CANADIAN CODE FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

CCVI
The Canadian Code for

Volunteer Involvement

VOLUNTEER BÉNÉVOLES CANADA

volunteer.ca

For further information on volunteering, please visit: **www.volunteer.ca**.

Volunteering: A Bigger Tent Without Walls

In preparation for Canada's 150th Anniversary, Volunteer Canada convened a series of round tables[2] to ask people to consider what they wanted the world of volunteering to look like in 2017 and beyond. As a springboard for the discussion, His Excellency, the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, shared his vision of a smart and caring nation. Many began to imagine a more inclusive and broader definition of volunteering. This gave rise to the Volunteer Canada Spectrum of Volunteer Engagement[3], which recognizes a wide range of activities including: being informed about an issue, supporting a cause, participating in service-delivery, organizational capacity building and strategic leadership.

Canadians continue to be generous with their time and are highly engaged in their communities with close to 13 million Canadians volunteering over 150 hours each year. As impressive as this may be, the formal volunteering measured in the survey has decreased slightly from previous years. Some of these lower volunteer rates may be explained by an aging population or the multiple demands on middle aged people (the sandwich generation), who are balancing the needs of their children and aging parents with their own careers and health. Volunteer Canada knew that this was only part of the picture.

The shifting perceptions of what volunteering is and how Canadians are acting upon their values was illuminated in our study, *Recognizing Volunteering in 2017*, carried out in collaboration with IPSOS Public Affairs. People are doing great things inside, alongside and outside of organizations. They are raising funds, raising awareness, mobilizing ideas and mobilizing people to improve lives, communities and society. People make a range of decisions throughout their day to act upon their values. Examples include everything from composting to choosing a fair trade local coffee brewer, to carpooling, responding to a request for spare change, shoveling for a neighbour and taking an evening shift on the youth help line. This is part of our Individual Social Responsibility (ISR), a concept that emerged from our research.

Many organizations are taking a more integrated human resource management approach. Given that organizations are responsible for anything done in their name (by a volunteer, paid employee, co-op student, or someone completing community service hours) and that they are also responsible for anyone who works with them, policies and practices relate more to what a person does within the organization and not how they are remunerated. With the exception of matters related to compensation and recognition, most policies apply equally to everyone in areas such as training and supervision, evaluation, confidentiality, harassment, inclusivity, conflict of interest and screening.

Given the rise of informal volunteering and organic movements, there may be an inherent paradox in promoting standards of practice, protocols, policies and procedures in this CCVI. As we better understand how volunteering is influenced by these trends, our challenge is to create the infrastructure needed to carry out the duty of care to ensure the quality and safety of our programs and services while making the space under our tent for informal volunteering and organic movements.

Paula Speevak
President & CEO
Volunteer Canada

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2   Volunteer Canada, *The World of Volunteering in 2017 and Beyond: Summary of the Round Table Discussions*, June 2011
3   Introduced by Volunteer Canada in 2012 and included in the 2012 Edition of the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*

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SECTION I INTRODUCTION

Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada provides national leadership and expertise on volunteerism in Canada. We aim to increase the participation, quality and diversity of volunteer experiences in Canada in order to help build strong and connected communities. Since 1977, we have worked closely with a wide range of collaborators in order to achieve our mission *to provide leadership in strengthening citizen engagement and to serve as a catalyst for voluntary action.* Collaborators include:

> Over 200 volunteer centres in communities across Canada

> Over 1200 Volunteer Canada members

> Over 20 members of the Corporate Council on Volunteering

> Canadian charitable and non-profit organizations

> Businesses

> Local, provincial and federal government departments

> Educational institutions

> National and provincial professional associations

Background

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI) was first launched by Volunteer Canada to mark the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. The CCVI was the vision of Liz Weaver, at the time Executive Director of Volunteer Hamilton, and was developed as her anchoring project in the McGill-McConnell Program, Master of Management for National Voluntary Sector Leadership. The CCVI was revised in 2006 in partnership with the Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (formerly Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources) to consolidate the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (Volunteer Canada, 2000) and the CAVR Standards of Practice (CAVR, 2002). Revisions in 2012 reflected legislative changes, demographic shifts, global trends and social innovation within the volunteer engagement field. This 2017 version of the CCVI contains updated standards, reflects the current social context and incorporates a more streamlined format.

Using the CCVI as a benchmark, Volunteer Canada developed checklists, Putting The Code Into Action, and the online Code Audit tool to help organizations assess their volunteer involvement practices. More information can be found at volunteer.ca/ccvi.

Over the past decade, employer-supported volunteering has moved from being an exceptional initiative to a mainstream practice among today's employers. With 37% of Canada's 12. 7 million volunteers reporting some sort of support from their employer to volunteer[1], Volunteer Canada's Corporate Council on Volunteering led the development of the Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering. This resource aligns with the CCVI, articulating values and guiding principles for cross-sectoral relationships and promoting standards of practice for Employer-Supported Volunteering. The two Codes provide a foundation for businesses and non-profit organizations to build effective partnerships in their work to strengthen communities.

Volunteer Canada would like to acknowledge **Cenovus Energy** for their financial support of this edition of the Code.

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1   Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating 2013

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement:

Purpose and Elements

The Code recognizes and reflects the changing realities of volunteer engagement and management practice, and supports the work of those who manage and support volunteer involvement within an organization. It is flexible and applies to organizations of all sizes, with different levels of resources, rural and urban, crossing a range of mandates, led by paid staff or by volunteers. Elements of the Code are designed to be inclusive and applicable to a diversity of people, cultures, communities, opportunities and approaches.

For volunteer involvement to be effective, the organization's leaders must actively champion a culture and structure that supports and values the role and impact of volunteer involvement.

The Code consists of three important elements:

> The **value** of volunteer involvement.

> **Guiding principles** that frame the relationship between the volunteer and non-profit organization.

> **Standards of practice** for involving individuals in meaningful ways to ensure successful integration of volunteers while meeting the needs of both the organization and its volunteers.

By adopting the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, non-profit organizations commit not only to strengthening their volunteer engagement strategy, but also to strengthening the capacity of the organization to meet its mandate and contribute to strong and connected communities.

SECTION II THE CANADIAN CODE FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

The Value of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteer involvement has a powerful impact on Canadian society, communities, organizations and individuals.

Volunteer involvement is fundamental to a healthy and democratic society in Canada

> It promotes civic engagement and active participation in shaping the society we want.

> It encourages everyone to play a role and contribute to the quality of life in communities.

Volunteer involvement is vital for strong and connected communities

> It promotes change and development through the collective efforts of those who know the community best.

> It identifies and supports local strengths and assets to respond to community challenges while strengthening the social fabric.

Volunteer involvement builds the capacity of organizations

> It provides organizations with the skills, talents and perspectives that are essential to their relevance, vitality and sustainability.

> It increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals through programs and services that respond to and are reflective of the unique characteristics and needs of their communities.

Volunteer involvement is personal

> It promotes a sense of belonging and general wellbeing.

> It provides the opportunity for individuals to engage according to their personal preferences, interests, skills and motivations.

Volunteering is about building relationships

> It connects people to the causes they care about, and allows community outcomes and personal goals to be met within a spectrum of engagement[4].

> It creates opportunities for non-profit organizations to accomplish their goals by engaging and involving volunteers, and it allows volunteers an opportunity to connect with and contribute to building community.

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4   See Appendix A, Spectrum of Volunteer Engagement

Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement

Guiding principles keep relationships balanced between organizations and their volunteers by ensuring they are reciprocal. They also help to ensure a commitment to developing and supporting volunteer involvement that benefits both the organization and the volunteer(s).

Volunteers have rights. Charitable and non-profit organizations recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer involvement.

> The organization's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement.

> The organization provides a safe and supportive environment for volunteers.

Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.

> Volunteers will act with respect for the cause, the stakeholders, the organization and the community.

> Volunteers carry out their involvement responsibly and with integrity.

Standards of Practice for Volunteer Involvement

The standards below are intended to provide guidance, not detailed instructions. Each organization will have to consider how to implement the standards according to its circumstance, while achieving the overall intent of the Code. By adopting the standards, the organization demonstrates a commitment to engaging and supporting volunteers in a meaningful and responsible way.

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
1 Mission-Based Approach	The Board of Directors and senior staff acknowledge, articulate and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose or mission. Volunteer roles are clearly linked to the organization's mission.
2 Human Resources	The organization has an integrated human resources approach that includes paid employees, students and volunteers. Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources team. Support for volunteer involvement includes providing appropriate resources.
3 Infrastructure for Volunteer Involvement	The organization adopts a policy framework and administrative procedures that define and support the involvement of volunteers. The organization has the required resources in place and has designated a qualified individual(s) responsible for supporting volunteer involvement. Standardized documentation, records management practices and procedures follow current relevant legislation.
4 Evaluation: Tracking, Measuring and Reporting	The organization measures and evaluates the effectiveness of its volunteer involvement strategy in helping to support its mandate. An evaluation framework is in place to assess the performance of individual volunteers and gauge volunteer satisfaction. Standardized documentation, records management practices and procedures track and record volunteer involvement.
5 Volunteer Roles and Recruitment	Volunteer roles contribute to the mission of the organization and clearly identify the skills and abilities needed. Volunteer roles involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect their skills, needs, interests and backgrounds. Volunteer recruitment incorporates a broad range of strategies to reach out to diverse sources of volunteers.

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
6 **Risk Management**	Risk management procedures are in place to assess, manage and/or mitigate potential risks to the volunteers, the organization, its clients, staff, members and participants that may result from the delivery of a volunteer-led program or service. Applicable Health and Safety protocols are followed. Each volunteer role is assessed for level of risk as part of the screening process.
7 **Screening**	The organization has a clearly communicated and transparent screening process in place. It is aligned with the risk management approach and consistently applied across the organization. This may involve a Vulnerable Sector Check when vulnerable populations are involved. See Volunteer Canada's 10 Steps of Screening.
8 **Orientation and Training**	Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization including the policies and practices appropriate to each role. Each volunteer also receives training specific to their role and their individual needs.
9 **Support and Supervision**	Volunteers receive the level of support and supervision required for the role and are provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.
10 **Recognition: Valuing Volunteer Involvement**	The organization acknowledges the contributions of volunteers using a range of recognition tools and activities that reflect the needs of the volunteer. The value and impact of volunteer contributions are understood and acknowledged within the organization and communicated to the volunteer. See Volunteer Canada's 2013 Volunteer Recognition Study and PREB.

For more details on implementing each of the Standards of Practice, go to: **www.volunteer.ca/ccvi**

SECTION III ADOPTING AND IMPLEMENTING THE CODE

The following are suggested steps for your organization to use as a starting point in adopting and implementing the Code. Organizations should work toward achieving the standards in ways that are appropriate to them. If your organization has already adopted a previous version of the Code, some of the steps may not be necessary. Periodic review of the Code will also help embed the values, guiding principles and standards of practice into those of the organization, so that effective volunteer involvement becomes part of the organizational culture.

- [ ] Review the Code with leadership to ensure that the organization is aligned with the Values and Guiding Principles sections.

- [ ] Present the Code to the Board of Directors and make a formal motion for the organization to adopt the Code.

- [ ] Prepare and publish a statement related to volunteer involvement in your organization.

- [ ] Assess the organization's practices related to the Values, Guiding Principles and Standards of Practice and share the results with the Board of Directors to support the case for adopting the Code. The *Code Audit Tool* may be helpful to your organization during this assessment. Conducting an assessment after adopting the Code provides the opportunity to inform the Board of Directors of the organization's progress in achieving the standards, and reinforces the board's commitment to the Code.

- [ ] Develop a work plan to address specific areas identified in the organizational assessment. The *Code Audit Tool* may be a helpful resource.

- [ ] Consult your local volunteer centre, provincial association of volunteer centres or Volunteer Canada. They are good resources to assist in adopting or implementing the Code.

- [ ] Advise Volunteer Canada when the organization has adopted the Code and is working toward implementing the standards of practice, to be listed as a Code adopter on Volunteer Canada's website.

- [ ] Review the Code periodically to mark your organization's progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

Involving Volunteers in Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations

Non-profit organizations accomplish their goals through their human resources. By using a planned approach to identify the work functions (both paid and unpaid) needed to achieve their missions, organizations are able to engage people's talents and skills and increase their organizational capacity through targeted recruitment. Part of the Code's strategy is to ensure that the skills needed to effectively engage volunteers become a core competency of most or all staff members. It is also important that the Board, Executive Director and senior staff champion a culture and structure that support and value the role and impact of volunteer involvement.

Everyone within a charitable and non-profit organization has a role to play in ensuring successful and effective volunteer involvement. Too often, the management or oversight of volunteers is left to a single individual[5] within the organization. Adopting a more inclusive approach to human resource management that considers both volunteers and paid staff ensures volunteers have more entry points into an organization.

