and inform potential volunteers
- Clearly state that volunteer engagement in the agency is based on the successful completion of the selection process
- Post position on Volunteer Toronto's online volunteer database

Initial and in-depth interview

- Respond to initial enquiries
- Pre-screen based on initial conversations (e-mail, telephone) and bona fide requirements
- Conduct interview(s); assess knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities
- Rate fit between position and potential volunteer
- Inform potential volunteer of results; if appropriate, make a conditional offer (if not, inform the potential volunteer of other options and provide feedback if requested)
- Check references and credentials
- Get police reference check, driving record or medical examination if appropriate for the position requirements
- Provide information on probation period

Complete critical paper trail

- Ensure that a file is created with application form
- Include all appropriate release forms related to position description, such as police checks, confidentiality forms, etc.

Orientation and probation

- Inform about specifics around probation (how long, assessment)
- Provide ongoing feedback & supervision
- Confirm end of probation

About Group Volunteering

What is group volunteering?

Group volunteering is a growing trend in the voluntary sector that involves groups of volunteers working together on a role or project. In some cases these roles are explicitly for groups, while others can be done by individuals or groups. Either way, a group could approach an organization for a role as organizations don't often recruit explicitly for groups for many volunteer roles.



Family volunteers



Corporate volunteers



Student/youth volunteers



GROUP VOLUNTEER CHALLENGES	EXAMPLE
<p>Schedules: For most group volunteers, it will be difficult to commit to a long-term or ongoing volunteer roles as extra logistics are required to coordinate all members of the group; consider opportunities that are “one-offs” or once a year as a viable option.</p>	<p>Working with a youth group that plays board games with seniors after school or on a weekend day – cater to the youth’s school schedules (and allow them time for homework and other activities) by only having board game time once a month or every couple months.</p>
<p>Skill-Level: When working with various age and skill-levels, having different opportunities to cater to different abilities within the volunteer activity is important to keep everyone engaged.</p>	<p>For family volunteers working on a community art project, have the younger kids work on individual smaller pieces, older youth working on larger pieces and the adults handling additional equipment and putting everything together.</p>
<p>Volunteer-Led: Your organization may be approached with the offer of a group of volunteers on a certain day, and you may be unprepared without a role to take them on. Sometimes these groups will suggest their own volunteer activity.</p>	<p>A corporate group approaches a youth shelter that is unable to take on a volunteer group on short notice. The group suggests that they can clean-up and rebuild part of the shelter’s backyard area on a given day.</p>
<p>Capacity: There could be a lack of capacity for an organization to adequately train and supervise the volunteers. By anticipating this issue, organizations can prepare guides or handbooks for group volunteers based on the roles to facilitate easier self-direction.</p>	<p>Organization that plants community gardens has seen interest in “family gardening days.” The organization has never managed more than 10 gardeners at a time, but can use the expertise of existing individual gardeners to help support families.</p>

Adapting Roles for Groups

Here are a couple examples of “solo” volunteer roles that can be adapted for different types of groups. Think of some of the volunteer roles your organizations offer and consider how they can be changed for family volunteers!

SOLO ROLE	FAMILY ROLE	CORPORATE GROUP ROLE	YOUTH GROUP ROLE
Warehouse packing volunteer	Families work together to create food/toy packages for at-risk youth and families – give them general information about recipients to encourage charitable and sharing values for children	A common corporate group role, departments or teams create a competitive edge to packing the most boxes for at-risk youth and families in a set time frame	Help connect youth groups with other youth in the community through food/toy packages that could be personalized by the youth who pack them
Special Event Volunteer	Encourage parents and kids to help with areas of special events (especially family friendly ones); allow children to be leaders to other youth while parents work on other roles	Set up corporate group as two-part ambassadors: one part is that corporation’s support of your organization (maybe they give out some kind of freebie) and the other part as mobilized fundraisers	Youth groups can learn valuable skills – e.g. customer service – across special event roles while still working together toward the event’s goal (fundraising, networking, training, celebrating, etc.)
Friendly visitor in a health care setting	Have families visit children or adults in hospitals or long term care facilities to create a sense of community and family for those receiving care	Prepare activities all over long term care home with seniors such as classes, games or storytelling and spread out corporate group volunteers	Youth group works with people in hospital care on a storytelling project about their lives, families or interesting stories – can be done in single visit or over multiple times and retold as story/play/video
Environment Clean-up			
Admin or Clerical			

Being Group Volunteer Ready

Group volunteering continues to evolve and gain in popularity amongst families, youth and corporations/businesses. More and more groups are looking for ways to get involved, so being ready for group volunteer opportunities will help you to properly maximize the impact of these activities. How can you rethink and adapt your volunteer relationships and engagement model to better suit – and prepare for – group volunteers? Use the questions on this page to help frame your thinking.

50

average number of roles listed as “Suitable for Groups” on volunteertoronto.ca



Group management questions

How can you pre-plan volunteer schedules and assign shifts for groups?

What methods can be used to be more flexible in your volunteer planning?

How can you recruit specifically for group volunteers?

What volunteer roles could work easily well for individuals and groups?

How can you manage and supervise group volunteers doing multiple tasks?

How can you recognize and appreciate group volunteer contributions in a meaningful and unique way?

How can you provide impact-driven tasks that can be completed in one or two shifts?

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