

# VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WORKBOOK



### THE RIGHT TO COPY THIS WORKBOOK

Permission is given to any nonprofit organization to photocopy any portion or the entire workbook for use within their organization, provided credit is given to Volunteer Alberta.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This workbook is intended to provide general information on volunteer screening and offer a starting point for your organization to develop effective policies, identify challenges, and mitigate potential issues related to volunteer screening. However, nonprofits vary considerably in their structure, mission and values, and operations. Therefore, the information in this workbook may not always be applicable to the needs of individual organizations.

This workbook is current only as of the date of publication and does not reflect subsequent changes to law or policy.

Volunteer Alberta does not offer legal or professional advice. Therefore, you may wish to seek professional advice to address concerns and issues.

© Volunteer Alberta and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017

Published by: Volunteer Alberta Suite 609, Empire Building 10080 Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1V9 Phone: (780) 482.3300 Fax: (780) 482.3310

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Volunteer Alberta developed this workbook in 2017 as part of the Volunteer Screening Program (VSP).

The VSP is offered by Volunteer Alberta in partnership with the Government of Alberta.

Volunteer Alberta would like to thank the Helen Schuler Nature Centre and Frontier Lodge for agreeing to share resources with the nonprofit sector in relation to volunteer screening.



# CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Getting Started	2
Step 1 - Generating Your Policy Statement	3
What is a Policy?	3
Policies and Screening	3
Developing Your Policy Statement	4
Sample Policy Statement	5
Step 2 - Generating Screening Procedures	6
What is a Procedure?	6
Procedures and Screening	6
Developing Your Procedures	7
The 10 Steps to Screening – An Overview	9
Creating Effective Volunteer Positions	11
Creating Effective Volunteer Positions	12
Assessing Risk	14
Risk Assessment Matrix	15
Information Storage – Privacy and Protection	16
Information and storage – Privacy and Protection	17
Step 3 - What Steps Will Your Organization Implement?	18
Step 4 - Final Review	19
Step 5 - Revisit Your Policy Statement	20
Appendix 1   Glossary	21
Appendix 2   Policy Template	
Appendix 3   Policy (Example)	24
Appendix 4   Sample Interview Questions	
Appendix 5   Sample Reference Questions	
Appendix 6   References	
Appendix 7   Additional Reading	
Additional Learning	
Additional Reources	



# **INTRODUCTION**

Good policies and procedures are key to your organization's success! Policies help to guide your organization – including programs, services, and day-to-day business administration.

This workbook is a step-by-step resource to support the development of volunteer screening policies and procedures. The workbook will explore the reasons for screening volunteers, assist in developing policies, and answer questions about the volunteer screening process.

Policies and procedures impact the work of your entire organization, so your whole organization should be involved in their development. Seek input from the people expected to follow, inform, develop, and enforce these policies. Remember that effective policies and procedures enable your organization to be effective in the future!

Keep in mind that the suggestions and guidelines provided by this workbook are a good starting point. However, you will need to tailor the information in this workbook for the individual needs of your unique organization.

### **GETTING STARTED**

Before developing your policies and procedures, it is important to have the following information at hand:

- Gather all documents and information relating to current volunteer screening processes and policies. This includes constitution, bylaws, any legislation that affects your organization, existing contracts and obligations, and current information from your board.
- Identify the key players who needs to be at the table? This includes board, management, operational staff, volunteers, partners, insurance agencies, and stakeholders.
- Your organization's mission and vision.
- Your organization's strategic plan.
- An awareness of your governance and operational structure understand how the Board, committees, volunteers, and staff interact and work together.





# **STEP 1 - GENERATING YOUR POLICY STATEMENT**

### WHAT IS A POLICY?

A **policy** can be defined as a course of action or a principle guiding action. For organizations, policies may be written statements that inform staff, board, and volunteers' work.

Keep in mind that policies are different from bylaws and constitutions. Bylaws and constitutions address legal operating matters and they are usually ratified by members of your organization. Policies are internal guidelines created by board members and staff informing all areas of your organization's work.

#### Policies are:

- Governing principles
- Internal governing rules of your organization
- A framework for carrying out work
- A way for the board to delegate authority
- A guide for what actions should be taken and why

### POLICIES AND SCREENING

To demonstrate **due diligence** and safely manage programs and services, every organization should be able to show they have policies in place to mitigate **risk** and potential situations if they arise.

**Duty of care** is an organization's obligation to take reasonable measures to care for and protect staff, clients, participants, volunteers, and the organization to an appropriate standard. The appropriate standard of care is dependent on the situation and risks.

Policies help organizations to carry out Duty of Care and demonstrate due diligence of the organization in mitigating risk.

### Helpful Tips

Policies answer the questions "why..?" and "what..?"

A policy should outline the intent of your organization and provide a framework of what to do in a given situation.





# **DEVELOPING YOUR POLICY STATEMENT**

Before creating your policy statement, consider the following questions regarding existing risks and requirements:

1. What are your organization's mandated requirements that pertain to volunteer screening (insurance policy, board policies, volunteer positions, client base)?

2. What do your organization's values and principles indicate that you should be doing with respect to volunteer screening?

3. What existing legislation may impact your volunteer recruitment and hiring process (e.g. Privacy Legislation, Human Rights Legislation, etc.)?





Using the answers to the above questions, begin crafting your policy statement. Remember, the statement should:

- Answer the question "what is your volunteer screening policy and why does it exist?"
- Briefly outline how different volunteers in your organization will be screened. Are there different processes for specific volunteer roles (i.e, those roles working with vulnerable populations and those that don't)? Be clear and concise (3-4 sentences).
- Consider who is responsible for carrying out the policy.
- Include a timeline to review the policy and indicate who should review it, noting when it was last approved or amended. Policies need to change and grow with as organization evolves!

### Sample Policy Statement

"All volunteers providing direct service to clients within our organization will undergo a consistent screening process to assist in determining the suitability of each candidate. The screening process will help to ensure the safety of vulnerable clients.

Volunteers providing indirect support to our programs will be screened according to the degree of access the volunteer has to vulnerable clients and/or information regarding vulnerable clients and the level of risk inherent in the volunteer role."



# **STEP 2 - GENERATING SCREENING PROCEDURES**

### WHAT IS A PROCEDURE?

In the last step, we identified a policy as a framework of what to do in a given situation. **Procedures** describe the specific way in which a policy will be applied or implemented.

In general, procedures should reflect organizational policies and practices.

### PROCEDURES AND SCREENING

**Helpful Tips** 

Procedures answer the questions "how...?" and "who...?"

A procedure is a series of steps that are consistently followed in order to carry out or support a policy.

To safely manage programs and services, and account for Duty of Care, every organization needs volunteer screening procedures. Effective procedures support matching volunteers appropriately to volunteer positions, address risks, and provide a process for staff to consistently follow to ensure every individual is effectively integrated within the organization.

Screening procedures should align with the standards of practice outlined by Volunteer Canada – the "10 Steps to Screening (Volunteer Canada 2012)." The 10 steps include:

- Creating clear and comprehensive volunteer position descriptions
- Understanding the level of risk for your volunteers, organization, and clients
- Understanding what types of information you collect and how you store this information

Having a clear picture of all the pieces related to volunteer recruitment and screening will help you generate comprehensive and effective procedures.





## **DEVELOPING YOUR PROCEDURES**

Before creating your screening procedures, consider he following questions regarding the clients your serve and your current recruitment process:

1. Who does your organization serve (e.g. seniors, youth, low-income families, immigrants)? What is your client base?

2. How do your existing volunteer positions support the organization – its mission, goals, programs, and services?

3. Who in the organization is responsible for the process of volunteer recruitment, engagement, and screening?





4. How will your organization carry out the process of volunteer screening? What tools, resources, and documentation are needed to support this work?

5. How will the organization mitigate risks? What is expected of staff, volunteers, and clients in order to address and mitigate risks?

6. What is our current volunteer screening process? What pieces of the current process are working and what can be improved?





### THE 10 STEPS TO SCREENING – AN OVERVIEW

The "10 Steps to Screening" provides guidelines for strategically integrating volunteers in your organization's work. By adopting these human resource standards, your organization demonstrates a commitment to engage and support volunteers in meaningful and responsible ways.

The 10 Steps can be broken into three sections: the Pre-hiring Process, the Hiring Process, and the Management of Volunteers. These steps are scalable to your organization – tailor the steps to your organization's needs and capacity.

### **The Pre-hiring Process**

The pre-hiring process lays the groundwork for the entire volunteer screening process.

