



The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

BACKGROUND

Broadly defined, a code can provide a framework for decision making by an organization. The code can specify organizational values, guiding principles and the specific rules or standards which align with these values. It can help an organization make decisions based on the organization's values and principles.

One of the strategic objectives for the International Year of Volunteers 2001 was to strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations. To support this goal, Volunteer Canada, with a national advisory committee, developed the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*. The Code is designed to present a setting in which organizations can discuss how their volunteers are engaged and supported.

As part of the International Year of Volunteers (and beyond), Volunteer Vancouver has moved to adopt the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement as part of its membership criteria.

THE CANADIAN CODE FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Values for Volunteer Involvement

- Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society. It fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities. It promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs.
- Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organization. It increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals, and provides volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute.

Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement

- Voluntary organizations recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers. The organization's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement. The organization commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers.
- Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization. Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and community. Volunteers will act responsibly and with integrity.

Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement

- The boards of directors and senior management acknowledge and support the role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose or mission.
- Policies and procedures are adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.
- A qualified person is designated to be responsible for the volunteer program.
- A clearly communicated screening process is consistently applied.
- Volunteer assignments address the purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways – reflecting their various abilities, needs and backgrounds.
- Volunteer recruitment and selection reaches out to diverse sources of volunteers.
- Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures, and receive training for their volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers receive appropriate levels of supervision according to their task and are given regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.
- Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valuable and integral members of the organization's human resources.
- The contributions of volunteers are regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods.