

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

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Overview: Elements of the Code

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement consists of three important elements:

1) Values for Volunteer Involvement

Core statement on the importance and value of volunteer involvement in voluntary organizations and Canadian society

2) Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement

Principles that detail the exchange between voluntary organizations and volunteers.

3) Organizational Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Standards that organizations should consider in developing or reviewing how volunteers are involved in their organizations.¹

1) *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.

- It creates opportunities for voluntary organizations to accomplish its goals by engaging and involving volunteers, and it allows volunteers an opportunity to grow and give back to the community in meaningful ways through voluntary organizations.

2) *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 have responsibilities. 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.

3) *Organizational 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.

Adopting Code

The following is a motion that the Board of Directors can use to “adopt the Code” or “renew their adoption of the Code”.

Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

Adopting the Code

Motion

“That the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement be adopted by this organization as an integral part of operational practice, to be made known to every employee and volunteer, and to be made readily available to every staff member and volunteer for consistent reference and consultation.”

Motion to renew

In light of the recent revisions to the organizational standards outlined in the Canadian code for Volunteer Involvement (The Code), the Board renews its adoption of the Code as per motion xxxx (add article or motion number of original adoption, as required), passed xxxx (add date of original motion).