Steps		What is Required?		
<ul> <li>Assess your programs and volunteer activities and roles to determine:         <ul> <li>Duty of care - the legal requirement to take reasonable steps to preharm</li> <li>Standard of care - the level or quality of service required in order to meet Duty of Care</li> <li>Internal policy implications</li> <li>Legislative requirements</li> <li>Risks and liabilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Types of questions to ask in this phase: Who is the participant? What is the nature of the activity? What is the set What is the level of supervision? (see <u>Risk Assessment Matrix</u>)</li> </ul>				
2.	Position Descriptions	Descriptions will help articulate requirements, level of risk, and the scope of the volunteer positions. Types of information to include in a position description (see <u>How to Create a</u> <u>Position Description Template</u> ):		
3.	Recruitment Processes	Recruitment practices need to be planned and clearly communicated. They must be fair, consistent, and appropriate for the volunteer position.		



## **The Hiring Process**

During the hiring process, organizations implement formal processes for recruitment and begin to onboard volunteers.

	Steps	What is Required?	
4.	Application	<ul> <li>A standardized application form is used for all volunteer positions and assignments that:</li> <li>Collects basic information to process the application</li> <li>Asks questions directly related to the requirements of the position or assignment</li> <li>Respects human rights legislation</li> <li>Requests reference information and consent</li> <li>Seeks permission to obtain a Police Information Check or Vulnerable Sector Check, if required</li> </ul>	
5.	Interview	Interviews provide an opportunity to talk with candidates about their skills, interests, qualifications, and personal goals to help determine if there is a potential match within the organization. They also provide an opportunity to meet potential volunteers. ( <i>for sample questions see <u>Appendix 4</u></i> )	
6.	Reference Checks	Reference checks can be used for all positions. Ensure that the type of reference check meets the requirements of the volunteer position and complies relevant provincial legislation (ex. Human Rights legislation). It is best practice to check more than one reference and ask open-ended questions. ( <i>for more tips, see <u>Appendix 5</u></i> )	
7.	Police Checks or Vulnerable Sector Checks	Police Information Checks (PIC) and Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSC) may be appropriate depending upon the policies, legal requirements, and the level of risk of the volunteer position (for more information, see <u>Is a Police Information</u> <u>Check the Only Way</u> ?).	





### The Management of Volunteers

Volunteer management is the feedback loop! These steps help ensure volunteers understand their role and how their work connects to your organization. Ongoing management is also a great way to build relationships and provide opportunities to learn and grow together.

Steps	5	What is Required?
8. Orienta and Trainin		Orientation and training provide volunteers with information about their role and the organization. Training should help ensure a volunteer's success. This is also an opportunity to continue to assess whether the volunteer is a good fit for their role.
9. Suppor and Superv		<ul> <li>Support and supervise volunteers to:</li> <li>Ensure continued mutual benefit for volunteers and your organization</li> <li>Maintain the quality of your programs and services</li> <li>Reduce potential risks and liabilities</li> </ul>
10. Follow- and Feedba	•	A clear follow-up system will also assist with monitoring the suitability of the match, the quality of programs and services, and reduce potential risks and liabilities. Feedback <i>for</i> volunteers should help improve their skills. Feedback <i>from</i> volunteers helps inform and grow your volunteer program!

### **CREATING EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

The volunteer position description is an important and useful screening tool. It will clearly define the responsibilities, expectations, skills, and abilities required to perform the volunteer task successfully.

The position description not only creates the basis for your recruitment efforts, it will help determine what information you collect, the associated risks, and the suitability of the volunteer for the role.

To assist you in this process, we have created a <u>position description template</u> for you to use or you can use the questions below.



### **CREATING EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

To help you get started, we have provided some questions for thought and discussion. Review these questions for each volunteer position in your organization.

- 1. What is the purpose or the key function of the position?
- 2. How does the position support organization mission and goals?

3. What duties and/or activities will the volunteer perform?

4. What experience, skills, and qualifications are required?

5. Who will the volunteer will be interacting with and where will the work take place?





6. What is the length of time and level of commitment required?

7. Describe the supervision, training, and orientation required for the position.

8. What risks are associated or involved in this position and situation (consider the activity, the clients/participants, setting, and any other relevant factors)?

9. What would the volunteer be expected to do in a risky situation?

10. As a result of action or lack of action, what potential consequences can you foresee?





### **ASSESSING RISK**

Using your volunteer position description, you can assess the level of risk inherent to the volunteer position. *All* volunteers within the organization will require screening to determine the suitability of the volunteer to the positon. However, not all positions will require a **Police Information Check** (PIC) or a **Vulnerable Sector Check** (VSC).

The decision to use a PIC or a VSC is part of the screening process and is determined by the level of risk associated with a volunteer position. This decision will be impacted by the access a volunteer has to vulnerable persons, the level of supervision, the intimacy of the setting, and the level of **trust and authority**. Clauses found in grant agreements, insurance policies, and existing board or organizational policies may also impact whether a PIC or VSC is necessary for a volunteer role. Generally, the higher the risk, the greater degree of screening is necessary for the position.

Using the Risk Assessment Matrix provided on the next page, you can determine the level of risk for the volunteer and the level of screening required for your volunteer positions.





## **RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX**

	Minimal Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk <sup>1</sup>	High Risk
Participants/Clients	Volunteer is in a role that does not involve interaction with participants.	Interaction is minimal and supervised by a paid employee. Interaction is with all types of participants.	Interaction is frequent and may be supervised by an employee or senior volunteer on an infrequent basis. One-on-one access may occur in certain situations.	Interaction is frequent and volunteer is in a position of trust or authority with a vulnerable person. Volunteer has unsupervised access to vulnerable populations.
Setting	Volunteer works in isolation with no interaction with participants.	Public, non-intimate setting, and/or open space with high visibility and supervision.	Space with limited visibility and infrequent supervision.	Space with no visibility or supervision.
Supervision/Access	Supervisor is present at all times.	Supervisor is regularly present.	Infrequent supervision by paid employee or senior volunteer or parent.	Little to no supervision.
Nature of the Relationship       (e.g. administrative support, social media volunteer, gift shop       occur in brief interactions and/or over short periods of time. (e.g. classroom       Personal relationship that develops, grows, and extends over time. Intimacy and trust may be developed. (e.g. driver, camp		One-on-one relationship, position of trust and authority. Personal relationship is developed between the volunteer and the participant. (e.g. coach, respite caregiver, a mentor)		
Degree of Physical Contact	No physical contact with participants.	Infrequent and/or supervised physical contact with vulnerable populations.	High degree of physical contact between the volunteer and vulnerable clients – a close relationship may be developed, but the volunteer does not necessarily have access to client at all times or does not have decision making power.	High degree of physical contact between the volunteer and vulnerable clients – client and volunteer role is dependent upon the development of a close, personal relationship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Volunteer positions in the medium or high risk category may be eligible for the Vulnerable Sector Check Fee Waiver under the Volunteer Screening Program. Please refer to <u>eligibility and guidelines</u> to determine if the Vulnerable Sector Check Fee Waiver is applicable.



Using the Risk Assessment Matrix, check off the risk associated with individual volunteer positions for each category.

	Minimal Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Participant (Client)				
Setting				
Supervision/Access				
Nature of the Relationship				
Degree of Physical Contact				
Access to Information				

Based on your answers above, determine whether the level of risk is:

- □ Minimal Risk
- □ Low Risk
- □ Medium Risk
- □ High Risk

### **INFORMATION STORAGE – PRIVACY AND PROTECTION**

**Personal information** is defined as information that can identify an individual (*e.g. name, address, telephone number, medical record, or criminal history*). At all times, the privacy of the individual needs to be balanced against the needs of an organization to collect, use, and disclose personal information for screening-related purposes. As part of a commitment to duty of care and the safety of volunteers and clients, an organization *must* safeguard personal information in their possession.

Organizations must think about the way they handle information – from collection to destruction – and how these practices align with provincial and/or federal legislations.





### **INFORMATION AND STORAGE – PRIVACY AND PROTECTION**

Below are some questions to consider when thinking about the privacy of your volunteers and the types of information you collect:

- 1. What legislation does our organization fall under (e.g. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), Protection of Personal Information Act (PIPA), the Health Information Act (HIA), etc.)?
- 2. How and where will personal information be stored?
- 3. Will the organization store Police Information Checks or Vulnerable Sector Checks?
  - a. If yes, how will they be stored to protect privacy?
  - b. If no, how will it be verified that the documents have been reviewed and are satisfactory?
- 4. Who will be permitted to access volunteer information? How long will records be kept on file?





## **STEP 3 - WHAT STEPS WILL YOUR ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENT?**

Based on the information gathered and discussed in the previous steps, refer back to the 10 Steps to Screening. Which steps will your organization implement to effectively screen volunteers and mitigate risk for the organization?

The 10 Steps Checklist - What is our Screening Process (check all that apply)?

- □ Assessment
- Position Descriptions
- □ Recruitment
- □ Application
- □ Interview/Reference Checks
- □ Record Checks
- □ Orientation and Training
- $\hfill\square$  Support and Supervision
- □ Follow-up and Feedback





# **STEP 4 - FINAL REVIEW**

In the previous step, you decided which actions your organization would take for implementing the screening process. Using the table below, list all of the steps your organization will undertake as part of the screening process in the "Action" column.

Next, decide who within the organization will be responsible for each aspect of screening. If an action will be repeated over the long-term (*i.e. screening checks or evaluations*), list the date upon which the action will be completed (*i.e. every six months, every two years, etc.*).

Action	Person(s) Responsible	Date of Re-Evaluation





# **STEP 5 - REVISIT YOUR POLICY STATEMENT**

Here is where all the information is gathered and put together for a final review!

Review all the information gathered and discussed in steps 1 through 4. Here are some questions to think about when reviewing your original policy statement:

1. Are there risks that haven't been accounted for?

- 2. Is there a policy that can be implemented to address these risks?
- 3. What level of risk are the volunteers our organization engages?
- 4. Are there actions in the screening process that need to be addressed in your policy (e.g. screening checks, third party references, etc.)?
- 5. Is there anyone you need to engage and/discuss your policy with (e.g. insurance provider, legal advisor, current volunteers)?





# **APPENDIX 1 | GLOSSARY**

**Due Diligence:** to act reasonably, prudently, in good faith and with a view to the best interests of the organization and its members.

**Duty of Care:** the legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect staff, clients, participants, volunteers and the organization to an appropriate standard. The appropriate standard of care is dependent on the situation and risk.

**Liability:** the duties, obligations, or responsibilities imposed on a person by common law or statute. As it is commonly used, we speak of a person or organization being held legally liable for something.

**Personal Information:** information that can identify an individual (e.g. name, address, telephone number, medical record or criminal history).

**Police Information Check:** includes a scan of police databases in the jurisdiction an applicant resides. Information includes a list of existing criminal convictions, any relevant convictions not yet recorded, court imposed orders, and a list of all pending court appearances.

**Policy:** a course or principle of action. For organizations, they may be written statements that guide people's work.

**Procedure:** series of steps that are consistently followed in order to carry out a policy. They describe the way in which a policy will be applied or implemented.

**Position of Trust or Authority:** a situation in which someone has a significant degree of authority over another. This includes unsupervised access, decision-making power, and situations in which the development of a close, personal bond exists.

**Risk:** A probability or threat of damage, injury, liability, loss, or any negative occurrence that is caused by external or internal vulnerabilities, and that may be avoided through preemptive action.

**Vulnerable Sector Check:** performed as part of a Police Information Check, when requested. Information includes a list of non-conviction locally held police records that demonstrate a pattern of behavior that may pose a risk to vulnerable persons, a list of existing criminal convictions, any relevant convictions not yet recorded, court imposed orders, and a list of all pending court appearances.





# **APPENDIX 2 | POLICY TEMPLATE**

Policy:	Title of the policy	
Effective Date:	Date the policy came into effect	
Date Last Reviewed:	Most recent review date	
Scheduled Review Date:	Next scheduled review date	
Supersedes:	All previous Policies and/or Statements	
Approved by:	Indicate who approved the policy and the date of approval (e.g., the board, the human resources committee, the executive director)	

#### PURPOSE:

This section sets out what the policy intends to accomplish or the goal of the policy. For example, a health and safety policy may have a purpose of ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for all workers in compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation.

#### SCOPE:

The scope outlines to whom the policy applies. It may apply to all staff and workers, or differentiate based on level, location, employment status, or department. Be sure to identify if the policy also applies to volunteers, contract workers, or consultants. The scope should also identify any exceptions to the policy.

#### POLICY STATEMENT:

The statement is the actual rule or standard the policy needs to communicate.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

Clearly define any terms used within the policy. If the terms are included in legislation that underpins the policy, be sure to use the definitions from the legislation (e.g., disability, prohibited grounds, discrimination, harassment, workplace violence).

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This section outlines the responsibilities of the board, management, and staff in regards to the policy as well as who is responsible for developing, maintaining, monitoring, and implementing the policy.

If there are consequences for not complying with the policy (e.g., disciplinary), be sure to mention this. For example, "Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary measures up to and including termination of your employment."



#### **REFERENCES:**

Reference any other policies, documents, or legislation that support the interpretation of this policy.

#### QUESTIONS:

Identify the person or position who is responsible for answering questions about the policy.

#### PROCEDURE (if applicable):

The **procedure** gives step-by-step instructions for how to carry out or implement the policy. It can be a separate document or may accompany a policy. To allow for exceptions, be sure to include a statement that the procedure is intended as a guide only.





# APPENDIX 3 | POLICY (EXAMPLE)

Policy:	Volunteer Screening Policy	
Effective Date:	January 1, 2013	
Date Last Reviewed:	January 1, 2015	
Scheduled Review Date:	January 1, 2017	
Supersedes:	All previous Policies and/or Statements	
Approved by:	Jane Doe, Executive Director	
	John Doe, Board President	
	Billy Joel, Senior Volunteer Manager	

#### PURPOSE:

To ensure volunteers, participants, and staff are aware of the consistent screening process for all volunteers and that volunteer applicants expect a screening and selecting process that is fair, equitable, and accommodating.

#### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, engaged with or looking to volunteer for our organization.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Our organization will screen and select candidates based on requirements determined through an assessment of risks. Interviews and requests for required information will be conducted in a manner that reflects the labour and human rights legislation in Alberta. The screening process will take reasonable and fair precautions to ensure volunteers selected meet the organization requirements of the position.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

Screening refers to the entire onboarding process for volunteers. This includes the pre-hiring, recruitment, application, interview, and selection process).

Human rights legislation refers to the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and protects all Albertans from discrimination.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Volunteer Responsibilities:

Volunteer candidates will complete application forms and demonstrate that they meet the application requirements honestly and to the best of their ability. Volunteer candidates will provide references if



required for the role and complete any orientation and training necessary to ensure they are prepared for the role.

Staff Responsibilities:

Volunteer supervisors will conduct a risk assessment for all volunteer positions to determine the screening requirements. Screening requirements should be directly reflective of risks. Record checks will be requested, where appropriate, and to address potential risks.

All staff responsible for the recruitment of volunteers will inform applicants of the screening process and are responsible for preparing, orientating, and training of new volunteers for the purpose of their position.

It is the responsibility of senior management and board members to determine a standardized application form and process (see Procedures Manual) that will be updated every two years and followed by all staff and volunteers.

It is the responsibility of any party involved in the screening process to make a determination on whether potential volunteers may be unfit based on the specific requirements expected of them. It is also the responsibility of any party involved to adhere to the responsibilities of this policy and any affiliated procedures or guidelines.

Failure to follow this policy and the screening procedure prescribed herein will result in inconsistent volunteer recruitment and may result in lawful action if risks, responsibilities, fairness and equity are not accounted for.

#### **REFERENCES:**

Alberta Human Rights Act. Provincial Legislation in the Province of Alberta

#### QUESTIONS:

Billy Joel, Senior Volunteer Manager

#### PROCEDURE (if applicable):

#### **Collection and Consent**

On the Volunteer Registration Form, clearly define the purpose for collection of information and a consent statement re: distribution of information for [\_\_\_\_\_] purposes if consent is given. This statement could include consent for sharing any collected information with the appropriate parties (e.g. health information may be shared with the team's first aid personnel, contact details may be shared amongst team members).

The information collected should only be distributed for the purposes stated above.



If there is a request for volunteer data for an alternative reason, permission must be sought first (e.g. an equipment supplier wants to send out advertising material to your volunteers).

The organization must also request consent for the taking and use of photographs.

Where consent is not given to distribute information, the volunteer's details must be stored securely and are best kept in a separate database to avoid error.

#### Storage and Access to Information

Information should be stored centrally (i.e. housed together with a designated person) and is best kept away from public facilities if possible. The storage should be secure (e.g. password protected computer or a lockable filing cabinet).

Only those officials stated on the Volunteer Registration Form or in the screening policy should be provided with information, where appropriate.

When information is not required for any purpose, it should be destroyed.

#### Police Information Checks/Vulnerable Sector Checks

Record Checks can contain sensitive information and should be handled by a designated and responsible person within the organization. Information provided in these reports is strictly confidential and will only be brought to the attention of the Board when the report content requires some action.





