



# COMMUNITY LEADERS

## How to build a thriving volunteer program



community food centres  
CANADA [cfccanada.ca](http://cfccanada.ca)





## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual captures the essential ingredients for creating a thriving volunteer program in community-based organizations, particularly those working with people who are experiencing income and food insecurity. Our aim is to address the approaches that are unique to working with volunteers who are also program participants (users of your organization’s services). We believe that prioritizing participants in volunteer roles offers multiple benefits — from challenging the giver-receiver dynamic that is common in charities, to adding a layer of leadership and skill-building to your existing programs.

Approach a volunteer program just like any other program: with clear objectives and measurable outcomes. And, like your other programs, dedicate funding to your participant-volunteer program. This manual will help you make the case for funding by helping you create a program that is tied to your organization’s strategic goals and can demonstrate impact.

Produced with our partner Community Food Centres (CFCs) and Good Food Organizations (GFOs) in mind, this manual is grounded in Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC)’s Good Food Principles. You can use the manual to manage volunteers who are working in food access or food skills programs, and community-building or fundraising events.

Whether you are looking to build a volunteer program from the ground up, or revamp an existing program, this manual offers the foundation, complete with inspiring stories and adaptable templates to help you on your way.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Food skills volunteer,  
Mount Paul Community Food Centre*



# INTRODUCTION

Most community-based non-profits will be quick to say that volunteers are the backbone of their work. It's therefore essential to be intentional about how volunteers are recruited, oriented, and trained to work at your agency and with the people who participate in your programs. Because staff alone are not able to fulfill the mandate of your organization, your volunteers are vital. It's important to actively communicate your philosophy and how it translates into day-to-day work with respect to policies, processes, and program and service delivery.

Volunteer retention is a major issue for organizations who rely on them for delivering programs. Volunteers stay when they feel appreciated, are participating in meaningful work, and can use existing skills and develop new ones. Creating a comprehensive volunteer program with objectives, intended outcomes, and an evaluation plan addresses retention issues, enhances your programs, and makes workloads manageable for staff. Plus, creating a cohesive, resilient, and robust volunteer program leads to a fun and motivating workplace culture!

The Volunteer Engagement Cycle outlines all the stages of working with volunteers. This all-encompassing approach addresses attrition, focuses on volunteer appreciation, and provides a supportive structure for volunteers and program staff. A volunteer coordinator who oversees the Volunteer Engagement Cycle will



*Ann, NorWest Community Food Centre*

ensure that volunteers are going through a fair and consistent process in line with your organization's objectives, and will find the right roles for interested applicants.

A clearly laid out program demonstrates the value of volunteers to your organization's mandate and the community you serve, and builds the capacity of individual volunteers. With outcomes like these, you'll likely attract funders to launch and/or sustain your volunteer program.

## SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER

### **Carolyn, Dartmouth North CFC**

After working in a packing plant for many years, Carolyn was out of a job. She was living on social assistance in a small apartment in Halifax, and feeling isolated and lonely. "I was sick of sitting at home, so when my friend told me about Dartmouth North [Community Food Centre], I decided to come over and check it out." She started coming for the community meals and quickly made friends — you'd regularly find her chatting with new friends around the wooden tables sharing stories. After some time, Carolyn became a volunteer because she wanted to help out too. She began volunteering two days a week cooking for the drop-in meal programs and café. "Pitching in makes me feel good," Carolyn explains.



*Carolyn, Dartmouth North Community Food Centre*

"I like doing stuff for someone else. When I was home alone, it was like I was in a shell. Now I feel more open about myself."





# VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

*Community garden volunteer  
Natoaganeg Community Food Centre*

adidas



# VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

Defining your volunteer program's purpose and philosophy first ensures that your organizational values, mission, and mandate are embedded into policies and practice.

Community Food Centres Canada's five Good Food Principles are an example of a philosophical framework that can be applied to the Volunteer Engagement Cycle. Our principles are centred around social justice values and promote individual and community strengths, focus on solutions, and align with equity-based approaches. Our partner Community Food Centres and Good Food Organizations use them to develop community-centric programs with an emphasis on health equity and social inclusion.

Orienting your volunteer program around the Good Food Principles and placing participants in volunteer roles enhances community engagement and reciprocity between your community members and your organization.

## PRINCIPLE 1 : Taking action from the individual to the systemic level

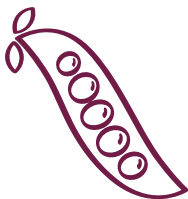


Value, welcome and encourage community members who have a lived experience of poverty and food insecurity to become a part of the organization beyond being recipients of services.

As volunteers, individuals can take a more active role in your organization and have a say in program operations.

The food justice lens broadens the spectrum of volunteers interested in becoming involved in your organization and is less likely to attract those who want to “serve the poor.”

## PRINCIPLE 2 Believing and investing in the power of good food



The healthy food environment that your organization aims to create includes diverse food offerings and empowers volunteers to share their own culinary skills, cultural traditions, recipes, and gardening knowledge.

Your organization can promote a volunteer culture of inclusivity by using food as a tool to foster community engagement.

## PRINCIPLE 3 Creating an environment of respect and community leadership



Actively recruit people who participate in your services and programs to become volunteers and work to reduce barriers and create realistic criteria for involvement.

Engage with volunteers, create pathways for leadership and skills building, and ask for their input as you evolve your programs.



## PRINCIPLE 4 Meeting people where they're at



Create volunteer positions that can be adapted to suit a person's ability, preference, and skill level.

Recognize that volunteers who also attend your programs come to the table with food skills and knowledge that they can pass on and share with other community members and staff.

Offer options for accessibility; for example, cover public transportation costs.

## PRINCIPLE 5 Aiming high for our organization and our community



Dedicate adequate staff time and resources to volunteer coordination — ideally via a volunteer coordinator position — so that the program is held accountable to the mission and principles of the organization.

Hold regular information sessions that explain your work, social justice lens, volunteer positions, and upfront expectations for involvement regarding time commitment, tasks, etc.


Evaluate your volunteer program to highlight its impacts and outcomes, and how it is helping your organization achieve its objectives.

Demonstrate to funders how volunteer positions are created with the intention for individuals to use and enhance their skills and knowledge.

*“When people show up, I treat them with dignity and respect. When I first came, my role here was to build community through friendship and love. Doesn't matter if the person needs 20 minutes to listen, you listen! And truly listen. Don't pretend to listen. That's the most important thing.”*

— Volunteer at **The Alex Community Food Centre**





# THE BASICS OF THE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT CYCLE

*Harvest rescue volunteers  
Nelson Community Food Centre*



# THE BASICS OF THE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT CYCLE

You can use the Good Food Principles as a lens to guide your volunteer program, and the Volunteer Engagement Cycle as the workflow of the program. The cycle's primary goal is to support the volunteers who enable your programs to achieve their goals. The cycle offers a clear and consistent process that can reduce miscommunication and unmet expectations.

Once your staff understand and agree on the basic cycle, you can begin implementing it. The philosophy and framework you develop will inform policies and processes, and will bring the Volunteer Engagement Cycle to life within your organization. Here is a generic Volunteer Engagement Cycle that you can adapt to your context.



After school program volunteer, The Table Community Food Centre

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Outline the yearly workflow of the volunteer program by detailing key events and activities. Identify barriers to participant involvement and remove or reduce them whenever possible by issuing a survey to volunteers when they leave and at determined times throughout their involvement.

## POSITION DESIGN

Use a standard format when building position descriptions to create consistency and save time (see Sample Volunteer Job description, Appendix D). Clearly outline the role by including tasks, location, time, and any specific skills required. Get feedback from program coordinators and volunteers, and adjust the role as required.

## RECRUITMENT

Identify where you can find people with the availability and skills for your roles. Start by posting simple flyers or notices in your space and build from there. You can reach different people by hanging posters (see Template Outreach Poster, Appendix O) in career centres and educational institutions,

## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT CYCLE

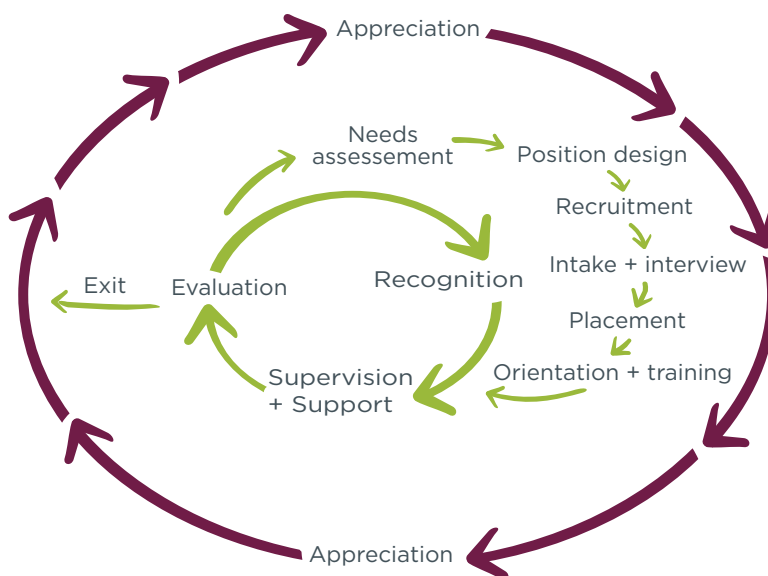


Diagram of a Volunteer Engagement Cycle: The cycle is constantly in motion. The volunteer coordinator continuously works on each part of the cycle within each program and with each potential and current volunteer. "Appreciation" is not only an event or a specific action – it is integrated at every step of the cycle and with each policy, practice, and process.



and by spreading the postings over email and social media. Holding a volunteer information session each month at the same day and time can be a great way to recruit. If you aren't able to fill all your positions, considering testing the time and day of the week you hold your information session to see if you can attract more people. Cast a broad net and keep track of where people heard about your volunteer program. Word of mouth is critical to developing a volunteer program with a focus on participant engagement.

### INTAKE AND INTERVIEW

Develop and use standardized processes to ensure that your intake is fair and consistent. Good planning and role development will help streamline the intake process and place volunteers faster.

### PLACEMENT

Try to have people commit to a specific role in a specific program at a specific time. For example, once a week on Wednesdays for a three-hour shift. Fluctuating shifts complicates things; opt to do so only as required.

### ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Create a checklist of all the things a new volunteer will be shown and told on their first day. Break down the list by which staff are responsible. Creating a checklist helps ensure everyone receives the same quality of orientation and training. Be sure to include an orientation to health and safety protocols and trainings required for the different volunteer spaces and roles.

### SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

When volunteers begin to work in their assigned roles be sure to provide them with a clear understanding of who supervises their work area and who to connect with if they have questions or concerns. At the start of each shift supervisors should check in with volunteers to make sure they feel prepared to contribute, and to provide any unique instructions for that day's activities. Ensure that a supervisor is always close at hand to address questions as they arise, and close each shift with a quick check in.

### EVALUATION

Regularly undertake evaluations as a way to harvest data and feedback on your volunteer program that could be used to seek funding to support it. Evaluate as you go through each step of the cycle. That way, your policies and practices do not become stagnant and your volunteer program evolves with the needs of your organization and participants. Clear and honest feedback, in both directions, is key to a healthy volunteer program. Seek out opportunities for conversations with volunteers as a

## Did you hear that?

Word of mouth is one of the best ways to promote your organization, especially among newcomers. According to CFCC's 2018 Annual Program Survey, 55% of participants born outside of Canada learned about their Community Food Centre through a friend or family member.

group, individually, and anonymously, and keep adapting based on that feedback.

### RECOGNITION

Sharing appreciation and recognizing the critical role volunteers provide to your work is an ongoing process in the volunteer engagement cycle. Volunteer efforts and impact should be recognized at the end of each shift, as well as through more formal methods including volunteer appreciation events, recognition in newsletters or on social media, acknowledge at special events, etc. Letting volunteers know their time, energy and commitment lets them know that they're efforts are valued.

### EXIT

In addition to ongoing evaluation and feedback, offering volunteers a chance to provide final feedback when leaving their posts is an important step in the process. Doing so gives volunteers a chance to reflect on their time and offer any suggestions to improve the experience.



## RELATED RESOURCES

**Template volunteer coordinator work plan** (Appendix A)

**Sample volunteer coordinator job description** (Appendix C)

**Volunteer interview form** (Appendix J)

**3 month volunteer check in survey** (Appendix M)

**Volunteer exit survey** (Appendix N)

**Template outreach poster** (Appendix O)

A man wearing a blue baseball cap and a black polo shirt is smiling broadly in a kitchen. He is looking upwards and to the right. In front of him on a counter are a clear plastic container with green herbs, a large stainless steel mixing bowl, and a large glass jar containing yellow grains. The background shows kitchen equipment like a range hood and shelves with pots.