The table on the next page illustrates key roles, responsibilities and accountabilities within a charitable and non-profit organization. It can be adapted to reflect the specific titles and roles that exist in any organization. For larger more complex organizations, a column identifying the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of staff working directly with volunteers might be appropriate. For grassroots organizations, some of the columns might merge, as individuals working for smaller organizations often undertake multiple roles. It is important to recognize that each organization is unique. This table is intended as a frame of reference to help non-profits determine who in the organization is accountable for ensuring that volunteers are effectively involved and able to contribute to the mission and programs of the organization.

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5   Or department, if applicable

	Board Members	Executive Directors or Leadership Volunteers	Volunteer or Human Resource Managers	Staff	Volunteers
Specific Roles in Organization	Create, lead and ensure a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement. (Policy Focus)	Create and lead a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement. (Policy and Delivery Focus)	Create and manage a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement. (Policy and Delivery Focus)	Proactively contribute to support an environment and culture for meaningful volunteer involvement. (Delivery Focus)	Proactively contribute to support an environment and culture for meaningful volunteer involvement. (Delivery Focus)
Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Plan	Define and review vision, mission and values related to volunteer involvement. Develop a strategic plan that integrates volunteer involvement as a core function and resource to support achievement of the mission.	Review vision, mission and values. Assist with strategic plan development. Develop and manage operational strategies, goals and the annual plan.	Link operational activities to vision, mission and values. Manage annual operating goals and strategies.	Understand how all volunteer roles link to vision, mission and values.	Understand how their specific volunteer role links to vision, mission and values. Undertake volunteer roles to achieve operational goals and strategies.
Governance Policy	Identify and develop governance policies.	Manage and support governance policies.	Manage and support governance policies.	Understand, implement and respect policies.	Understand, respect and follow policies.
Programs and Operations	Develop policies for programs and operations.	Identify and obtain the human and financial resources required for effective program delivery and operations.	Manage volunteer / human resources so that programs and operations are effectively supported.	Provide support to volunteer service and leadership for effective program delivery.	Provide volunteer service and leadership for effective program delivery.
Human Resource Management and Volunteer Involvement	Develop a policy approach to human resource management and incorporate the volunteer involvement standards of practice.	Ensure effective management of human resource strategies in the organization. Lead the involvement of volunteers and integration of volunteer involvement standards of practice.	Ensure consistent application of human resource management strategies to volunteer resources. Ensure volunteer involvement standards are consistently applied within the organization.	Operate within and support the volunteer involvement standards for development, delivery and support of quality programs and/or services.	Operate within and support the volunteer involvement standards for development and delivery of quality programs and/or services.

SECTION IV APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Spectrum of Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer Canada promotes a broader definition of volunteering that includes a wide spectrum of engagement. The spectrum spans from being informed to assuming a leadership position. *Education and Awareness* of issues or causes positions people to give voice to and take action on things that matter to local communities and society at large (e.g. organizing a lunch and learn session, attending a webinar, circulating a petition). *Actively Participating* in programs, activities and services directly improves peoples' quality of life (e.g. participating in a group volunteering event with colleagues, regular volunteering with a non-profit organization). Providing *Leadership* helps organizations to better achieve their missions (e.g. serving on the board of a non-profit organization, chairing a major campaign). All these roles are essential to building strong and connected communities.
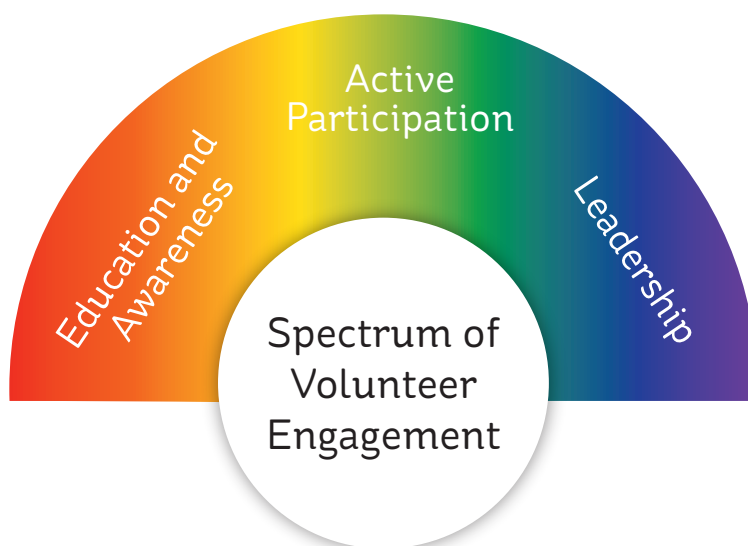
The spectrum of engagement recognizes the diversity in peoples' sources of inspiration, modes of putting their values into action, skills to contribute and capacity to donate time. The spectrum of engagement also recognizes that each organization is different and has a different capacity to engage volunteers. The most vibrant organizations offer and welcome volunteer opportunities within the full spectrum of engagement.