# **APPENDIX 4 | SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. What interested you about this volunteer position?
- 2. Is there an aspect of our mission that motivates you to want to volunteer?
- Have you volunteered in the past?
   Yes: What have you enjoyed most about previous volunteer work?
   No: What have you enjoyed most about previous paid work or other activities?
- 4. Are you involved in other organized activities?
- 5. What special skills would you like to utilize as a volunteer?
- 6. Are there tasks that you do not want to do as a volunteer?
- 7. Can you briefly talk about your experiences as they relate to this position?
- 8. What would be the ideal volunteer job for you and why?
- 9. What are your personal goals for this experience?
- 10. Do you have any concerns about what we expect of you?
- 11. Are you willing to make a time commitment of \_\_\_\_\_?
- 12. Are you interested in additional training pertinent to this position?
- 13. Are you willing to provide training in your area of expertise to other volunteers or staff members?
- 14. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask us?





# **APPENDIX 5 | SAMPLE REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

- 1. How long have you known the volunteer and in what capacity?
- 2. How would you describe the volunteer's ability to get along with others?
- 3. Is the volunteer a team player or do they prefer to work alone?
- 4. What special skills or positive qualities does the volunteer have? Are there areas where they could improve?
- 5. How comfortable would you be leaving the volunteer with \_\_\_\_\_? Or in a \_\_\_\_\_\_ situation?
- 6. The volunteer role they are being considered for is \_\_\_\_\_\_. What do you think the applicant would be good at? What would they find challenging?





—.

# **APPENDIX 6 | REFERENCES**

Alberta Community Development. 2003. *The Board Development Workbooks (complete series).* Edmonton: The Muttart Foundation.

Canada, HR Council of. 2017. HR Toolkit. June 1. Accessed June 26, 2017.

Canada, Public Safety. 2008. Best Practice Guidelines for Screening Volunteers.

Canada: Volunteer Canada. 2012. The Screening Handbook - Tools and Resources for the Voluntary Sector.

Network, Ontario Nonprofit. 2017. Ontarion Nonprofit Network. June 1. Accessed June 26, 2017.

Ontario, Government of. 2017. Volunteering in Ontario. June 1. Accessed June 26, 2017.

Volunteer Canada. 2017. Screening. June 26. Http://volunteer.ca/screening.





# **APPENDIX 7 | ADDITIONAL READING**

The Screening Handbook - <u>http://volunteer.ca/content/2012-screening-handbook</u>

Best Practice Guidelines for Screening Volunteers - <u>https://volunteer.ca/content/best-practice-guidelines-screening-volunteers-finding-right-match</u>

The Canadian Code of Volunteer Involvement - <u>https://volunteer.ca/content/canadian-code-volunteer-involvement-2012-edition</u>

Safe Enough: Reviewing your Screening Practices - <u>https://volunteer.ca/content/safe-enough-reviewing-your-screening-practices</u>

Volunteer Alberta: Volunteer Screening Program Resources and Education - <u>http://volunteeralberta.ab.ca/volunteer-screening-program/vsp-education-training/</u>

# **ADDITIONAL LEARNING**

Volunteer Alberta Webinar - Skilled Volunteerism: Rethink How You Work With People

Volunteer Alberta Webinar - Screening Volunteers In. Not Out.

Volunteer Alberta Webinar - the 10 Steps to Screening

Visit our <u>website</u> for future dates!

# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES<sup>2</sup>**

Helen Schuler Nature Centre - Volunteer Recruitment Package

Frontier Lodge - Volunteer Position Description

<sup>2</sup> These peer resources are available upon request

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

This workbook is intended to provide general information on volunteer screening and offer a starting point for your organization to develop effective policies, identify challenges, and mitigate potential issues related to volunteer screening. However, nonprofits vary considerably in their structure, mission and values, and operations. Therefore, the information in this workbook may not always be applicable to the needs of individual organizations.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Volunteer Alberta developed this workbook in 2017 as part of the Volunteer Screening Program (VSP). The VSP is offered by Volunteer Alberta in partnership with the Government of Alberta.

This document is provided for general information only and may be distributed. This document has been thoroughly researched; however, we cannot guarantee accuracy. Readers should consult with a lawyer regarding specific legal questions or concerns.

# **QUESTIONS?**

For questions specifically pertaining to the Volunteer Screening Program, please contact screening@volunteeralberta.ab.ca

For general inquiries, please contact volab@volunteeralberta.ab.ca.



Abertan Government