

*Creating an
Orientation Manual for Volunteers*

*A Template
for
Non-Profit Organizations*

**Compiled for
Volunteer Centre of Camrose and District
Camrose, Alberta**

Possible Methods of Orientation for Volunteers



Table of Contents

Item	Page #	Recommended Priority
Overview and Purpose of this Document	4	
A. Welcome Letter	5	A
B. Details of Your Organization	5	
1. Organization Mission Statement	6	A
2. Objectives / Goals of the Organization	6	A
3. Impact of the Organization	7	A
4. Organization Chart / Staff or Volunteer Listing	7	B
5. Site Map	8	C
6. Emergency Procedures	8	A
7. Hours of Operation	8	A
8. Vehicle Regulations / Parking	8	C
9. Confidentiality	9	A
10. Communications	10	B
a. Dealing with the Media	10	A
C. Volunteer Specific Information	11	
1. The Importance of the Volunteer	11	A
2. Why Volunteer with this Organization?	11	A
3. Paid Staff and Volunteer Relations	12	A
4. Statement of Organization's Commitment to Volunteerism	13	A
a. Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement	13	B
5. Personnel Policies	15	A
a. Screening	116	A
b. Volunteers' Code of Conduct	16	A
c. Standard of Appearance	17	A
d. Rest Breaks and Related Activities	17	A
e. Volunteer Recognition and Benefits	18	A
f. Grievance Policy	18	A
g. Human Rights / Sexual Harassment Policy	19	A
h. Resignation / Leave the Volunteer Program	19	A
6. Insurance and Liability Coverage	19	A
7. Position Description	20	A
8. Conclusion		

Overview and Purpose of this Document

- What do our volunteers need to know?
- Do volunteers need to understand the big picture or just their own piece of the puzzle?
- How can we minimize risks of misunderstandings, under-performing expectations, or overstepping boundaries?

If any of these questions have been raised by you or others in your not-for-profit organization, the pages of this template may help you to find some answers.

The Volunteer Centre Society of Camrose and District is pleased to offer you this template as a guide to developing your organization's own volunteer orientation manual. The needs of every organization will be different, depending upon the size and culture of the organization, the nature of the role of volunteers, the level of risk inherent in positions staffed by volunteers, and more. However, themes common to all organizations include the potential for volunteers to be engaged and invested in your cause or service; and to be powerful, effective voices in the community, speaking knowledgeably and persuasively about the good work performed by your organization. Proper orientation of your volunteers prepares them not only for success inside your organization, but also for the role of champion of your cause in the greater community.

This template is fairly exhaustive. Use it selectively, choosing, item by item, the components to include in your organization's own volunteer orientation manual. You may find the samples a helpful guide. Give attention to the needs of your volunteers in the layout of your own manual. For example, large font and generous white space is appreciated especially by mature volunteers or others who may have vision challenges. Strive for a balance that equips your volunteers to be effective within and beyond your doors; somewhere between overwhelmed and under-informed. A well thought out volunteer orientation is an essential tool in building an effective volunteer force, and a first step in retaining valuable human resources.

We wish to acknowledge the contributions of our own volunteers, Carol Green and Susan Mortensen, experienced managers of volunteers, in the development of this template. Thanks also to Pamela Moskie, whose organizational skills and volunteer management experience were instrumental in pulling the pieces together. Finally, thanks to the Reynolds-Alberta Museum for their inspiring example of a volunteer orientation manual.

We are under no illusions that this would be the final word on volunteer orientation manuals. If you have ideas to share with others about aspects of volunteer orientation not addressed in this template, we'd be happy to have your input. It is the collaborative spirit of the not-for-profit sector that makes our communities stronger.

A. Welcome Letter

A letter of welcome from the CEO or Executive Director adds a personal touch to integrating new volunteers into your organization. This letter can be brief and highlight some of the key aspects of the organization and the importance of volunteers in fulfilling the purpose of the organization. The following is a sample letter addressed to a new volunteer from the Executive Director – in this scenario the ED is different from the Volunteer Program Coordinator. All personal, organization and city names are fictional – thank you to the Camrose Adult Read and Write Program for the inspiration for this model.

Sample:

Dear Ann,

I am thrilled that you have chosen to volunteer with the Happyville Adult Literacy Program. Volunteers are a vital part of achieving our goals of making Happyville a more literate community and have played a key role in a number of activities in the past including acting as tutors, helping to coordinate awareness events and performing administrative duties around the office. I hope that you find the duties of your particular job description to be fulfilling and that your volunteer experience with us is rewarding and positive. The following information package includes details about our organization and the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or the Volunteer Program Coordinator – Mary Mayberry at 555-1234. Once again welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

*Jane Friendly
Executive Director
Happyville Adult Literacy Program*

B. Details of Your Organization

Provide enough information about your non-profit organization to allow the volunteer to understand the context in which s/he will be working. This will help to ensure a good match between your organization and its volunteers, allowing them to decide whether their beliefs, values, skills and experience are a congruent fit for the position they are about to undertake. Along with providing your volunteers with a copy of your organization's brochure, the following are important potential items to include in this section of your volunteer manual.

1. Organization Mission Statement

A mission statement is a paragraph which defines any organization's reason for existence. It embodies its goals, philosophies and intended activities essential to the identity of the organization. A mission statement clarifies the purpose of the organization to promote focus and helps to create a clear identity within the community. It is an important snapshot for the volunteer and may help clarify their own vision of how they can be involved in the fulfillment of your mission.

Sample: *Happyville Adult Literacy Mission Statement*

Happyville Adult Literacy seeks to improve and maintain the functional literacy of adults in our community and to respond to new and ongoing literacy needs through mutually beneficial student and tutor experiences and other initiatives.

2. Objectives/Goals of the Organization

This section includes specific courses of action for achieving your organization's mission. Defining the actual activities of your organization helps the volunteer get a general sense of where they can "plug in" and contribute.

Sample: *Happyville Adult Literacy Goals and Objectives*

- *Promote public awareness of the need for functional literacy and the purpose and goals of the program.*
- *Recruit, train and support volunteer tutors to work with adult literacy and ESL students.*
- *Provide an enjoyable and safe learning environment for all participants of the Program.*
- *Provide on-on-one learning opportunities to meet individual student needs as perceived by the coordinator and expressed by the student.*
- *Provide the required resources to achieve the expressed goals of the student such as staff, facilities, equipment, library or if required, access resources of other community organization and agencies.*
- *Network with other provincial and national literacy programs and organizations.*

3. Impact of the Organization

This statement places the organization within a context. How does the work of your organization affect the community? Why is it important that your organization exists? This section pertains to volunteer organizations of all kinds. Whether your focus is recreation or a particular social issue defining its impact on the community for your volunteers is helpful in creating a personal sense of connection to a larger whole. It can help inspire passion for the organization and create a sense of personal pride in volunteers by belonging to an important organization, no matter how big or small your impact on the community.

Sample: *Impact of Literacy - Happyville Adult Literacy's Contribution to Community*

Literacy is important to individuals.

Literacy allows people to:

- *Access to information that allows people to orient themselves in the world.*
- *Develop strong communication skills include reading with understanding, conveying ideas in writing, speaking so that others can understand, listening actively, and observing critically.*
- *Build a capacity of empowerment to express ideas and opinions with confidence that they will be heard and taken into account.*
- *Increase their capacity to solve problems and make decisions that increases independence, self-reliance, and the ability to take responsibility.*
- *Live a fuller and more participatory life.*

Literacy is important to local communities.

- *It is the foundational skill upon which personal problems can be solved and upon which personal responsibility can be fostered. When issues can be more readily solved at a personal level social issues begin to resolve at a social level. With more individuals empowered by the ability to read and write to take responsibility for their own lives and decisions the onus which is placed on social agencies is lessened.*
- *Literacy is the key to education and learning and education and learning are the key to social and economic development. In other words, emerging from this basic foundation is an individual's capacity to develop skills for living and working and hence contribute more fully to community health and development.*

4. Organizational Chart/ Staff or Volunteer Listing

Entering an organization can be daunting and sometimes confusing to a new volunteer. It is not always clear how things are organized or who is responsible for what aspects of the organization's mission. Developing an

organizational chart can be very helpful in clarifying some of these things. This provides the volunteer a map of “who’s who” and allows an avenue for communication should the volunteer have questions for specific members of the map. It also allows the volunteer to be able to communicate about the organization clearly to members of the public if asked.

Here are some things to consider in developing an organizational chart:

- If your organization is affiliated with other organizations create a chart to show this relationship. This may include partnerships, funding sources and umbrella organizations under which yours falls.
- Identify the hierarchy of your organization if there is one. Who is in each particular role and what are the duties prescribed to that role (briefly). This is especially important for identifying people with whom the volunteer may be interacting on a regular basis. Does your organization have a Volunteer Coordinator? Who supervises volunteers, or in other words, who is the new volunteer’s primary “go to” person?

5. Site Map

Depending on the size of your organization it may be necessary to provide each volunteer with a site map of your building and surrounding area. Giving a personal tour is ideal to familiarize the volunteer and make them feel at home. Be sure to identify places where the volunteer will do their work, where their supervisor may be or where they can take breaks.

6. Emergency Procedures

Including emergency procedures can set the new volunteer’s mind at ease, prevent injury and ease liability on your organization. What is your organization’s protocol in the case of an emergency? Your floor plan can include locations of emergency exits and first aid kits. Your organizational chart can include contact people who would be in charge should an emergency situation occur.

7. Hours of Operation

Indicate here when your organization is open to the public or when normal working hours are. Be clear as to whether this is the time during which volunteers will be required or if they will be performing their duties outside of normal business hours.

8. Vehicle Regulations/Parking

Being clear about parking and vehicle details can help create ease for volunteers in accessing your building and also promote safety. In this portion

of your manual include a map of designated parking areas, speed limits around your building, whether or not volunteer vehicles need to be registered and how to do that and any job specific information regarding vehicles (for example if a volunteer is to drive a vehicle belonging to your organization, what are expectations around insurance, maintaining fuel levels, vehicle maintenance, etc.)

9. Confidentiality

Most organizations ask that volunteers, who may interact with their clients, sign oath or pledge of confidentiality as a legal bond to protecting the people with whom they work. The following points are taken directly from the Alberta Government website www.pipa.gov.ab.ca and may serve as basic guide in the development of an Oath of Confidentiality. More detailed information about privacy protection legislation and non-profit organizations can be found at this same website.

- *Obtain consent for collecting, using and disclosing personal information, except when inappropriate (for example, in an emergency or when consent would compromise the availability or accuracy of the information). Obtain the consent in a form appropriate to the kind of information concerned. If an individual modifies or withdraws his or her consent, respect the changes.*
- *Collect personal information only for reasonable purposes and only as much as is reasonable for those purposes. Except when inappropriate, collect personal information directly from the individual concerned and inform the individual of how you will use and disclose the information.*
- *Use and disclose personal information only for the purposes for which it was collected, unless the individual consents or the Act permits the use or disclosure without consent.*
- *On request, provide an individual with information about the existence, use and disclosure of the individual's personal information and provide access to that information, if reasonable. On request, correct information that is inaccurate.*
- *Ensure that any personal information is as accurate as necessary for the collection purposes; ensure that personal information is secure; and keep the information only as long as reasonable for business and legal reasons.*
- *Designate an individual to make sure you comply with the Act and make information about the organization's management of personal information available on request.*

Source: [Alberta Government Services](#) and the [Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner](#).

10. Communications

Does your organization have a formalized way of communicating with your volunteers about the activities of the organization? What does it look like? Some organizations offer monthly/quarterly newsletters that keep people up to speed on what's happening. Other groups hold meetings and informal gatherings to create networks and share information. Depending on the size of your operation it may be sufficient to simply schedule meetings for volunteers with their coordinators. Websites are often utilized now as a forum for posting news and even receiving emails from people interested or involved in your organization.

a. Dealing with Media

Everyone in your organization, from the CEO to the Caretaker should know how to respond if approached by the media to give a statement about your organization or their experience there. It is important to designate someone to deal with the media specifically and ensure that that all paid and volunteer staff know who this person is. This takes pressure off your staff , prevents any misinformation and allows for consistency in communications with the public.

C. Volunteer Specific Information

Having now given an overview of the organization, this section is dedicated to clarifying the role of the volunteer within the organization.

1. The Importance of the Volunteer

- Explain why volunteers are important to your organization.
- List ways that volunteers have contributed in the past and are contributing currently.
- Include any major achievements or milestones of your organization and how volunteers were involved.
- Define what a volunteer is in your organization as well as clarify the relationship between any paid staff and the volunteer.

Sample: The Importance of the Volunteer to Happyville Adult Literacy

Over the 5 years that this organization has been operating we have seen many milestones. Three highly successful awareness campaigns and 1 major fundraiser are but a few of the highlights of our organization since its humble beginnings. In addition our program has grown from serving a handful of students in improving literacy skills to now serving over 4 dozen students from all walks of life. Volunteers have played a significant role in each of our milestones by contributing time, skills, enthusiasm and passion in all that they do. Volunteers have served in a variety of capacities in growing our organization. They have served to organize and implement a number of events, acted as part of steering committees, been public advocates within the community and of course acted as tutors to the increasing student population here at Happyville Adult Literacy. The work of our organization has been greatly extended through volunteer service into areas that, otherwise, could not be considered because of limited resources. We are grateful for all that our volunteers do and look forward to continued growth and relationship in the coming years.

2. Why Volunteer With This Organization?

After hearing about your organization and its stance on volunteerism, it is useful for your volunteers to express their own reasons for wanting to volunteer with you. This clarity will help both you and your volunteers to achieve goals and create a meaningful, fulfilling volunteer experiences. Armed with this individual understanding of your volunteers, your organization can be much more deliberate and specific in providing meaningful, often inexpensive recognition of your volunteers.

Following is a chart listing common reasons why people volunteer. You may wish to include this chart, or one you have customized to your organization, in

your volunteer application materials. This tool can also be used by your volunteer coordinator to help create a “perfect match” between volunteers and their assigned duties.

Sample: My Reasons for Wanting to Volunteer with Happyville Adult Literacy

X		X	
	To get out of the house		To make contacts in the museum community
	To meet new people or make new friends		As an academic requirement
	To establish a track record to get a new job		To be in charge of something
	To try out a new career		To feel useful/needed
	To build confidence/self esteem		To make a transition to a new life
	As a break from other stresses in my life		To gain respect
	To rebuild on old skill		To meet potential employers
	To help another person		To become an “insider”
	To be with friends who volunteer		To have fun
	Because I don’t like to say “no”		To get to know a new community
	To get recognition		As therapy
	As an alternative to giving money		To learn something new
	To do something I love		Because my mom/dad/teacher etc. said I had to
	To fulfill a community service requirement (for school, work, church)		I believe in the cause/goals/mission of the organization and want to support it.
	To test/challenge myself		To share what I know of the cause/topic
	To spend quality time with family by volunteering together		To do something different than my regular job
	To share my passion		Other:

3. Paid Staff and Volunteer Relations

If there are both paid and volunteer staff within your organization, clarify the relationship between these two important facets to maximize potential for positive working relationships. Explain:

- Who is responsible for what work?
- Who is responsible for volunteer supervision, given that volunteers may be working in areas that involve paid staff?
- How shall each be recognized?
- How much input shall volunteers and paid staff have into the development of your organization?
- What are the avenues for such input?

Following is a brief statement addressing some of these questions. However,

your organization may require a more involved look at this topic. Contact the Volunteer Centre of Camrose and District if your organization would like to access additional resources and samples in this area.

Sample:

Paid staff and volunteers come together at Happyville Adult Literacy to work toward achieving the mission, goals and objectives of the organization. Both contribute in significant ways and volunteers are seen to compliment the work done by paid staff. Volunteers do not replace or displace paid positions. We value the experience and insights of both paid and volunteer staff and encourage feedback about our organization, processes and programs. Such feedback can be passed through respective supervisors or addressed at our quarterly General Meeting.

4. Statement of Organization's Commitment to Volunteerism

Some organizations choose to adopt the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement as a statement that defines their values and beliefs around volunteerism – this can be included in your manual to clarify your position to your volunteers. Knowing that you take volunteerism seriously can be an important point when volunteers are choosing organizations in which to invest their time and skills.

a. Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

Following is a summary of elements of the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. If your organization does choose adopt this Code, it is important to invest time in identifying what each statement means for your organization. Adopting this code will help create a volunteer program that has integrity and encourages the mutual commitment of volunteer and organization. If you would like assistance in achieving this standard, call the Volunteer Centre of Camrose and District to discuss the support available.

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

Volunteers have rights. 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.*

Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Standard 1: Mission-based Approach

The board of directors, leadership volunteers and staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose and mission.

Standard 2: Human Resources

Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources team. The organization has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mission, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support the volunteer program, and establishing policies for effective management.

Standard 3: Program Planning and Policies

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

Standard 4: Program Administration

The organization has a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for the volunteer program.

Standard 5: Volunteer Assignments

Volunteer assignments address the mission or purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect the abilities, needs and backgrounds of the volunteer and the organization.

Standard 6: Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out and involve a diverse volunteer base.

Standard 7: Screening

A clearly communicated screening process is adopted and consistently applied by the organization.

Standard 8: Orientation and Training

Each volunteer is provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and practices, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer receives training customized to the volunteer assignment and the individual needs of the volunteer.

Standard 9: Supervision

Volunteers receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and are provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.