## WHO VOLUNTEERS AND WHY?

*Community meal volunteer  
NorWest Community Food Centre*



# WHO VOLUNTEERS AND WHY?

Regardless of the intended purposes of your volunteer program, people volunteer for many reasons. Understanding why someone wants to volunteer can prevent conflict and give you space to meet a volunteer “where they’re at” (see Chapter 1, Good Food Principle #4) while ensuring that the work is done with organizational objectives in mind. Here are some examples of why folks volunteer:

- Retired and has extra time
- New to the city and wants to meet people
- Student who wants to get a reference or work their community service volunteer hours
- Uses the program and services and want to give back
- Needs to support closure/resolution of court/probation order to complete community service
- Sees volunteering as part of their religious or spiritual beliefs
- For someone in recovery, a 3-4 hour weekly commitment may help with establishing a routine and support
- Will get increased social welfare benefits (i.e., transportation allowance)
- Donor and wants to be part of the organization where they financially contribute
- Wants to utilize a skillset they have not used in a while or learn a new skill (e.g., gardening, cooking)
- Lives alone and wants to socialize and make friends
- Needs a reference or wants to learn a skill to improve job prospects or Canadian experience
- Advocate for food security and anti-poverty
- Loves the agency and want to be a part of the work

Shaping your program and volunteer information sessions (see Appendix B) with some of these perspectives in mind increases the breadth of volunteers you will attract and establishes common ground in objectives and purpose.

## Volunteer demographics

According to our 2018 Annual Program Survey across Community Food Centres:



**22%**  
of participant-volunteers were unemployed



**48%**  
were retired



**2/3s**  
of participant-volunteers had an annual household income of less than \$30,000

### Dan, Mount Paul CFC

Before Dan started volunteering at Mount Paul Community Food Centre in Kamloops, BC he had often felt isolated. He was living in subsidized housing and found it challenging to be healthy on a limited income. Deciding he wanted to start volunteering, he got connected to the CFC through Volunteer Kamloops. Dan immediately began to help out in several programs and found the Centre to be a safe place where he could relax and be himself without the social pressures of fitting in. He soon became more social, attended more regularly, and tried new activities like cooking and gardening. Dan said he found working with the staff and community to be inspiring: “It’s positive and super motivating to be here, that’s why I keep coming back.” He has now been volunteering for several years and has even taken on leadership and mentorship roles at the Centre.



**VOLUNTEER  
COORDINATOR ROLE**

*Seniors lunch volunteers  
The Local Community Food Centre*



# VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR ROLE

Though not always possible, it's ideal to have a dedicated staff person in charge of your volunteer program. Having someone implement the Volunteer Engagement Cycle will increase efficiency for the organization on the whole and provide extra support for program coordinators and volunteers. If the role is not clearly outlined, things can get messy and unnecessary conflict can occur between staff.

The following are some ideas for how to curate the volunteer coordinator role.

If you don't have a volunteer coordinator, staff can apply the tasks as a way to support volunteers. Later in this chapter, we share other ideas for volunteer management in the absence of a volunteer coordinator. The goal is to ensure that all volunteers are treated equally and that a clear and consistent process guides their participation.

## COOPERATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS AND PROGRAM COORDINATORS

A volunteer coordinator acts as the main point of contact for volunteers and ensures the Volunteer Engagement Cycle is constantly in play.

A program coordinator is a staff member who runs a specific food program such as a drop-in meal, kitchen, or garden program.

Defining the parameters of the volunteer coordinator and program coordinators will ensure clarity of roles for all involved and help avoid confusion or conflict. Ultimately, a volunteer coordinator and program staff need to work closely to ensure a positive and seamless experience for volunteers. Sometimes their roles will overlap and they can develop a collaborative solution for how to move forward.

## SAMPLE: ROLES IN WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

	Volunteer coordinator	Program coordinator
Information session	x	
Intake process	x	
Interviewing applicant	x	
Placement	x	
Administration, securing files, explanation and paperwork (e.g., sign code of conduct)	x	
Orientation	x	
Onboarding/training	x	x
Scheduling	x	
Recording attendance/hours		x
Dealing with complaints/conflict	x	x
Supervising		x
Offering feedback on performance		x
Transferring volunteer position	x	
Terminating position	x	x
Writing letters of reference (for social assistance, courts, immigration, job application)	x	x
Writing/updating volunteer position and description	x	x
Organizing volunteer appreciation events	x	
Providing referrals or additional topical training for volunteers (e.g., food handling, interpersonal skills)	x	

## SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Katherine Carey is the Volunteer and Communications Coordinator at the Dartmouth North Community Food Centre. Her role is split between volunteer coordination three days per week and communications two days per week. Most of her role as volunteer coordinator consists of recruiting and screening volunteers, creating a volunteer schedule, and providing monthly orientations. She also checks in regularly with program staff to identify potential needs for volunteer roles. “It’s really important to have a strong relationship with program staff and identify volunteer needs as early as possible,” she shares. “It takes time to recruit, screen, and schedule volunteers for a role.” Katherine strongly believes in having a designated volunteer coordinator as it enables program staff to focus on running their programs and ensures there’s a strong, consistent system for volunteer recruitment and retention.



*Katherine Carey, Dartmouth North Community Food Centre*

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE FUNDS TO HIRE A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

If your organization is not in a position to hire a volunteer coordinator but requires a volunteer base in order to run programs, you need to create a system that matches your organizational capabilities. Establish a consistent way to manage volunteers — left to their own devices, multiple staff will end up spending inordinate amounts of time recruiting, screening, orienting, and placing volunteers, and less time focusing on program delivery and development. Some staff have stronger abilities and knowledge in onboarding, for example, so having different staff onboard volunteers could lead to higher levels of attrition, complaints, and conflict. Without a standard management system, your programs may become vulnerable and unsustainable to run and your staff will end up with unmanageable workloads.

### **Here are some options for what to do without a volunteer coordinator:**

- Have one staff member dedicate a day per week to providing a basic volunteer management system. This person would:
  - Be the primary contact for all inquiries until the volunteers are placed — direct all phone calls, walk-ins, and email to this person
  - Have each staff member write up their requirements for the year including position descriptions
  - Ask staff to update volunteer vacancies on a weekly/monthly basis
  - Be responsible for a standardized intake process and volunteer screening
  - Explain policies and codes of conduct, and get signatures from volunteers
  - Place volunteers into positions, set the parameters of their shift, and schedule their shift.
  - Introduce the volunteer to the program coordinator and make it clear the volunteer is now reporting to them
- Join your local volunteer association (you can post volunteer opportunities through their networks). Plus, you can send your program staff to their meetings and low-cost trainings on volunteer management.
- Break down the key actions and responsibilities of



the volunteer program as a team and assign them in ways that make sense based on your staffing structure. Each staff member will be responsible for their volunteers, but have a similar process that they work from regarding intake, code of conduct, level of commitment, training and orientation, job descriptions, etc.

- Team up with a like-minded organization (i.e., one that does food programming) and work together to jointly recruit and do outreach for volunteers
- Approach local colleges and universities to see if they have a student in a relevant field who may be able to complete an academic or community service placement by running your volunteer program (community development, social services, and non-profit/volunteer management are good programs to investigate).

## RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT A DEDICATED COORDINATOR AT MOUNT PAUL CFC

Mount Paul Community Food Centre in Kamloops, BC has a fairly small program staff of five and no dedicated volunteer coordinator in place. To manage their volunteers, they've gotten creative. Each program staff plays a part in building volunteer teams for their specific program. "We have been able to meet our volunteers where they are at," says Dawn Christie, the CFC's program manager. "When somebody comes in the door, at least one staff will have a conversation with them about what their key interests are, and what they are looking for, whether that's growing, cooking, advocacy, or specific tasks such as greeting people at the door, or watering the garden." Once they're placed in a program, it's the program coordinator's role to check in on them and ensure they are effectively involved and appreciated.

Since they don't have a dedicated staff person to recruit new volunteers, Mount Paul CFC promotes volunteer opportunities through things like social media, Volunteer Kamloops, and community events.

Using several methods and being open to a variety of ways to welcome new volunteers has also enabled Mount Paul CFC to build their volunteer teams.



*Staff at Mount Paul Community Food Centre*

## BUILDING VOLUNTEER CAPACITY AT NATOAGANEG CFC

To generate interest in volunteering at the Natoaganeg CFC in Eel Ground First Nation, New Brunswick, the chef and program manager held a volunteer training program, for which attendees were paid. The full week of half day training day gave community members (members of the First Nation) a chance to learn about the Community Food Centre's different programs as a way to orient them to what volunteering might be like and what program they'd like to get involved in. Of the 11 participants, six became regular volunteers and several are in touch regularly to see if there are one-off opportunities to help out. Subsequently, 10 of the 11 passed their food safety training and two are now on work placements. Natoaganeg's approach turned out to be a great way to build up the idea of volunteerism while meeting their community members where they're at.



*Community Chef, Program Manager and community meal volunteers at Natoaganeg Community Food Centre*



### RELATED RESOURCES

**Sample volunteer coordinator job description** (Appendix C)



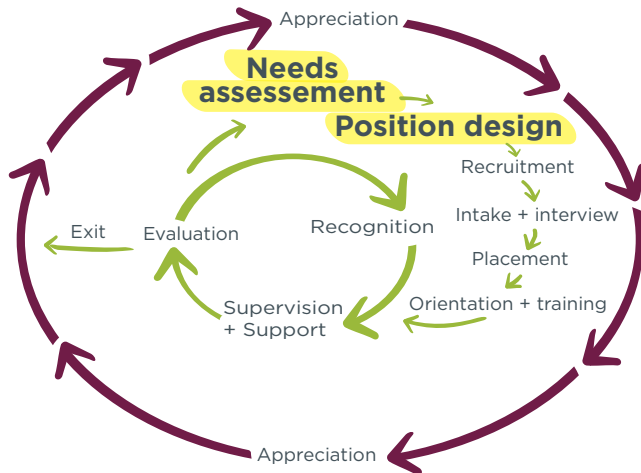


## GETTING STARTED

*Garden volunteers  
The Table Community Food Centre*



# GETTING STARTED



Maybe you're about to embark on building a volunteer program, or maybe you're revamping what you already have. Either way, it's helpful to ensure you first have a strong rationale and sense of what the program will accomplish for your organization and programs.

This chapter will guide you through the following questions:

- Who is the volunteer program for?
- What kinds of roles will volunteers fill?
- Are these roles sufficiently connected to program outcomes?
- How can the volunteer program support your organization's broader mandate?

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It's important to think about the purpose of your volunteer program, as it will ultimately determine your volunteer selection criteria. In addition to thinking about the benefits for your organization, consider the benefits for volunteers. A program that meets the various needs of your volunteers and your organization is more reciprocal in nature and can help with retention rates as well as assist in creating a positive environment.

Using a lens like the Good Food Principles (see Chapter 1), with an emphasis on engaging community members and reducing stigma, shifts your program from a traditional volunteer program that might only exist to increase capacity at your organization to one that values and intentionally seeks out community members to be a part of service delivery.

People volunteer for a wide range of reasons (see Who

Volunteers and Why?, Chapter 3). Considering these reasons when building your volunteer program will help your organization respond to community need while also meeting its own needs.

If your program primarily engages folks outside of your community, donors, or corporate volunteers, consider expanding the scope. What else could your program achieve? Starting to think of your volunteer engagement as a "program" that has a logic model (see Appendix G for a sample volunteer program logic model) and specific outcomes means that you are able to evaluate its impacts, make changes accordingly, and hopefully end up with a robust volunteer program where there is good retention.

## Participant Volunteers

According to our 2018 Annual Program Survey across Community Food Centres:



**44%**  
of program participants also volunteer at their CFC.

Participant-volunteers tend to be more engaged in CFC programs compared to participants who didn't volunteer at the CFC.

## DESIGNING A VOLUNTEER POSITION

Keep positions as simple as you can — simple roles can be filled by a larger variety of people. This doesn't mean making them boring; it means being intentional and creating roles that get the work done while also keeping them open to the largest pool of potential volunteers. Baseline positions can be leveled up or down to accommodate individual volunteers' ability, skills, or interest. Here are three practices that we believe create positions that work well for volunteers and your programs.



### 1. Create volunteer positions with skills that correspond to jobs

When trying to attract participant-volunteers, create roles that will help people develop transferable skills or practice their existing skills. When writing volunteer role descriptions, consider targeting one or more of the following objectives:

- pre-employment/skill building
- skills utilization/development
- increase social interaction and give back to the community

Volunteers who are here for **pre-employment/skill building** are generally looking to create a routine, join or rejoin the workforce, or build up their résumé and references. It's useful to identify what skills a volunteer will use and develop in a volunteer position. Baseline skills include punctuality and attendance, customer service, taking direction, receiving constructive criticism, calling when you aren't able to make it, etc.

Volunteers who are here for **skills utilization/development** are generally looking to apply and develop their current skills and knowledge in a program area or job field. An example of this could be a front desk/welcoming

position. The skills you're looking for match a customer service representative — for example, able to explain the details of various programs at your organization, give a tour of the facilities, and approach and be approached by a high volume of people over their shift.

If you have a program that requires registration or an intake, a food bank for example, you will need to find someone who has strong communication skills, can maintain confidentiality, can work in a fast-paced environment, and is able to collect only the necessary information for a community member to gain access to the program.

Start your role description or orientation with a general statement that encompasses the positive **social interaction** you are trying to create in your overall program and organizational environment. This social element can often be the biggest draw, will make volunteers feel good about the work they're doing, and can help with retention.

## MAKING A STRATEGIC CASE FOR PARTICIPANT-VOLUNTEERS

Prioritizing participant-volunteers is a natural extension of broader strategic goals like reducing social isolation or increasing community connections. Having a strong percentage of participant-volunteers helps to reduce stigma because these volunteers will share the experience of having used similar services and dealing with food insecurity and income insecurity. This kind of relatability makes participants feel safer in your space. Volunteers can draw on their lived experience to offer valuable feedback to your programming, a great example of reciprocity where the needs and benefits of both your volunteers and the organization are considered.

It takes time to move to a participant-volunteer model. Set a tangible goal to begin — as little as 15% — and aim to increase each year. Our partner Community Food Centres aim for a 50% participant-volunteer makeup, and some have exceeded this goal. Set objectives that link to your organization's goals and that hold a clear social value to your participants. You can then use these objectives to make a strong case to potential funders who may want to support your work in this often-overlooked way.



*Affordable market volunteers, Hamilton Community Food Centre*

## 2. Create a volunteer position that suits the needs of your program, not an individual volunteer

It's best to create a role that can be filled by different people. Creating on-the-spot roles for an individual with a specific skill can lead to volunteers having too much responsibility, and a potential for overstepping. Spontaneous roles could lead to a new program being created without thinking about whether or not it fits the organization's overall program objectives, or how it can be maintained over the long-term (e.g., the kitchen volunteer is a yoga instructor and offers to lead yoga for people once a week). Once that particular volunteer leaves, it creates a program gap and a new volunteer position needs to be filled.

Instead, developing volunteer roles to fulfill your centre's overall objectives and provide the best service for program participants will result in a more organized volunteer program.

“I take part for the sense of community, seeing everyone together. The patrons [community members] make it worthwhile, they let you know you're helping them. You turn into their mentors and their friends.”

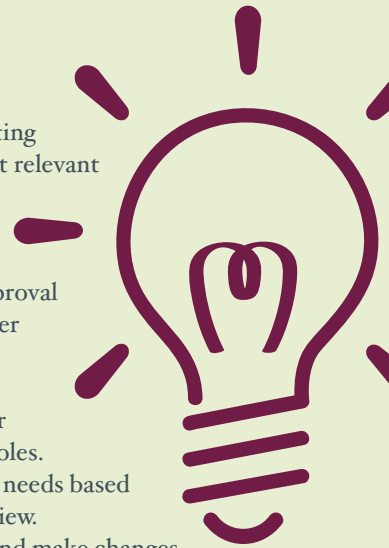
— Donald, volunteer at **The Table CFC**

## 3. Design team-based volunteer positions

Designing team-based positions makes sense for programs that require a high volume of volunteers. For example, in a healthy meal program, volunteers are usually required in three areas: preparing the meal with the community chef/cook, plating/serving the meal, and bussing/cleaning up. This type of program may require two shifts of overlapping volunteer teams. An advantage is that lead volunteers and/or volunteers with more capacity work alongside volunteers who may be new or have less capacity. A peer learning opportunity can take some pressure off staff and increase positive outcomes for the program overall. Scheduling the same people each week for the same day and time can build a team dynamic amongst volunteers and create some regularity for participants. Finally, building strong volunteer teams can increase someone's sense of belonging and will have a positive impact for program participants.

## Quick tips for creating volunteer positions

- Develop a clear process for creating new volunteer positions. Consult relevant staff in this process. Program coordinators can create new positions with the volunteer coordinator as required with approval from management. (See Volunteer position assessment template, Appendix H.)
- Review each program's volunteer needs and outline the required roles.
- Adjust each program's volunteer needs based on the information from the review.
- Assess each volunteer position and make changes whenever possible that make its roles accessible to more people, in particular community members.
- Continually update positions as you receive feedback, and remove or redistribute responsibilities that have caused conflict or issues in the past or were not useful or enjoyable for the volunteer.



## RELATED RESOURCES

**Volunteer positions in food focused organizations** (Appendix E)  
**Program-specific volunteer considerations** (Appendix F)  
**Volunteer position assessment template** (Appendix H)





**ONBOARDING NEW  
VOLUNTEERS**

*Intercultural community kitchen,  
Hamilton Community Food Centre*



# ONBOARDING NEW VOLUNTEERS



A clear and consistently delivered volunteer intake process will streamline efforts, whether or not you have a dedicated volunteer coordinator. A volunteer intake process usually involves the following steps:

- volunteer information session
- application form
- interview/screening
- placement/scheduling

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION

Without a system for filtering high volumes of communication, volunteer screening can be chaotic. This chaos in turn can cause delays in responding to calls, email, and walk-in inquiries, which can make for an unpleasant experience for potential volunteers. Holding a monthly volunteer information session is one way to introduce potential volunteers to your organization in a consistent and respectful manner.

The volunteer information session provides an introduction to your organization and programs, and shows how individuals can be involved in this work. The session can also be a basic orientation for new staff, potential or existing donors, and students. It's a great place to share how your programs implement your organization's philosophy and intention.

This session is also an opportunity for the volunteer coordinator (or equivalent) to start acquainting themselves with potential volunteers. Ideally, by the end of the session attendees will have enough information to make a decision about whether or not they would like to volunteer. In turn, the coordinator will have insight into each attendee, which will assist in guiding future

conversations as they move forward in the volunteer program. In this respect, the session is part of the screening and intake process.

The volunteer information session is also a great tool for all staff to funnel requests for information about volunteering. In the session, one staff member offers consistently delivered information about the organization and the programs, which ensures quality control and reduces workload for the rest of the staff. Attending the session can be a mandatory first step for all interested volunteers. (See Appendix B for a volunteer information session outline.)

## APPLICATION FORM

If you hold a volunteer information session, you can hand out application forms and collect them at the end of the session. If you are not able to conduct an information session, you can hand out the forms and have prospective volunteers complete and return them at a later date. To reduce paperwork and increase efficiency, it's best to have a discussion with a potential volunteer before they fill in a form — either via information sessions, in person, or by phone. To address any literacy issues, offer assistance to individuals in filling out the form. (See Appendix I for a sample volunteer application form.)

## Online Volunteer Intake

Some organizations prefer to have an online intake process. If you have the tools available to collect volunteer applications online it can save some time inputting information and help to keep volunteer information organized, but it's always important to have an alternative way for volunteers to apply, especially for those without access to a computer or who don't feel comfortable using one. You'll also want to ensure that for every online application someone follows up with information about next steps, including upcoming information and intake sessions, etc.







Community meal volunteers, NorWest Community Food Centre

## INTERVIEW/SCREENING

Once a prospective volunteer attends an information session and fills out the application form, the volunteer coordinator follows up. This meeting can be done in person, especially if the individual lives nearby, but a phone interview might be the best step so you can pre-screen for interest and fit, determine what program or role they might be best suited to, and discuss commitment length and scheduling availability.

The interview is an opportunity for the coordinator to determine alignment between the applicant and the organization. Perhaps the applicant has a middle/higher income and is coming to your organization very much embedded in the traditional charitable mindset of “wanting to help the poor,” or perhaps their demeanor is such that working with them will likely be challenging.

## Tips to reducing barriers in your intake process

Be conscious of your language when screening. Calling something an “interview” could sound potentially scarier than inviting someone to come in for a “chat” about a position. Words have a lot of power.

Screening is important, but screen too much and it may start to feel stigmatizing. If you can mitigate risks through planning programs and roles, you may not need to undertake exhaustive screening for every volunteer position. Reduced screening, where appropriate, can go a long way to removing barriers to participant involvement in the volunteer program.



Julie at The Alex Community Food Centre

## SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER

When Julie first found The Alex Community Food Centre in Calgary, she was on maternity leave, experiencing postpartum depression, and feeling alone in a new neighbourhood where she didn’t know anyone. Feeding her four children healthy meals was top priority, so when she heard that The Alex offered free cooking classes she joined the International Avenue kitchen program.

Julie quickly began to feel like part of the community. When staff invited her to volunteer, she happily accepted. “At The Alex, people can give back on their terms,” she shares. “There are no expectations or obligations placed on you when you volunteer. You might only be able to help out for one day, or one meal, and it’s great.” Since then, Julie has worn many hats as a volunteer — from helping to shape the concept of a Fresh Food Market to cleaning up after meals.

Establishing a screening protocol as part of your volunteer intake process helps ensure you only take on volunteers who make sense for your organization's needs and capacities, and who will contribute to the program's objectives.

It's best to go through a process in which applicants follow all the steps to securing a volunteer position or being put on a waitlist. Establishing expectations up front (i.e., time and day commitments, volunteer code of conduct, volunteer position description, etc.) will usually enable less suitable applicants to screen themselves out.

Unfortunately, there are rare cases when you have to turn people down from the start. This usually happens when a participant who is well known to the organization has demonstrated that they would not be a good fit (i.e., disrespectful to other community members or staff, or has been disruptive in programs). It's not easy to do, but it's better for the individual if you are honest with them and let them know why it would be better for them to participate at the organization in programs rather than in the volunteer program. Depending on the relationship you have with the individual, you may wish to have this conversation alongside another staff member who knows them better. Being honest is being respectful, and who knows how things could be in the future? You may have given them the feedback they needed to hear so that they could make improvements and one day be a volunteer.

### PLACEMENT/SCHEDULING

When placing people on a shift, think about the rest of the volunteers on that shift. Weaving different strengths together will allow for the greatest diversity in each team, and can lead to strong relationships between volunteers. Ask volunteers to commit to coming one day a week, for a set number of hours, for a set number of months. This routine builds consistency for a volunteer and the rest of the team. Not only is this a retention-focused approach, but it can meet other organizational objectives like increasing social connection and self-worth among community members.

Here are some other tips to placing and scheduling volunteers:

- Create weekly volunteer schedules for program staff (see Appendix K for a volunteer scheduling template).
- To avoid gaps in the schedule that could impact service delivery, make sure there is some overlap for the next shift.
- When you establish some overlap, volunteers have more opportunity to interact. The first shift can pass on the details of what work is left to be done.
- Schedule individuals completing court-ordered community service for day-long blocks at a time so

## Placing donors or non-participant-volunteers

Be intentional and upfront about where donors or non-participant-volunteers are placed. Let them know in a respectful way why you want to reserve positions for participants. You might say something like, "We have a preference for participant-volunteers because we want to give the community opportunities, but we want you to participate, too. Here is where you would be most helpful: raising money at your company office/ healthy food drive or volunteering at one of our fundraising events. We can put you on the events list."



Non-participant-volunteers can volunteer in programs, but it's important that there is a balance and that non-participants are not favoured over participants. When non-participant-volunteers are placed in programs, ensure they are placed amongst community members and are doing similar jobs. Doing so levels the playing field between volunteers who have different incomes.

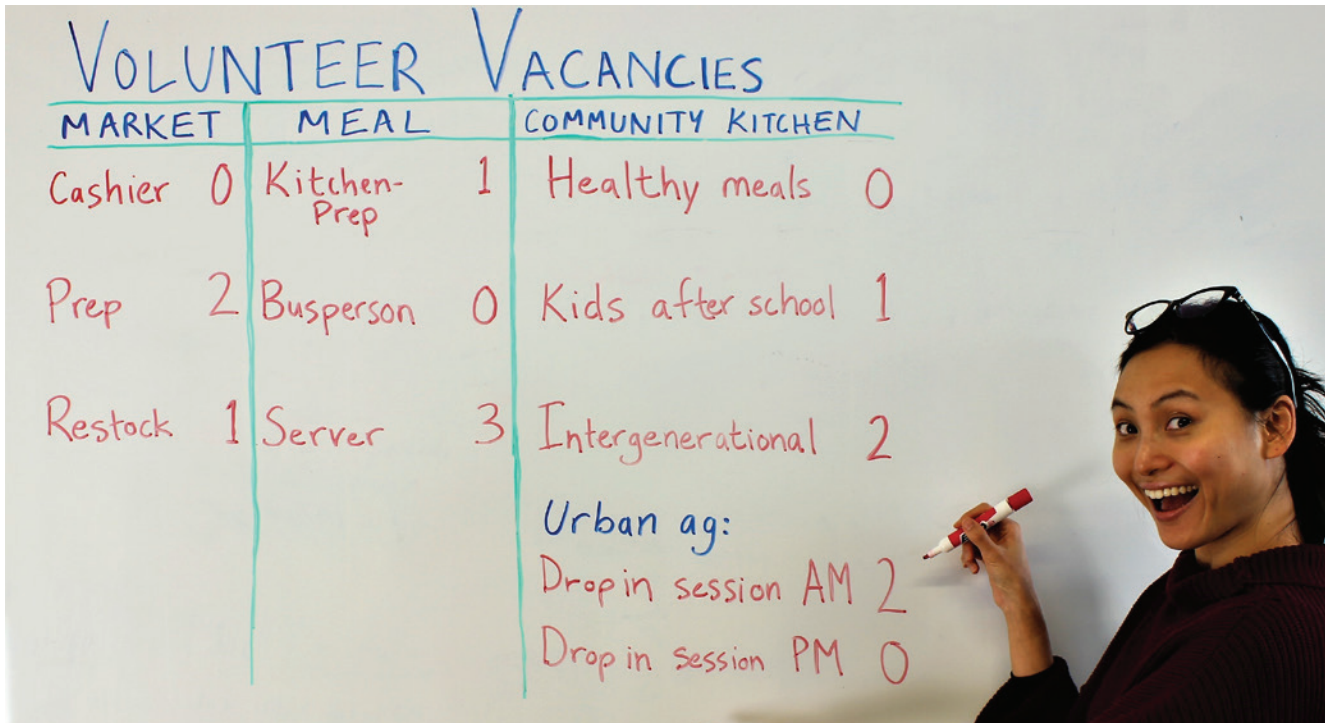
Sometimes we can stereotype participant-volunteers and feel like they are not going to show up because they have a lot going on in their lives. In reality, if you have a consistent, supportive, and inclusive program, volunteers of all income levels will have similar retention and dependability rates. It is important to be mindful of the biases we hold and to make sure we don't impose them on our volunteers — especially the ones who use our programs.

they can get their hours done quickly and resolve their charge.

- Having a few "float volunteers" each day is useful when you have different programs running at the same time, so you can fill in gaps when the unexpected unfolds.
- Use a whiteboard to track volunteer vacancies by program and position so you are always up-to-date with a visual of your needs (see table on next page).



## VOLUNTEER VACANCIES



MARKET		MEAL		COMMUNITY KITCHEN	
Cashier	0	Kitchen-Prep	1	Healthy meals	0
Prep	2	Busperson	0	Kids after school	1
Restock	1	Server	3	Intergenerational	2
Urban ag:					
				Drop in session AM	2
				Drop in session PM	0

A volunteer vacancy board is an easy way to track how many positions need to be filled in each program area. Invite program staff to use the board as well. The volunteer coordinator can work to fill the vacancies accordingly.



### RELATED RESOURCES

#### **Volunteer information session outline**

(Appendix B)

#### **Volunteer application form**

(Appendix I)

#### **Volunteer interview form**

(Appendix J)

#### **Volunteer scheduling template**

(Appendix K)

K)





## SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS TO SUCCEED

*Community kitchen volunteer,  
Dartmouth North Community Food Centre*



# SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS TO SUCCEED



In volunteer programs, you will always lose and gain volunteers — this can't be said enough! Conducting regular volunteer information sessions will eventually provide your programs with a steady stream of new volunteers and may even put you in a situation where you have a waitlist.

You must ensure you are able to retain a critical mass of volunteers to keep your programs operating. A key part of retention is about how you treat and support volunteers. Supporting volunteers has to be intentionally built into the lens of your program, as well as into your volunteer processes and practices. You can support volunteers through:

- Orientation and training
- Key policies
- Recognition and appreciation

## ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Starting off on the right foot and building a relationship is the linchpin for things going well down the line. Providing a standard orientation and training for your volunteers is one way to show that you care about them being there and that they are contributing value to the organization. It's also easier said than done when staff offer many programs and are short on time. Ideally the program coordinator will offer the orientation and training, but in reality this is not always possible — you may have to lean on experienced or lead volunteers to show new volunteers the ropes.

Orientation and training are essential parts of the volunteer onboarding process and begin when a new volunteer attends their first shift. This table presents a suggested onboarding process. In this example, the volunteer coordinator does the front-end of onboarding and the program coordinator does the back-end.

(refer to table: Role of Volunteer Coordinator, page 15)

## KEY POLICIES

Establishing expectations of behaviour and the environment you are trying to foster is best done up front and as thoroughly as possible. It is best to have a few policies that complement each other. We recommend having a code of conduct, a respect policy (or a philosophy on how people will be treated in the space), and a document that outlines your conflict management process.

<p><b>Orientation: Volunteer coordinator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After volunteer has gone through screening process, assign volunteer to a shift and schedule their start date</li> <li>• On start date, meet with volunteer and go through volunteer policies and procedures (see below), explain expectations, description of the position, shift date and time, and explain what to do if they cannot attend a shift</li> <li>• Tour volunteer around the space, explain the environment and the programs that occur</li> <li>• Take volunteer to the area where they will be working and introduce them to the program coordinator</li> <li>• Hand off training to the program coordinator and let volunteer know that they can check in with you at any time</li> </ul>	<p><b>Training: Program coordinator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce and welcome volunteer to the team</li> <li>• Show them around the space while explaining their duties</li> <li>• Make sure they have a number to call if they cannot make a shift or will be late for a shift</li> <li>• Answer any of the volunteer's questions</li> <li>• Either run through some of the tasks they will be doing during their shift or pair them up with experienced volunteer to show them the ropes</li> <li>• Check in with volunteer at the end of their first shift to see how things went, and to give them transit tokens, market vouchers, etc. if part of the arrangement</li> <li>• Thank them!</li> </ul>
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### Code of conduct

A code of conduct sets out important behaviour expectations for volunteers. (See Appendix L for a sample code of conduct.) Here are some things to consider including in your code of conduct:

- Outline behaviour that is expected during volunteer shifts (e.g., always embody organizational principles of social inclusion and respect)
- Outline how to deal with absences, calling in sick, etc.
- Specify what is out of scope of a volunteer's privileges (e.g., food access programs will want to indicate that volunteers will receive food in the same way as those being served)

### Respect policy

A respect policy is a statement that embodies the spirit or philosophy of how your organization wants community members to be treated and treat each other. As a progressive organization that uses a lens similar to the Good Food Principles outlined in Chapter 1, you need to make people feel welcome regardless of their social location and life circumstances that have brought them to use your services and programs. For example, offering services no matter someone's sexuality, ethnicity, or citizenship status. It is important to outline and post your policy so people will know who is welcomed and can feel safe in your space. Once it is known that you are an inclusive organization, people will pass on this information to their friends and community, building your positive reputation. A respect policy ensures that your organization is doing its best to provide access to healthy food and programs, and that everyone has a right to food. Because your volunteers will be engaging with your community members, it is important that they are familiar with your respect policy so they can be part of creating the environment (See Appendix P).

### RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

Everyone experiences recognition and appreciation differently — what one person values, another may not. Simple things like having nametags ready for volunteers on their first shift shows from the start that you recognize their importance and efforts. Here are some ideas for showing recognition and appreciation for your volunteers:

**Hold an annual feast:** Host a yearly volunteer appreciation event where staff set up the space, cook a meal, serve, and clean up. You can add elements to the celebration by having a raffle or door prizes or giving out small tokens of appreciation to everyone as they leave.

**Offer incentives:** Give vouchers to your affordable market or a local grocery store, or provide opportunities to attend events (e.g., free tickets to sports/theatre). Highlight volunteer stories in your organization's newsletters and/or on social media. Put up team photos (with permission) in the workspace.

**Reduce barriers for participation:** Provide tokens for those who need them. If possible, schedule volunteers with children when there is a children's program running or when/if you have child-minding services available.

*“I feel a part of the community here. Hopefully I’m making a contribution. I am part of an initiative that I’m committed to.”*

— **The Table CFC** volunteer



Community meal volunteers at Regent Park Community Food Centre



**Offer pre-employment support:** Knowing that some people volunteer because they want work experience, give feedback about their performance, provide verbal references and written letters of reference, and refer volunteers to free or low-cost trainings (e.g., food safety certification, conflict resolution).

**Encourage interaction:** Since social interaction is one of the biggest motivators for volunteers, create a space to sit down at the end of a shift to relax, perhaps over a coffee, snack, or a meal. A small table with a few chairs is all it takes.

**Provide pathways for leadership:** Help move volunteers who have demonstrated interest and skill to other positions that require different or higher skill sets (e.g., from food prep in a meal program to a food server at meal time, or from reception desk to peer advocate).

Find ways to recognize and celebrate people as much as possible within the natural cycle of your volunteer program.

## Steering away from longevity awards and certifications

While it may be tempting to recognize volunteers who have offered their service over many years, we suggest proceeding with caution by honouring this through awards. Volunteering consistently for a year or years at a time is outside the reach of many participant-volunteers.

Some organizations or program coordinators have offered their volunteers certifications as another benefit. However, it's a lot of work to build, run, monitor, and maintain certifications, and in the end they are not widely recognized by employers or educational institutions.

In both scenarios, it's better to focus on providing meaningful volunteer roles where an individual can demonstrate and practice skills that can be directly applied to a résumé, and then providing a reference upon request. Referring and linking people to existing training opportunities in the broader community is also great.



## SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER

Arazou went to the Hamilton Community Food Centre the first day it opened. She saw people making tea and wanted to help out. As an individual with a Kurdish background, preparing tea holds specific cultural meaning and she wanted to share her special way of making it with others. “People loved the tea [I made] and kept coming back for more,” she explains. “That was my first time helping out and [I] have been volunteering since.”

Arazou says that volunteering at the Hamilton CFC changed her life. “Talking to others, helping them makes me happy. First I joined the kitchen and helped the community chef, then I did the Community Action Training program and became a peer advocate.” Arazou wanted to play a bigger role in her community by helping people — especially other newcomers — access resources. “I don’t want them to have to learn the hard way like I did when I came to Canada 18 years ago.”



*Arazou from Hamilton Community Food Centre*

## MEET ALTA

*Market and garden assistant at The Depot CFC*

*Alta has been involved at The Depot CFC in Montreal's Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) neighbourhood since he was 10 years old. Now 18, he started way back as a program participant and has since become a volunteer and part-time staff person in the garden and produce markets. His story bursts with examples of how the Good Food Principles are woven into The Depot's approach: from building leadership and foregrounding participants' skills, to centring healthy food in their programs and meeting people where they're at.*

As a teenager, I see lots of news about how the planet is dying and things are terrible but not a lot about what we can do. I like the idea of growing food and cooking it — doing something positive. When I started seeing flyers at my local community centre about The Depot food programs I got really interested.

The first [program] I did was Boîte à Lunch. We would make a snack and also something we could take to school the next day. There are lots of cooking shows on TV and you watch them and think cooking is an art, like drawing or playing an instrument. But the program showed us that even if you're young, you can do it. Yeah, there's talent, but it can be built if you're passionate.

I now do a lot of cooking at home. I also have a meal prep system and do my school lunches for the week on Sunday. My dad cooks a lot, too. My parents are both from Bangladesh so there are lots of curries and tandoori chicken. My favourite thing to make is a French omelette — it's really difficult but when you get it right, it's so satisfying!

This summer I got a job as a garden assistant at The Depot and I really saw what an amazing place it is for our community. Not only for what they do — all the programs and services — but who they are. In NDG



*Alta pictured in the garden at The Depot CFC*

everyone comes from different countries, languages, ethnicities. But at The Depot it doesn't matter where you're from, your status in society, everyone is treated equally. No disrespect is tolerated there.

Since I started to learn about gardening and cooking, I've also become really interested in the story behind food. How it works in our bodies, what we're getting from it. I'm now volunteering with Boîte à Lunch and doing my IB [International Baccalaureate] project for school on the importance of eating breakfast. Lots of young people don't. I'm not going to lie, I don't always want to, either. But I'm coming up with cheap, easy, fast breakfast recipes that kids can make on their own, like an oatmeal and banana pancake. Eventually, I'll do a workshop with the youth, talk about all the benefits, and teach them some of the recipes.

Food these days often has a really negative connotation. There's lots of talk about the dangers, and about eating too much. But what I've seen is that good food is the only true way to nourish yourself. It's an incredible way to get everyone together.

*Written by Alta, market and garden volunteer at The Depot CFC*



## RELATED RESOURCES

**Sample code of conduct** (Appendix L)  
**Respect Policy** (Appendix P)

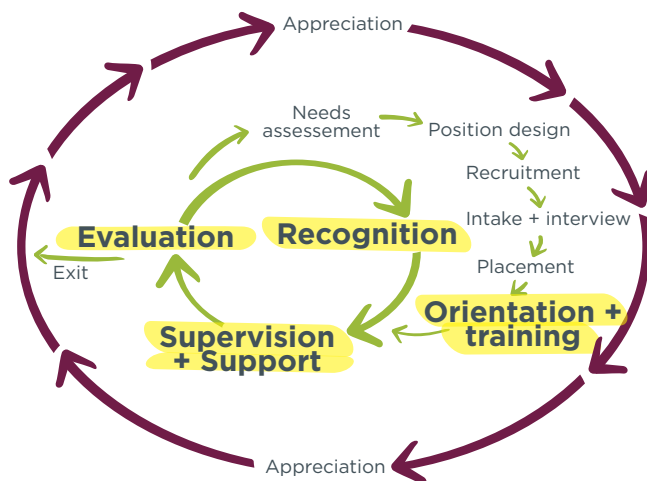




## CREATING A CULTURE OF REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK

*Community meal volunteer,  
NorWest Community Food Centre*

# CREATING A CULTURE OF REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK



Although you will never be able to fully predict everything you need to have in place to establish your volunteer program, implementing a few key preventative measures from the start is a good way to prepare for when things go awry. The most important piece is to build a good relationship with your volunteers and understand big-picture patterns in volunteer engagement. Here are some ways to start:

## THE POWER OF REGULAR CHECK-INS

Volunteers can become disconnected from the organization without program coordinators and/or volunteer coordinators checking in with them as a group and individually, in regular or semi-regular ways. Volunteers need opportunities to give feedback, ask questions, receive appreciation, learn about things that are changing in programs or the organization, and debrief if there has been an incident — just as staff do. Having regular contact points will demonstrate that you are invested in your volunteers and that you want to get to know them and how they are finding their placement.

Check-ins can help to reduce confusion about how tasks are to be carried out, and reduce or prevent misunderstandings of expectations. For example, in a meal program, taking time once a month to meet with your group of volunteers to give them updates or to troubleshoot an issue shows that you care about what they think and that they have something valuable to contribute to improving service delivery. Topics can be as simple as discussing how to improve composting, to

debriefing an incident that occurred between a volunteer and community member to figure out how to improve interactions.

You can establish contact in many different ways. Even having your volunteer coordinator or manager stop into programs and say hi to your volunteer teams every day and acknowledge them can make a difference in how a volunteer feels, and how they treat other volunteers and community members.



*Volunteers meet at Regent Park Community Food Centre*

## EVALUATION

In addition to ongoing check-ins, conducting formal evaluations a few months into a volunteer's placement and again when they leave is a great way to get valuable feedback and data for your reporting/fundraising needs. A survey administered two or three months into a volunteer's placement will offer insight into how they experienced the intake and training process, and how it could be improved. A survey administered after a volunteer leaves helps your organization improve the program and evaluate its impact by connecting the questions to the desired program outcomes (see volunteer program logic model, Appendix G). Ensure that volunteers are provided with the option to include their contact information or submit anonymous feedback so they can feel most comfortable being honest and open with suggestions, insights and concerns.



## HELPING PEOPLE EXIT

Wrapping up a volunteer placement is a critical piece of the Volunteer Engagement Cycle (page X) and is integral to operating a successful volunteer program. You might realize that the volunteer isn't a good fit for the organization, or their life circumstances have changed and they can no longer offer the commitment required for the role. Helping people realize it's time to go is not something to feel bad about. A kind, caring, and warm exit with doors left open and relationships intact is a massive success. The simple reality is that no one can volunteer forever and it is the role of the volunteer coordinator to both bring people in and facilitate their departure. Depending on the circumstances, the staff coordinator overseeing the volunteer's placement may or may not need to be involved in this exit process.

Help volunteers identify when it's time to move on from a role or from the organization, and be prepared to assist them in exiting. Sometimes posing a simple question about how things are going or if they feel like volunteering is still working for them is all that's needed to help someone leave who is ready to go. At the very least, asking the question opens the door to a constructive two-way conversation about moving forward within the volunteer program.

Make peace with the fact that it is a cycle and people will come and go, even if everything is done perfectly. When volunteers leave on their own terms, it is a great opportunity to evaluate their experience via a simple few questions in an exit interview or survey. In this way, you can turn a volunteer's departure into a learning experience. It's a chance to see what is going well in the program and where you may need to make some changes. That said, we don't recommend exit interviews in cases where you are letting someone go, and they are not leaving on their own volition, as it may exacerbate the situation.

## GROUNDINGS FOR DISMISSAL

Sometimes an incident or series of incidents occur that requires a volunteer be let go. Follow the volunteer code of conduct in directing the dismissal (see Appendix L for a sample code of conduct). The following is a list of grounds for dismissing a volunteer:

- drugs or alcohol use on the job
- theft
- violence or intimidation of other volunteers, staff, or participants
- discrimination or rudeness to other volunteers, staff, or participants
- favouritism or giving preference or different access of services to certain participants over others

Perhaps, through better initial screening, more appropriate task allocation, or quicker intervention when signs showed that the placement wasn't working, having to dismiss a volunteer could have been avoided. But even with all the best processes in place, incidents warranting dismissal may still occur, and taking swift action will prevent further damage.

## DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Follow the steps below to dismiss a volunteer.

Step	Action
1	Speak to the volunteer about their behaviour, referring to the volunteer code of conduct, which they previously signed. Explain why their behaviour is unacceptable.
2	Provide a warning and give a clear explanation of how the behaviour must change. Ask for their agreement.
3	If there is no change to the behaviour, ask them to leave.  <b>Note:</b> It is very important that the volunteer understands they are welcome to continue using all of your programs (food bank, drop-in) even though they cannot remain as a volunteer.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Inevitably, when you work with people, you're going to experience times of conflict. Deal with conflict in a consistent manner. Staff must take the lead to resolve issues, which can be made clear from the onset with volunteers. When volunteers come on board, it is important that you let them know how conflicts will be dealt with and who they can turn to if they are having issues. Let them know what criteria would call for termination. Unless it is something that resulted in serious violence or the like (in the extreme case that you had to call the police), it is a good idea to give people three chances to rectify behaviour that is undesirable before they are let go.

Your policy applies to both volunteers and community members. Start by creating a policy or statement outlining your conflict management process and then posting it in a visible place. The policy and/or statement does not have to be exhaustive; what is more important is that it outlines which staff to contact if a conflict occurs, so that a volunteer knows it's not acceptable to take matters into their own hands.

The most important thing is to deal with conflict and issues soon after they occur. If you avoid an issue or let it linger, you could lose volunteers or make them feel that being treated poorly is acceptable. Interpersonal issues

### Levi, Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre

Levi's first engagement with Qajuqturvik CFC was as a trainee in their 3 month pre-apprenticeship kitchen program. And while he gained valuable skills in the program he still struggled to find employment due to his precarious housing situation. Upon completion of the program Levi wanted to stay engaged with the centre because it provided some stability in his life "I don't like sitting doing nothing," he says. "I've been much more active since I started volunteering. I like serving people who need it." Levi is happy to have the volunteer experience from the kitchen to add to his resume, and hopes it will help him gain employment with one of the mining camp catering contractors working in the north.



Culinary trainees, Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre

can be tricky to navigate but when they are addressed head-on and in a timely manner, they can usually be resolved with both parties feeling satisfied. The goal is to create an environment of mutual respect where everyone is treated fairly. Other things to consider when handling conflicts between individuals:

- Let the volunteer and/or community member know that you have a process for dealing with conflicts, which starts with talking about what happened. Let them know that just because staff are talking to you does not mean you are in trouble.
- Always listen to all parties to give people a chance to explain their perspective of the issue or incident.
- After hearing the problem, identify the best person to be involved in resolving the problem (i.e., direct supervisor or volunteer coordinator).
- After receiving ideas from those involved, outline the process for resolution, and make sure it is explained and followed.
- Improve or change any behaviour and/or language so the individual can remain a volunteer.



## RELATED RESOURCES

### **3-month volunteer check-in survey**

(Appendix M)

### **Volunteer exit survey** (Appendix N)





## TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON ISSUES

*Community meal volunteers,  
The Local Community Food Centre*



# TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON ISSUES

Trouble is sure to rear its head, despite the best-laid plans, policies, and processes. In this section we identify 10 of the most prevalent issues that arise in volunteer programs. We discuss potential reasons for these issues, and offer some ideas for how to address them.

**ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS FEEL THAT OTHER VOLUNTEERS MUST BE HERE FOR THE SAME REASON THEY ARE (E.G., DONATE TO THE AGENCY, HEALTHY FOOD ACTIVIST, FOODIE, TO TURN EVERYONE INTO A VEGETARIAN).**

**Why is it happening?** People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, ranging from an interest in anti-poverty issues to being an environmentalist. Reasons vary, but what volunteers have in common is a willingness to help out and a lot of passion.

**How to approach it:**

- Understand why your volunteers are there: not everyone is there for the same reasons and that is a good thing — celebrate that difference! (See Who Volunteers and Why?, Chapter 3)
- Provide volunteers with information on the philosophy behind your work, and tell them that self-determination and non-judgement are important features. Explain your approach to the work through the Good Food Principles or your organization's healthy food and respect policies. This can be done in a group setting at your monthly information session, or as it comes up during a volunteer's tenure.

**ISSUE: PEOPLE THINK THAT INDIVIDUALS WHO USE THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS CANNOT BE VOLUNTEERS BECAUSE THEY ARE UNRELIABLE OR UNTRUSTWORTHY AND MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE.**

**Why is it happening?** The charitable lens, where there is a focus on "helping" participants, remains dominant in many organizations who operate food programs. Volunteer programs that exclude participants or treat them like they are incapable of volunteering due to their life circumstances perpetuate this lens. As a result, stereotypes about participants being unreliable, untrustworthy, and unable to do the work become prevalent, when in reality all volunteers can display



*Community lunch volunteers at NorWest Community Food Centre*

these behaviours despite income level. Not having a clear purpose and process for your volunteer program can make it susceptible to excluding the very people the organization is meant to serve. Move toward a lens that values lived experience and promotes inclusion, such as the Good Food Principles, and that makes space at the “volunteer table.”

**How to approach it:**

- Use a social justice framework, such as the Good Food Principles (see Chapter 2), to guide and shape volunteer programs and volunteerism.
- Use a process like the Volunteer Engagement Cycle (Chapter 2) that includes elements of consistency, predictability, and planning. Following this cycle will ensure that participants are intentionally incorporated into your volunteer program.
- In an information session, highlight that the main objective of the organization is to build a socially inclusive community where there is a place for everyone.
- Create strategic objectives for your volunteer program that state the multiple intentions to suit many types of volunteers — from ones who are longstanding donors to ones who regularly attend programs. For example, “Our volunteer program prioritizes positions to community members who use our services, which is strengthened by perspectives brought through a range of lived experience.”



### ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS TAKE ON TOO MUCH LEADERSHIP/OVERSTEP THEIR BOUNDS (E.G., VOLUNTEER JUMPS INTO A FIGHT).

**Why is it happening?** Volunteers may not have a good understanding of their role and therefore feel more responsibility for the delivery of the program than they ought to. They may not realize that staff will be supervising the work, and that staff have planned and organized a purpose and method for doing this work. Any lack of engagement, training, and oversight with volunteers as they start working with you can lead to misunderstandings about their role. In their previous volunteer experiences, they may have had to take on more responsibilities, especially in organizations with less staff capacity. Some volunteers who come may be overly passionate and are just trying to help out but could, in some cases, be putting themselves or others in danger.

#### How to approach it:

- You want volunteers to feel valued and motivated to be there, but it is important to give them a position description and explain their tasks while on shift.
- Make sure that during training, program staff/the volunteer coordinator place limits on what volunteers will do within the organization regarding conflicts or potentially physically escalating situations (e.g., call staff for backup, call the police, clear the space, continue service or program delivery).
- Ensure that volunteers are not working alone with participants.
- Inform volunteers that if an exception to service or if a question or problem arises, they must pass this issue up to staff rather than try to solve it themselves.
- When designing volunteer positions, ensure they are not too close to a staff role.

### ISSUE: MANAGEMENT WANTS ALL VOLUNTEERS TO GET A POLICE CHECK.

**Why is it happening?** It could be the case that your organization has always had this policy and has not questioned it. Your organization might have implemented a policy that volunteers working with children and youth require a police check (which is true) but ended up applying this policy to everyone. Your organization may be using the police check to screen out “undesirable” volunteers. Staff might hold an underlying assumption that someone with a record would be a problematic volunteer (i.e., there is a fear or stereotype about accepting someone with a record because they may be “dangerous” or “unsafe”).

#### How to approach it:

- Make sure all volunteers sign and follow your code of conduct. Having buy-in for the code of conduct is a straightforward way to set expectations about behaviour for volunteers.
- Don't create a blanket policy. Make sure your reason for police checks fits into your philosophy; such as working with a vulnerable population like children and youth.
- Be inclusive of as many people as possible, acknowledging that some may have had involvement with the criminal justice system and some without a record may possess undesirable behaviour.
- Assess and rework as many volunteer roles as possible so there would be no reason to know someone's history with the justice system. Have clear procedures for who handles cash, receives deliveries, or accesses the fridge. Don't bar someone from a role because of bias; instead, take the job away if they don't follow procedures.
- Have good staff oversight of volunteers, especially new ones. Make sure to properly train and get to know them when they start in order to assess their suitability as a volunteer.
- Don't let one extreme incident or individual be the reason for an oppressive rule for everyone else. Many people with criminal records hold jobs and are part of the communities we engage with all the time. Consider that the food industry in particular (i.e. farms, food processing, food delivery, food packaging, restaurants, catering, institutions with cafeterias etc.) is inclusive of people with criminal records and many volunteer positions will have similar duties to ones in these industries.



*Volunteers helping with sorting Holiday Hampers*

### ISSUE: STAFF DO NOT WANT PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND/OR ADDICTION ISSUES TO VOLUNTEER.

**Why is it happening?** Again, there are many stereotypes and assumptions about people who have substance use and/or mental health issues. There is often a fear of the unknown — people who may not have encountered anyone with these issues may have some uninformed ideas or opinions about the capacity of someone with an addiction or mental health issue. Or staff may have previously had concerning incidents during programs with individuals with mental health and substance issues and have concluded from these experiences their unsuitability for the volunteer program.

#### How to approach it:

- Ensure staff are trained in Anti-Oppressive Practices, and given support and resources to best meet the needs of people with mental health and/or addictions who are interested in volunteering.
- Set guidelines for expected volunteer behaviour in the form of a code of conduct that staff explains and all volunteers sign. Emphasize expectations of behaviour by stating things like:
  - “We expect volunteers to be substance-free (except prescription medication) while they are doing their shift.”
  - “If inappropriate behaviour is noticed, staff may approach you privately to discuss the situation and may ask you to leave for the day or not return as a volunteer if the behaviour persists.”
- Go back to your selection criteria as they relate to the position (i.e. availability for weekly shift, meets basic requirements for the position). People cannot be excluded from volunteering due to mental health or substance-use challenges. Dismissal from the program is always an option if someone is not able to do the job or behave in a respectful manner.
- Expect the best from people. When you are honest about expectations, you need to expect that people can be successful in meeting them. Many people who have addictions or mental health issues are functional and have the ability to modify their behaviour, substance use, or mental health issue through medication or other methods.

### ISSUE: VOLUNTEERS ARE DENYING SERVICE OR BRINGING A JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDE TO THEIR SERVICE (E.G., MAKING A DISCRIMINATORY COMMENT, “POOR BASHING,” OR NOT TREATING EVERYONE EQUALLY).

**Why is it happening?** Many food-oriented organizations use a charitable lens to guide their work, which can often produce “othering” of community members. If you do not explicitly challenge this lens, you may end up with volunteers who are perpetuating oppressive ideas about people who have low income as “lazy” or dividing them into being “deserving or undeserving.” This could be happening because they have never been challenged on this language, or didn’t have a thorough volunteer orientation and training.

#### How to approach it:

- Set expectations of volunteers and familiarize them with the purpose/mandate of the organization, starting with the volunteer information session.
- Don’t assume it’s just volunteers. Volunteers may be taking signals from staff with respect to behaviour and language. Ensure staff are trained in Anti-Oppressive Practice (AOP) and can intervene when judgmental attitudes arise.
- Make time to have private conversations with volunteers who are being inappropriate to see if their behavior can change. Try to have these conversations close to the time the incident occurred.
- Post signage in your centre with AOP messaging to create an inclusive environment and demonstrate that equity is a priority in your space.
- Hold debriefs or check-ins with volunteer teams at the beginning or end of their shifts. Here you can pass on key messages to them and hear about issues. As you debrief situations and scenarios in the group, model language and behaviour.

### ISSUE: I’VE BEEN VOLUNTEERING HERE FOR THREE YEARS, AND I APPLIED TO SEVERAL JOBS YOU POSTED BUT NEVER GET THE JOB!

**Why is it happening?** Some of your volunteers may see their work as a path to employment at your organization. If a volunteer is approaching the work in this manner, they may feel ownership or entitlement, or they might not be feeling appreciated. They may feel as though they are already doing the job, so why are they not getting the job? They are not seeing all of the work behind the scenes that staff are doing and cannot appreciate the full workload of the position. They may also feel resentful of the amount of time and energy they have given to the organization and they want to be reciprocated. And lastly, they may have stayed too long in their position.



**How to approach it:**

- State to volunteers from the beginning that the chance of getting a job is rare, but they will get a good reference and solid skills development. If a volunteer enquires about job prospects, be honest about the reality of getting a job.
- Give people honest and constructive feedback that will help them grow their skills.
- Build volunteer roles around key skills objectives. Give volunteers their position description so they are able to accurately describe their roles and responsibilities on résumés and in interviews.
- Create a template reference letter for volunteers that is easily adaptable to different roles so you can readily provide a reference.
- Train volunteers on key skills or help them access external training opportunities (e.g., food safety certification). Make sure volunteers are aware of any onsite trainings or workshops you are offering.
- Have higher skilled people mentor others. Create positions to match skills that cohere with real jobs.

**ISSUE: NEW VOLUNTEERS PETER OUT, AND DON'T SEEM TO STICK AROUND OVER THE LONG TERM.**

**Why is it happening?** Volunteers may not have been informed about the length of commitment or parameters/expectations for the position. Community Food Centres and other organizations that run food programs are busy places, where lots of people are mixing. Someone new to the organization may not know the lay of the land and who they can approach if they have a question. Something may have happened that upset them (i.e., a fellow volunteer or community member may have treated them poorly). Maybe the volunteer is bored or they do not like the position. Perhaps a group of friends or coworkers joined together, and if one leaves the others may follow.

**How to approach it:**

- Create avenues to receive feedback. Let them know in the beginning that if there is something wrong, they're encouraged to tell staff. Have program coordinators check in with volunteers at the end of the shift.
- Ask before they are gone. If you sense someone is not enjoying the role, is missing shifts, etc. have a private conversation with them. Ask what's going on and see if there were any gaps in their expectations vs reality. If there were, begin to address them in the volunteer process.
- Ask after they are gone. Do some follow-up with people who have left and find out their reasons for no longer volunteering. Once you know the reasons, you

can begin to address them with confidence.

- Communicate time expectations in the information session or during the application stage. For example, ask for a commitment of 4 hours/week (same day and time) for 4 to 6 months.
- Build in redundancy by scheduling and training at least 1-2 extra volunteers a day who can float around to programs that are lacking volunteers or are busier than usual.
- Create standardized roles that can be switched up but that eliminate the risk of a keystone volunteer not showing up.
- Frame the work as having a real purpose. Sometimes knowing the importance of the work is motivation enough to keep doing it

**ISSUE: NO ONE WANTS TO BE OUR DISHWASHER.**

**Why is it happening?** Washing dishes is a physically taxing, fast-paced position that requires stamina and having to be on your feet for long periods of time. As a result, most dishwashers are paid because the position is integral to service delivery. Was the dishwasher given a say in the matter, or was the volunteer just put into the position because it was available? Has the role been positioned as the least desirable or are people put into it at the last minute?

**How to approach it:**

- Hire a dishwasher! If you don't, your program staff will inevitably have to cover off this work. Think about the cost of having your program staff doing this work. How much current staff time is it taking to get this role done, and at what pay rates? It will be much more cost effective in the long run to find funding to hire a dishwasher. Your program staff will be able to focus on the work they are supposed to do, and the kitchen will be more manageable and prepared for the next program. Even finding funds to cover a few hours each day during your high-volume programs (i.e., meals) will help take the load off your kitchen staff.
- If you can't hire a dishwasher, find someone who is looking to gain employment as a dishwasher and can use the volunteer role as training (especially if you have a chef who has industry experience). Rotate the dishwasher role so the same person is not doing it each week or even for the full shift. Make it a shorter shift, but know that doing so will require more volunteers to fill spots. Assign two people to the role so there is company and backup.

**ISSUE: VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS BURN OUT OR ARE SPREAD TOO THIN.**

**Why is it happening?** A volunteer coordinator works across all program areas and with program coordinators. For this reason, it is easy to become involved in extraneous program issues. The volunteer coordinator may not have a defined role and they are overlapping by taking on the program coordinator's role. Staff may not be clear on how the intake process happens, or have needs that outpace the coordinators ability to meet them. (i.e., want a replacement right away for a volunteer that has left). The volunteer coordinator may not be saying no to extra projects (e.g., a team member who asks them to coordinate volunteers for a fundraising event in an unrealistic timeframe).

**How to approach it:**

- Divide appropriate tasks to other staff who are supervising volunteers in order to create limits to the volunteer coordinator role (See Chapter 4 for the volunteer coordinator's role and Appendix C for a sample volunteer coordinator job description).
- Raise money to hire more staff. Framing your volunteer program as something unique with positive impacts for your community members can demonstrate that it is a worth funding.
- Set up a work plan for your position to ensure that tasks and responsibilities are known. You may then be able to demonstrate that you need assistance (e.g., part-time staff) or more days if you are not full time.
- Make sure all staff have a clear understanding of volunteer recruitment and replacement, and that unfilled shifts take time to fill.
- Make sure that the volunteer coordinator refers volunteers to the program coordinators to resolve issues. Or check in to see that the program coordinator has tried to resolve the issue first before attempting to resolve it. The program coordinator may not have known there was a problem in the first place and could potentially have more context to resolve the issue.
- Support your volunteer coordinator in saying no and place limits on what volunteers will do within the organization. Sometimes even though a program coordinator wants a new position, it may not be appropriate or it may be too costly in terms of time and energy. Volunteers might want to cook up special projects that may lead to overstepping boundaries, and that are not sustainable.



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## TEMPLATE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR WORK PLAN

<b>Program:</b> Volunteer	<b>Time period:</b>
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<b>ACTIVITY</b> What would you like to do?	<b>OBJECTIVES</b> What agency-wide strategic objective or program-specific objective do you want to meet? See your program's logic model.	<b>TASKS (OPTIONAL)</b> What are the main tasks that you need to undertake in order to realize the activity?	<b>TIMELINE</b> When will the activity be conducted/ completed? (Ongoing, by X month, weekly, etc.)	<b>WHO</b> Which staff person will be responsible for implementation or completion?
Volunteer information session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase volunteerism and leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Provide orientation to the volunteer program and organizational mandate</li> <li>• Recruit volunteers who are aligned with your programs and organizational values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertise info session in program space, social media, website</li> <li>• Collect names of attendees and create attendance list</li> <li>• Run workshop</li> </ul>	Every second Thursday of the month	Volunteer coordinator
Review volunteer positions with program coordinators	Ensure that positions are up to date and accurately reflect program requirements	Set up meetings with each program coordinator to review volunteer program requirements	At least once a year with each program coordinator	Volunteer coordinator and program coordinator

(fill in org name) – Annual Work Plan Template



## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION PLAN

### SAMPLE AGENDA AND CONTENT OF VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSION

Activity	Timing	Delivery	Notes
Welcome & Introductions		Introduce yourself and why you are or want to be involved with the organization If it's a small group also ask favorite fruit or vegetable!	Listen for people's level of communication skills and start to develop a picture of where they might be well suited to volunteer. Based on what people say, you can tailor the session to your audience's interests.
Agenda		Briefly review items on the agenda	You may want to print a copy of the agenda for the participants of the session or write the agenda out on flip chart paper for all to see.
Framing the Issues		Details for each activity can be found below as well as information to provide framing and context for the activities. (See Sub Section 1 for details) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Activity #1: Defining Food Insecurity</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity #2: Brainstorm: What causes Food Insecurity?</i></li> <li>• <i>Activity #3: Cost of Living Exercise</i></li> <li>• <i>Bonus Activity: Who Is On Social Assistance?</i></li> </ul>	These activities are designed to lead participants in understanding the context in which your organization exists. You may choose to pick one, two or conduct all three activities based on time and size of group.  Ensure each individual activity is preceded with a clear framing of the objective and context.
Orientation to the Organization		Share and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief narrative about when your organization began and how it has developed over time</li> <li>• Basic information about programs your organization offers and philosophy</li> <li>• Stories and statistics that exemplify impact</li> <li>• Volunteer roles in detail and logistics each entail (e.g. shifts, responsibilities, skills needed, personality traits or interests that would make a good match)</li> </ul>	Use supportive documents, including organization's mission, vision, annual reports, etc. For example, in CFCs we would use the Good Food Principles to describe the programs and philosophies to give further framing.  This is a rare opportunity where you have a captive audience who you know are already interested in your work. Throughout this section your role is to share key information about what you do, how you do it and why.  Program staff may want to join for a short period of time to introduce themselves and their role on the team.
Getting to know you: a continuum		Begin with <i>Activity #4: Getting to Know You: A Continuum</i> (See below for details)	This simple and reflective activity is designed to shift attendees from thinking about issues and programs to thinking about themselves.



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Next steps & conclusion		<p>Participants fill out a volunteer application form if they choose at this point.</p> <p>Be aware that not everyone has the same literacy levels. Watch for people reading the form for a long time but not writing anything. Listen for people mentioning not having the right glasses. Keep an eye on people who you know are learning English. In all cases you may want to offer that they could verbally share with you and you could make the notes. Meet people where they're at!</p>	<p>By this point it will have been an intense hour for most adults. Try to wrap up quickly so that if someone isn't interested they can leave. People will likely have questions and need clarity on some points. It is extremely useful to have a second staff member available to help out with this.</p>
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# SAMPLE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR JOB POSTING

[ORGANIZATION'S LOGO]

**Reports to:** Program Manager

**Supervises:** Volunteers

**Blurb about your organization here:**

**Position Summary:** insert your details here (e.g., Permanent Position, 37.5 hours/week)

The volunteer program at insert organization name here strives to create an inclusive environment that values building leadership opportunities for community members. Volunteers at insert organization name are involved in many facets of the organization, from working in our gardens and community kitchens, to meal programs and fund-raising events. We are looking for an individual who has an interest in working with volunteers at a community-based organization, has excellent leadership skills and a good understanding of food insecurity, income inequality, and health equity issues.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Relevant post-secondary degree or equivalent experience
- Minimum two years' work experience in community development or volunteer coordination
- Experience working with a high volume of people from diverse cultures, ethno-racial backgrounds, and abilities in a community-based setting
- Excellent program planning, team building, and supervisory skills
- Solid experience working with people facing income and food insecurity
- Strong organizational, analytical, writing, and communication skills
- Knowledge of and experience with food security issues and programs an asset
- Knowledge and experience with social justice and anti-oppression principles
- Second language and knowledge of local community and resources are assets

## DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Administration

- Maintain confidential electronic and paper records of all volunteers (past and present)
- Assist program coordinators in planning, developing, and maintaining a map of the volunteer needs of the organization
- Develop and maintain adequate administrative systems to recruit, train, and track volunteer information, including volunteers' hours, attendance at training events, and performance
- Provide volunteer schedules to program staff each week to monitor attendance
- Assess turnover and retention levels over time
- In collaboration with program staff, develop and maintain clear job descriptions for volunteer positions
- Develop and maintain volunteer policies, procedures, and resources, and make them available to program coordinators and/or their volunteers
- Develop a regular evaluation plan for the volunteer program and an annual volunteer program report

### Recruitment & Placement of Volunteers

- Update website and voicemail with current volunteer opportunities
- Recruit volunteers for all of the organization's ongoing programs and occasional events: assess skills offered by volunteers, ensure appropriate screening, identify goals, and connect to appropriate programs or activities
- Recruit unpaid staff via other agencies, and support insert organization name's other program coordinators in finding interns/coop students in specialty areas from colleges, etc.
- Screen and log potential volunteers
- Develop/maintain monthly volunteer information session

- Provide an initial orientation for new volunteers including a tour of the organization and an introduction to the program coordinator for more in-depth role orientation and supervision

**Volunteer Support**

- Be available for volunteers by phone and in person
- Write letters and complete forms for social assistance and court-ordered community service, as required
- Provide job references as appropriate
- Build opportunities for volunteers to develop leadership capacity
- Send out monthly newsletters to volunteers
- Develop and run an annual volunteer appreciation event and provide ongoing recognition throughout their tenure

**Coordinator Support**

- Provide support to program coordinators in supervising volunteers and troubleshooting issues
- Keep staff informed about policies, procedures, and responsibilities regarding the volunteer program
- Check in with coordinators of all programs regularly (monthly) and attend staff meetings as required

**Other**

- Report and meet with the supervisor as required
- Develop funding proposals, and write reports to funders as required
- Participate in broader activities at the organization: organization-wide planning, fundraising and public relations, communications, special events, and team-building activities

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## SAMPLE VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

[ORGANIZATION'S LOGO]

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Affordable Produce Market

The affordable produce market is a place where people can come together to buy affordable produce in a welcoming environment. The market works to serve the local community and bring affordable produce into an area where there is a lack of accessible grocery stores. The market strives to include social and food skills elements, such as food demonstrations and a peer advocacy office, and hosts local vendors. The market contributes to the organization's overall work in making fresh food accessible and building healthy inclusive communities.