APPENDIX B

Glossary of Terms	
Board	Those persons responsible for providing leadership and direction to the organization and tasked with governing the organization's affairs on behalf of its members. For the purpose of this document, the term *board* refers to a board of directors, members of the executive, board of governors or a board of trustees, administrators, clergy, leaders, coaches, coordinators, officials, parents, participants or anyone else involved in the governance or decision making of the organization.
Capacity	The human and financial resources, technology, skills, knowledge and understanding required for organizations to do their work and fulfill the expectations of stakeholders.
Active Citizenship	Citizens who actively participate in their communities by tackling problems or bringing about change with the aim of improving quality of life.
Culture	The way a group of people engages with one another. It refers to the shared language, values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history or institutions of a group of people.
Diversity	A broad term that refers to the differences among individuals and groups, including differences in age, culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability.
Employer-Supported Volunteering (ESV)	The practice of employers providing the time, space, infrastructure and support for their employees to volunteer in the communities where they live and work. Employer-Supported Volunteering is typically one component of a corporate social responsibility strategy. Examples of Employer-Supported Volunteering include: volunteer grants or Dollars for Doers program, volunteer paid time-off policy, day of service, volunteer council or ambassadors program, group volunteering, short or long term skills based and/or pro bono volunteer assignments. See Volunteer Canada's Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering.
Family Volunteering	Family volunteering involves more than one person in a household or extended family, from different generations, volunteering together.
Integrated Human Resources Approach	A strategically planned approach to identifying the work functions that need to be accomplished in organizations. It involves engaging people, whether paid or unpaid, to perform the work needed to achieve the organization's mission[6].

Glossary of Terms

Manager of Volunteer Resources	The term *Manager of Volunteer Resources* is used throughout the Code as a generic term. An administrator of volunteer resources[7] is a professional who applies best practices in volunteer management in compliance with nationally accepted standards to identify, strengthen and effectively maximize voluntary involvement for the purpose of improving the quality of life of individuals and communities. The term *administrator* is used in a generic way to represent all other titles used in the non-profit sector (director, coordinator, manager, leader, etc). In some organizations, the title of the person responsible for managing volunteer resources may not even reflect this role.
Micro-Volunteering	A form of virtual volunteering, micro-volunteering describes a task done by a volunteer or team of volunteers, usually via the Internet. It typically does not require an application process, screening or training period because it takes only minutes or a few hours to complete. Micro-volunteering does not require an ongoing commitment.
Mission	The overall goal of the organization. The reason for an organization's existence.
Non-Profit Organization	Self-governing organizations that exist to serve the public benefit and generate social capital but do not distribute private profit to members. The organization depends on volunteers and is independent or institutionally distinct from the formal structures of government and the profit sector. A non-profit organization can be a large structured organization or a small community or grassroots organization.
Policies	Specific statements of belief, principle or action to guide decisions and achieve outcomes.
Procedures	A series of steps to help implement policy. The steps indicate who will do the work and how it will be done.
Skills-Based Volunteering	A type of volunteering that leverages the specialized skills and talents of individuals to help build and sustain the capacity of organizations to successfully achieve their missions.
Spectrum of Engagement	A continuum that includes being informed about an issue, being supportive of a cause, actively participating and taking leadership. All these roles are essential to building strong and connected communities.
Staff	Individuals who perform paid work on behalf of an organization.
Virtual Volunteering	A volunteer who completes tasks, in whole or in part, off-site from the organization using the Internet.
Volunteer	Any person who gives freely of their time, energy and skills for public benefit, without monetary compensation.

Additional resources for implementing the CCVI: **www.volunteer.ca/ccvi**.

Volunteer Canada members can access the Code Audit Tool at **www.volunteer.ca/audit** to assess their organization's volunteer involvement strategies and practices.