Standard 10: Recognition

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

Standard 11: Record Management

Standardized documentation and records management practices are followed and in line with relevant legislation.

Standard 12: Evaluation

The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the organization are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

5. Personnel Policies

For organizations with paid staff, much of their personnel policies will apply only to those receiving a pay cheque. However, a careful review of personnel policies may yield some policies that apply to all who work toward achieving the organization's mission, regardless of pay.

Some organizations choose to include in their volunteer manuals their entire policy statements, where they apply to volunteers. Others summarize in a few

statements their policies and procedures on specific issues. Such a summary should be accompanied by a reference to the full policy and information on where a volunteer can access it if interested.

Your policy documents may include:

a. Screening

Screening is a process that helps organizations to select the most suitable candidates for particular roles and engage them in a way that helps to ensure success for the volunteers and the organization. Outline your processes for screening of volunteers and explain that it is important to the safety of your clients and the integrity of your organization. Potential volunteers are much more accepting of screening procedures when they understand that they are a part of standard practice and applied consistently. The following is a list of possible screening procedures:

- Application form
- Resume
- Interview(s)
- Agreement for Volunteer Involvement in accordance to job responsibilities
- Standard Release Form – This is your organization’s release of liability form should any harm come to the volunteer during their time with you.
- Driver’s Abstract – if applicable.
- Pledge /Oath of Confidentiality
- Reference Checks
- Police Record Check – Volunteers living within the City of Camrose will require a form to be completed by your organization in order to receive this service at a reduced fee. RCMP performs this service at no charge for residents of the County.
- Child Welfare Check
- Orientation
- Probation Period
- Training requirements
- Buddy System / Mentoring of new volunteers
- Supervision / Spot checks
- Evaluation process

b. Volunteers’ Code of Conduct

Before getting into the specific responsibilities of a particular position description, many organizations articulate a general “Code of conduct” by which volunteers (and paid staff) are expected to abide.

Sample: *Happyville Adult Literacy Volunteer Code of Conduct*

- *Take your commitment to our organization to heart, performing your duties to the best of your ability.*
 - *Honour confidentiality.*
 - *Respect the mission and goals of Happyville Adult Literacy.*
 - *Deal with conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner as outlined in this manual.*
 - *Respect the property of Happyville Adult Literacy.*
 - *Do not accept valuable gifts or money from learners.*
 - *Be courteous, friendly and cooperative.*
 - *Offer constructive feedback about our organization in an appropriate manner.*
 - *Be willing to learn and take part in orientation and training sessions.*
 - *Follow through on commitments and advise your supervisor if you are unable to work as scheduled.*
 - *Demonstrate respect for the direction and decisions of your supervisor(s).*
 - *Treat co-workers (paid and unpaid), clients and members of the public fairly and without discrimination.*
- This list is not exhaustive and may not cover every situation or provide you with a set of absolute standards.*

c. Standard of Appearance

Organizations often believe that behavior and appearance of staff (paid and unpaid) reflects on the reputation of the organization itself. A section in your orientation manual about appearance will guide new volunteers and help them determine if the culture of this organization is a good fit for them. Your organization may have requirements that are more stringent or lenient than those below, but this list may provide some benchmarks to consider:

- Nametags are required whenever you are present in your volunteer capacity.
- Dress appropriate for your duties. For example, physical work requires clothing that is comfortable and durable.
- Hats and t-shirts with logos are not permitted.
- Clothes cannot be torn, frayed, dirty or reveal any part of the cleavage, midriff or buttock.
- Make-up and jewelry must be minimal especially in regard to facial jewelry.

d. Rest Breaks and Related Activities

As mandated by the province, public areas are to be smoke free. It may be

important to reiterate this point for the sake of clarity with your volunteers. Point out any special areas designated for smoking, eating /coffee breaks and whether there are food services on the premises. Many organizations ban the use of alcoholic beverages on site or prior to engaging volunteer activities. Such policies should be clearly stated.

e. Volunteer Recognition and Benefits

Besides having an organization which approaches volunteerism with integrity (indicated by inclusion of the Canadian Code of Volunteer Involvement), it is important to note the other “perks” of being involved with your group. List the various ways that the contributions of volunteers are acknowledged within your organization. Demonstrating that volunteers are appreciated contributes to a meaningful experience, encourages volunteer retention and sends the message to the community that your organization is *the* place to volunteer! Consider the wide range of possibilities for acknowledging volunteers, from ensuring that they are given a friendly greeting each time they enter your premises, to participating in your community’s National Volunteer Week celebrations (contact your Volunteer Centre for details) or planning your own recognition events. Don’t neglect opportunities to include volunteers in staff development training, where appropriate. Find more ideas for volunteer recognition at:

www.energizeinc.com

www.volunteer.ca

www.envision.ca

f. Grievance Policy

What is your organization’s process for dealing with complaints or concerns? Provide your volunteers with a standard process for handling these situations properly – the same process that applies to paid staff. If your organization does not have written policy, consider this very simple example.