**Job Title:** Volunteer Market Assistant

**Volunteer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Shift day and time:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Responsibilities

#### Program-specific

- Retrieve produce receptacles
- Wipe down tables and chairs
- Sweep floor
- Inspect produce
- Package and prepare produce
- Arrange produce baskets
- Assist with pricing and labeling produce
- Assist shoppers with purchases
- Restock produce throughout the market

#### General

- Contribute to a safe and welcoming environment for other volunteers, community members, and staff
- Notify staff promptly if a problem arises
- Offer suggestions for program improvement
- Participate in formal and informal program evaluations
- Understand and comply with insert organization name's policies and procedures

#### Skills and attributes

- Basic English communication skills (verbal)
- Ability to work respectfully with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Ability to work independently and as a team player
- Comfortable learning new things and receiving constructive feedback
- Good sense of humour
- Open to learning
- Punctual



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## VOLUNTEER POSITIONS IN FOOD FOCUSED ORGANIZATIONS

Here is a list of common volunteer positions in food focused organizations.

### 1. Drop-In Meals

- Meal prep/plater: Work with community chefs to prepare breakfast for 150-200 and a complete lunch for 200-250 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. A great way to gain experience working with a skilled chef and assist in plating the meal for the servers.
- Server: Work quickly, and interact in a friendly manner with community members in the space.
- Bus person: Ensure that the space is clean prior to service. Bus and wipe down tables during meals and after meals. Clean up after the meal.
- Dishwasher: A great job for someone who likes to work independently and with focus. Essential to the team.

### 2. Perinatal or parent and child programs

- Kitchen Assistants: Work with community chefs to prepare lunch for the moms and families taking part in the program. Great way to gain experience with a skilled chef.
- Dishwasher: A great job for someone who likes to work independently and with focus. Essential to the team.
- Program Assistants: Ensure the smooth running of the program, from setup, to workshops, food hamper distribution, donation sorting and distribution, and cleanup.

### 3. Affordable Markets

- Market setup: Organized market produce, price produce, etc.
- Restocker and customer service: Assist customers in shopping, provide recipes, share info about vegetables, restock produce, clean.
- Takedown: Clean up, recycle boxes, compost waste, put away equipment, and store leftover produce.
- Children's Assistants: Organize activities for youth attending the market, ensuring a safe and friendly environment for all.
- Bakers: Help prepare a featured baked item available for sale at the market. Competency with baking in large quantities is essential.

### 4. Bake Oven

- Help run pizza oven programming (often in conjunction with the affordable market). Summer months only.
- Kitchen prep: Prepare dough and pizza toppings.
- Pizza assembly: Help children and community members make their own pizzas (120 pizzas per session).
- Pizza oven assistant: Assist with baking pizzas. Some training and kitchen experience is required.
- Corn BBQ: Sell and manage the Corn BBQ, which operates during the Good Food Market.

### 5. After School Program

- Summer camp assistants help with summer and March break camps offered each year.
- After-School Program assistants work with the after-school coordinator to prepare and run programs with youth aged 8-12 during the school year.
- A pre-screening interview and police check are required for these positions.

### 6. Community Kitchens

- Community kitchen assistants help to plan and run the community kitchen programs. Good interpersonal and communication skills, along with skills and comfort in the kitchen, are required. A pre-screening and application process are required for these positions.

### 7. Food Bank

- Food handlers prepare food for distribution through the food bank. This includes packaging eggs, washing and preparing fresh produce, bagging dried beans, and receiving and organizing food donations.
- Food distributors work one-on-one with community members to prepare their food bank hampers. This position requires good interpersonal and communication skills.
- Front desk volunteers are the first people that community members meet when they enter the space. These



volunteers help process memberships for new food bank users and orient them to the space. This position requires good interpersonal and communication skills.

- Filers help the front desk volunteers by focusing on creating new files for community members and ensuring all paperwork is kept organized and up-to-date.
- Greeters ensure that everyone feels welcome and comfortable in the space.

### **8. Community Gardens**

- Community garden volunteers support garden participants with accessing garden tools, site clean-up, support with coordination of special events such as harvest celebrations, etc.
- Not many volunteer positions are required as participants typically take the lead in the general day to day activities of the garden

### **9. Food Demonstrations**

- Take place 1-2 times per week, and demonstrate ways to prepare simple, healthy meals with the food hampers and featured food-of-the-month. These volunteers must be comfortable demonstrating food skills in front of a crowd. A background as a dietician is an asset.

### **10. Board of Directors**

- Board of Director positions are 3+ years in length. These volunteers provide financial, governance, and strategic advice and oversight for the organization. Each year, the executive director recruits new members.



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## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER CONSIDERATIONS

*At our partner Community Food Centres, programs are offered in three core areas: food access, food skills, and community education/engagement. Specific programs within these branches are diverse and there are nuances to consider when designing participant-volunteer positions.*

### FOOD ACCESS

#### *Affordable Markets*

- Establish when volunteers can shop at the market. During or after their shift, is fine but make sure they do not all leave at once. Allowing volunteers to shop before the market begins will be seen as unfair by other customers and is not advised. If a volunteer shops during market hours, store their items in a designated place so everyone knows to not redistribute the items back into the market.
- Make a policy that volunteers cannot cash out themselves, other volunteers, friends, or family can take some pressure off volunteers from having to address special requests and avoid potential coercion.
- Assign a few volunteers to work on cash and have the same ones do it each week. Train them well and do not let the cashier position be interchangeable with other market positions. Giving volunteers a chance to do this position shows that you trust them, but it is important for money to be handled in a responsible way. Make sure volunteers know that staff will come at regular intervals to remove excess funds (sometimes called a “cash drop”) so there is less stress for volunteers.

#### *Meals*

- Establish when volunteers can eat together (e.g., during or after their shift). It’s nice to create a time for volunteers to eat after service so they can socialize with each other and staff. This can also be a good time for an impromptu check-in or updates.
- Develop a practice for distributing leftovers after everyone has eaten.

#### *Healthy food banks*

- Make a policy that volunteers cannot prepare a food hamper for themselves, another volunteer, friends, or family. Instead, staff can prepare a hamper for volunteers after their shift is complete.
- Restrict volunteers from accessing the walk-in fridges and freezers, or stipulate that staff needs to accompany a volunteer. Food in these areas is shared with other programs and a volunteer may take out too much or something not designated for the food bank. This restriction will help maintain food levels across the organization.
- If a food bank member has a complaint or wants to make exchanges that are not in line with what has been outlined, make sure staff are there to support volunteers to prevent a potential conflict.

### FOOD SKILLS

#### *Community kitchens*

- Due to smaller group sizes, limited space, and staff duties, only 1-2 volunteers are usually required in kitchen programs.
- Recruit a participant who has frequently attended the kitchen program to become a volunteer. They will be more familiar with the space, tools, and processes.
- Try to schedule volunteers so they are able to help staff prep and clean up.

#### *Community gardens*

- There is a long-standing debate over what to call those who engage in garden programs — are they garden participants or garden volunteers? Gardens are a bit unique in that everyone involved is contributing to them via regular tasks or maintenance (e.g., planting, weeding, watering, harvesting) so it’s easy to call everyone a volunteer. But the drop-in/low-commitment nature of such roles isn’t aligned with an intentionally designed volunteer program. We recommend recruiting just one or two volunteer “garden assistants” to lead garden activities and commit to regular shifts. Everyone else can be considered a participant or member, and you can work to build confidence, skills, and a schedule that may help transition participants into eventually becoming volunteers.

- In addition to sending some of the harvest to your Centre's food programs, all volunteers and participants should take home a part of the harvest on the day they participated. It helps embed a sense of equity among all involved.

#### *Children and youth programs*

- Volunteers will require a police check.
- You may want to take on a student studying in this area, such as in Early Childhood Education or a Teaching Certificate program, or ask parents if they want to volunteer for the children's (under 12) programs.

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION/ENGAGEMENT

#### *Peer advocacy/peer support programs:*

- Creating pathways for volunteers to take leadership in the organization is important. An advocacy program is a good place for longstanding volunteers or those seeking more training and involvement to move into.
- We advise that once a volunteer has become a peer advocate that they no longer stay with the volunteer program, in order to free up positions for new volunteers.

#### *Social justice groups*

- This group is for community members and not a place where there are volunteer opportunities; however, if you have a participant who wants to volunteer but is unable to make a commitment or cannot come regularly, social justice groups are a good way to stay involved with the organization and be a part of its work.

### FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- This is a good placement for non-participant-volunteers and those who can only commit once in a while.
- Maintain a list of volunteers who are interested in events or one-off opportunities, and connect with them a few times a year by email.
- A good placement for people who want to be involved but are working during program hours, or those who move on but want to stay involved.

### DONOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND STEWARDSHIP

- When you are doing your one-off corporate or other donor volunteer opportunities, ensure that you are not taking your regular volunteers off their schedule and replacing them with a donor volunteer. Although it is important to steward and give your donors opportunities for involvement, it is equally important to not give them preferential treatment over your regular volunteers.
- Find unique tasks for these groups that may happen infrequently (e.g., a big garden prep party, a painting project, agency cleanup, etc.). Such projects are great for corporate volunteer groups, too.
- Make sure that if you are placing donors in programs, like a meal program, that they are working alongside participant-volunteers so they are fully integrated into the team and not set above or apart from others.



## SAMPLE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL

<b>PROGRAM TYPE:</b> Education and Engagement		<b>TARGET GROUP</b> Program participants (i.e., those are who are also users of our organization's services)	
<b>PROGRAM NAME:</b> Volunteer Program		<b>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:</b> This program is designed to challenge the giver-receiver dynamic, as well as build skills and increase a sense of community amongst program participants. Volunteers may assist with meal preparation, kitchen cleanup, program facilitation, childcare, and/or work in the garden.	
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase volunteerism and leadership among program participants.</li> <li>• To reduce social isolation and increase connections to a variety of supports.</li> <li>• To increase knowledge of poverty and food system issues, and create inclusive opportunities for effective action on these issues.</li> </ul>			
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> The major activities involved in running the program. Collectively, these activities should work to achieve the listed outcomes.	<b>OUTPUTS</b> The numbers we count in our programs to track and measure the level of activity.	<b>OUTCOMES</b> The short- to medium-term changes in knowledge, skills, behaviour, etc. that the program aims to bring about with participants.	<b>OUTCOME INDICATORS</b> Things we measure to determine how well we are achieving our outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer information session offered monthly</li> <li>• Volunteer training specific to volunteer position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Training provided by veteran volunteer where/when possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Volunteer appreciation events held bi-annually (less formal appreciation extended regularly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of volunteers</li> <li>• Volunteer hours</li> <li>• Number of first-time volunteers</li> <li>• Number of participant volunteers (i.e., volunteers who also participate in CFC programs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased volunteerism and leadership among program participants</li> <li>• Stronger connection to a variety of supports</li> <li>• Social isolation reduced</li> <li>• Improved mental health</li> <li>• Reduced stigma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of satisfaction with the role (e.g., training, supervision, level of responsibility, appreciation expressed by staff and participants)</li> <li>• Strengthened leadership skills (e.g., interpersonal communication, problem-solving, decision-making, self-motivation)</li> <li>• Increased confidence to take on leadership roles</li> <li>• New friendships formed</li> <li>• Increased sense of community belonging</li> <li>• Improved mental health</li> <li>• New knowledge gained about poverty and social justice issues</li> <li>• Increased interest and engagement in community issues</li> </ul>



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# VOLUNTEER POSITION ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

SOURCE: THE ALEX COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE

Staff and volunteer coordinator must complete an assessment for all new volunteer positions.