Sample: Happyville Adult Literacy - Grievances/Appeals/Concerns

- *In situations where differences arise between volunteers or between volunteers and staff it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.*
- *If a third party is needed the Volunteer Program Coordinator is to be informed and involved. Under no circumstances shall differences be made public or involve other members of the organization.*
- *If the grievance is in regard to the Program Coordinator, an appeal may be made to Happyville Adult Literacy Board.*

g. Human Rights/Sexual Harassment Policy

A sample of a human rights/ sexual harassment policy can be found at www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/

h. Resignation/Leaving the Volunteer Program

Describe “exit protocol” expected within your organization, whether that is a telephone call or a written letter of resignation when a volunteer intends to discontinue serving your organization. If a volunteer ‘signs on’ for a predetermined time with a specific ending point, you may determine that no notice of resignation is necessary. However those endings happen, don’t miss the opportunity to send every volunteer who leaves on good terms a note of thanks. While they may not serve in your organization any longer, their positive attitude toward your cause or service will be known in the community.

Many organizations choose to do an exit interview/questionnaire which allows the volunteer to state reasons for leaving and reflect upon their experience during their commitment. This is a useful tool for strengthening your volunteer program.

Dismissing a volunteer is never a pleasant task, but it is made much easier if the grounds for terminating a volunteer’s service are clear from the beginning. Grounds for termination can be stated either in this section of the orientation manual, or included as a part of the position description. Consider including a short list of ‘deal-breakers’ like breach of confidentiality, failure to carry out duties assigned in position description and failure to complete required training.

6. Insurance and Liability Coverage

Just as employees must be accounted for under your organizations liability insurance, so too must your volunteers. Ensure that your coverage is suitable for the activities of volunteers within your organization. Be sure to discuss special event coverage with your provider if applicable. Provide volunteers with a brief statement to describe what insurance coverage is in place to protect them.

7. Position Descriptions

A position description is an essential part of a satisfying volunteer experience. It is a means for both you and your volunteer to understand the volunteer's role in achieving your organization's vision and goals. People are better able to determine whether the position suits their needs and skills when a written description of their role is provided at the outset. They are also more likely to succeed in meeting your expectations when those are clearly articulated.

While the position description is an essential tool in welcoming a new volunteer, is best kept as a separate document from the orientation manual. That manual is a standard document that applies to every volunteer. Even the smallest of organizations likely needs more than one volunteer position description, but any one volunteer only requires that one that applies to him/her. Regardless of how it is presented, no volunteer should be invited into an organization without a written description of the position.

Sample: Position Description Template

Position Title (Should describe the role. Note that "Volunteer" alone describes a rate of pay, not a position).

Responsible to: (name of position that supervises this volunteer position)

Job Importance: How does this role contribute to the well-being of clients and/or the success of this organization?

Responsibilities:

- *Provide details of expectations.*
- *These are the details upon which a performance evaluation should be based.*
- *Include expectations for participating in training.*
- *Detail any reporting requirements on client activities, tasks, time sheets, other.*

Qualifications:

- *What are the minimum qualifications and credentials necessary to perform this role?*

Recommended Skills:

- *Include previous work experience and personal qualities that will help ensure success in this role.*

Evaluation:

- *Describe how and when performance is evaluated, and whether this is an opportunity for the volunteer to provide feedback on the position.*

CONCLUSION

Many excellent resources exist to support not-for-profit organizations in developing effective, successful volunteer programs that support mission-focused work. This template was developed to provide a resource to our local organizations who expressed a need for guidance in the area of orientation of volunteers.

Additional resources, both print and electronic, are available locally through the Volunteer Centre of Camrose and District (email cdss3@telusplanet.net.) And finally, a resource that must not be overlooked is the experience that managers of volunteers gain and can share with each other. We welcome your contributions and recommendations to make this resource a valuable piece of collective wisdom shared for the benefit of community.



#3, 4516-54 Street
Camrose AB, Canada
T4V 4W7
Phone: (780)672-0141
Email: cdss3@telusplanet.net