ROLE TITLE
<p><b>ROLE DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>What is the main purpose of this role?</p> <p>What are the major tasks associated with this role?</p> <p>What the required skills for this role?</p> <p>What skills can staff teach through this role?</p> <p>What are the attributes required for this role?</p> <p>What kinds of experience are required for this role?</p> <p>Does this role require instrumental volunteers?</p> <p>Can this role support capacity-building and leadership development?</p>
<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>What are the known risks of this position?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To the volunteer:</li> <li>• To community members:</li> <li>• To staff:</li> <li>• To CFC resources:</li> </ul> <p>What measures will we take to reduce known risks?</p>
<p><b>SCREENING</b></p> <p>How will we screen volunteers for this role?</p>
<p><b>RECRUITMENT</b></p> <p>How will we recruit volunteers for this role?</p>
<p><b>ORIENTATION AND ONGOING SUPPORT</b></p> <p>How will we welcome new volunteers to this role?</p> <p>What kinds of ongoing support are needed for this role?</p> <p>What type of training is available for this role?</p>
<p><b>EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION</b></p> <p>How will we evaluate volunteer performance for this role?</p> <p>How will we recognize volunteers for their contribution to this role?</p>

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

THIS FORM CAN BE AVAILABLE IN PRINT AND/OR ONLINE TO STREAMLINE YOUR VOLUNTEER INTAKE PROCESS.

[ORGANIZATION'S LOGO]

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Main Intersection: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel. Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birth Date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ (No Year required)

Why do you want to volunteer at **insert name of your organization?**

What kind of volunteer work are you interested in?

Select ALL the programs that interest you	Select ALL the activities that interest you
<input type="checkbox"/> Drop-In Meal Service <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Beginnings <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen <input type="checkbox"/> Pizza Oven (summer only) <input type="checkbox"/> Good Food Market <input type="checkbox"/> Education Program <input type="checkbox"/> After-School Program <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Program <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors Cooking Group	<input type="checkbox"/> cooking community meal <input type="checkbox"/> stacking shelves, bagging items, unloading deliveries <input type="checkbox"/> serving meals <input type="checkbox"/> creating files, registering members <input type="checkbox"/> providing information <input type="checkbox"/> assisting with workshops <input type="checkbox"/> assisting with cooking demonstrations <input type="checkbox"/> supporting people as they learn new skills <input type="checkbox"/> dishwashing <input type="checkbox"/> gardening <input type="checkbox"/> building and fixing things

What are your skills, abilities, and strengths?

Please describe any previous or current work or volunteer experience:

Do you have any allergies, medical conditions, or physical limitations we should know about?

What language(s) do you speak/write? \_\_\_\_\_



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## VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW FORM

Applicant name \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview questions

Thanks for coming today. I wanted to discuss your interest in the \_\_\_\_\_ volunteer position. I have a few short questions about why you are interested, and then we can review the position and I can answer your questions.

Tell me/us a bit about yourself and what makes you interested in getting involved with this position/organization.

Have you ever volunteered before? Or are you currently volunteering with other organizations?

If so, can you tell me a bit about your current/past volunteer experiences? Specifically your role.

What do you enjoy the most about volunteering?

What do you enjoy the least?

We look for at least a 3-6 month commitment one day a week, for a 3-4 hour shift. Is that something that would work for you?

Review position description with potential volunteer and offer some basic information about the organization.

Outline the next steps. When can an applicant expect to hear back. Is there a waitlist? Will you follow up regardless of a placement? Any other helpful information.



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## VOLUNTEER SCHEDULING TEMPLATE

Here is a sample weekly volunteer schedule for a kitchen program. N/A indicates no volunteers are needed, and the blank cells indicate a slot still needs to be filled. This tool helps the volunteer coordinator schedule volunteers for each program area.

This tool can either be shared on a whiteboard posted near your volunteer coordinator's desk at a central workspace, or shared through an online calendar.

Shift time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9AM-1PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Gustavo	Ben	Sara
9AM-1PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Loretta	Susan	Carlo
9AM-1PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Janice	Rosa	Mamma Rita
9AM-1PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Tammy		CJ
9AM-1PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	Omar		
1PM-5PM	Sarah	N/A	Peter	Terrance	Jay	N/A
1PM-5PM	Amal	N/A	Lilly	Jennifer B	Kat	N/A
1PM-5PM	Emilio	N/A	Clarence	Jennifer M	Elias	N/A
1PM-5PM	Jordan (away)	N/A	Ms. B		Mark	N/A
1PM-5PM	Lee	N/A	Jeff			N/A



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## SAMPLE CODE OF CONDUCT

SOURCE: THE ALEX COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE



### Inclusivity

We value diversity at The Alex. To ensure that we have a safe and welcoming space for all, volunteers must work to:

- Make sure all people are treated with respect.
- Address discrimination based on race, class, gender expression and identity, ability, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background, or age.
- Ensure that incidents of ill-treatment or injustice that negatively impact a person or group of people are reported to a staff person.
- Maintain dignity, build community, and challenge inequality.

### Conduct

- You should always feel welcomed and treated as an important part of our team.
- Your time is valuable and you are an asset to our organization. We will be respectful of your time and strive to make your volunteer work with us enriching and meaningful.
- Volunteers are crucial to the operation of The Alex. We depend on you! Volunteers must be reliable in turning up for their shifts on time. Please let us know in advance if you are unable to make it during your scheduled shifts so that we can make every effort to fill your place.
- You should always feel safe and comfortable while you are volunteering at The Alex. If you are ever in a situation where you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, please leave the situation immediately and notify your supervisor or the volunteer administrator.
- Volunteers must call a staff person if there is an incident involving participants, clients, community members, or in case of an emergency. Do not deal with incidents on your own.
- You may be in a position where community members/clients look to you for guidance. Please be professional at all times and be mindful of the impact you have on others.
- Volunteers must not exploit the trust or vulnerability of any community member/client.
- Please respect the boundaries of your volunteer role. Do not provide any medical, legal, or psychological guidance. If a community member/client needs professional guidance, please refer them to a staff member.
- The Alex is a safe and family-friendly environment. Volunteers must not attend their shifts while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. To do so will result in instant dismissal. Volunteers must not take drugs or alcohol during their shift at The Alex.
- While on shift, volunteers may have access to areas and supplies that non-volunteers do not. When volunteers are not on shift, they should not go into these areas.
- Volunteers must not use Alex equipment (photocopier, fax, phone, computer) during their shift unless it is an emergency or part of their volunteer task. Please ask a staff member if you can use the equipment before you do so.

### Confidentiality

It is of the utmost importance that the privacy and confidentiality of volunteers, participants, clients, and community members are respected at The Alex. To maintain this confidentiality, volunteers will:

- not disclose information read in documents or files.
- not disclose information heard in conversation with participants, volunteers, community members, or staff.
- not disclose information about an incident that involved participants, volunteers, community members, or staff.



**Occupational Health and Safety**

- All roles have the potential of accident or injury, but we have worked hard to manage and mitigate risks.
- The risk for each role has been assessed and role specific training may be required.
- All volunteers must complete the orientation to ensure awareness of emergency procedures.
- If at any time a volunteer feels there is a health or safety concern with their role, they must notify supervising staff or the volunteer coordinator.
- Volunteers have the right to refuse unsafe work. This refusal must be communicated to the immediate supervisor and/or volunteer coordinator.

## THREE MONTH VOLUNTEER CHECK-IN SURVEY

*This survey is designed to be administered to volunteers 2-3 months into their volunteer commitment. Accordingly, it is focused more heavily on program improvement than program impact. Enter the exact name of your organization before distributing.*

*Determine whether an anonymous survey is the best fit for you and your organization or if you'd prefer to use this tool as a way to check in with individual volunteers. Whichever approach you take be sure to indicate clearly on your survey how the information will be received.*

**Introduction:** The purpose of this survey is to help us improve our volunteer program. We want to make sure we are doing the most we can for our valuable volunteers . . . like you! Please answer all of the questions in the survey as completely and honestly as possible — don't hold back. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete. All results will remain anonymous and confidential. *(Adapt if this will be an open survey, including volunteer name, etc.)*

1. Which program(s) do you volunteer in?

2. Is this your first time volunteering with an organization? Yes / No

3. Do you also participate in *(insert your organization's name)* programs or use its services? Yes / No  
a. If yes: Which ones do you participate in/ use?

4. Why did you choose to volunteer at *(insert your organization's name)*?

5. How well do you feel the training you received prepared you for your current volunteer position?

Not at all      Somewhat      Mostly      Very well

Comments/suggestions on the training you received:

6. How satisfied are you with the level of supervision you receive as a volunteer?

Very dissatisfied      Somewhat dissatisfied      Somewhat satisfied      Very satisfied

Comments/suggestions:

7. How clear are you on your duties and responsibilities as a volunteer?

Not clear at all      Somewhat clear      Mostly clear      Completely Clear

Comments/suggestions:





## VOLUNTEER EXIT SURVEY

*This survey is designed to be administered as a volunteer exits your organization. It has been designed in accordance with the provided logic model. Questions (particularly 9-14) can be adapted to align with the strategic objectives of your volunteer program. Please remember to enter the name of your organization (where noted) before distributing.*

**Introduction:** Thank you for contributing your time to *(insert organization's name)*. We ask all volunteers to complete this short survey as they exit our volunteer program. The first set of questions will help us improve the program. The second set will help us better understand the impact of the program.

Please answer all of the questions in the survey as completely and honestly as possible — don't hold back. The survey should take 10 minutes to complete. All results will remain anonymous and confidential.

### Set #1

1. How long have you been a volunteer at *(insert organization's name)*?

- Fewer than 3 months
- Between 3 and 6 months
- Between 6 months and 1 year
- Between 1 and 2 years
- More than 2 years

2. Why have you decided to stop volunteering with *(insert organization's name)*?

How satisfied are you with the level of supervision you receive as a volunteer?

Very dissatisfied      Somewhat dissatisfied      Somewhat satisfied      Very satisfied

Comments/suggestions on the training you received:

4. How appreciated do you feel as a volunteer by your supervisor/staff?

Not appreciated      Somewhat underappreciated      Somewhat appreciated  
Very appreciated

Comments/suggestions:

5. How comfortable did you feel offering suggestions or voicing concerns as a volunteer?

Very uncomfortable      Somewhat uncomfortable      Somewhat comfortable  
Very comfortable

Comments/suggestions on the training you received:

6. Overall, how satisfied were you with this volunteer experience?

Very dissatisfied      Somewhat dissatisfied      Somewhat satisfied      Very satisfied

Comments/suggestions on the training you received:

7. Please provide one or two additional suggestions for how we can improve our volunteer program.

## Set #2

8. Have you made any new friends through volunteering at (*insert organization's name*)? Yes / No

9. Do you feel like you belong to the community at (*insert organization's name*)? Yes / No

10. Because of this volunteer experience, do you feel more confident taking on leadership roles? Yes / No

If yes: Please explain

11. Has volunteering at (*insert organization's name*) made you think differently about food insecurity and poverty issues in this community? Yes / No / Not sure

If yes: Please explain

12. Has volunteering at (*insert organization's name*) increased your level of interest in community issues? Yes / No

If yes: In what way?

13. Have you become more engaged/active on those issues? Yes / No

If yes: In what ways?

14. What is the most important difference that volunteering at (*insert organization's name*) has made for you?

15. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?



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## VOLUNTEER OUTREACH POSTER



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## SAMPLE RESPECT POLICY

### Purpose:

- Create a public facing policy to be posted in the space
- Template can be adapted to your organization
- Help to foster a safe space for community members & staff that is free of:
  - Physical and verbal abuse
  - Discrimination
  - Vandalism
- Set expectations of behaviour in the space
- Clearly indicate what will happen if policy is not followed
- Promote a social justice lens which encourages resolution when possible

### General Respect Policy Template

At **(insert organization's name)** we are committed to ensuring our space is welcoming and safe.

We value equity and inclusion. This means we believe that everyone should feel comfortable coming to our space and not be discriminated against. We strive to create a safe space where individuals' ancestry, race, ethnicity, ability, immigration status, mental and physical health, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, income status, religion, political affiliation or record of offences are respected.

The environment we want to create in our space is one where people feel safe, welcomed and are treated with dignity. In order for this to happen we ask everyone attending our centre to treat each other in a friendly, patient, and understanding manner.

We also ask that you are considerate of our physical space and other people's belongings in the same way.

### Disrespectful Behaviour

We want you to have access to our healthy food programs and services. However those who are not able to follow the above guidelines will be asked to leave for a period of time. This includes discriminatory language, verbal and physical abuse, and vandalism.

The amount of time will be determined by the seriousness of the incident and the number of times it has occurred. You will be assigned to a staff member to support you in resolving the incident. Our hope is that once the incident has been resolved you will be able to return to the space.

### Getting Support

If you feel that you have not been treated well please bring your concerns to a staff member so they can provide you with assistance.



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## COMMUNITY LEADERS:

### HOW TO BUILD A THRIVING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

is produced by Community Food Centres Canada.



**Community Food Centres Canada** builds health, belonging and social justice in low-income communities across Canada through the power of food.








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