

# SCiP

Serving Communities  
Internship Program

## SCiP GUIDEBOOK

How to get started with SCiP  
for your organization

Presented by:



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## Introduction

The Serving Communities Internship Program (SCiP) provides Alberta's nonprofits with the opportunity to bring in new expertise essential to achieving their missions. By participating in this program, nonprofits can tap into the skills and mindsets of Alberta post-secondary students driven to make a difference in their communities.

It is essential to gain an understanding of who your potential intern might be and what motivates them before you begin the process of hiring a SCiP intern. This knowledge will not only provide the background and guidance needed to create a meaningful experience for your SCiP intern, it will also help achieve your organization's project objectives, and support your intern's future career goals.

This guide will provide insight into the program and strategies to assist with planning for your SCiP intern. In this resource, you will find information on:

- Program history and eligibility.
- Understanding when to plan for interns.
- Creating a meaningful work experience.
- How to engage an intern.



## History of the Serving Communities Internship program (SCiP)

There is a growing awareness around the province, that to thrive, nonprofit/voluntary organizations require increased access to capacity building resources to help unlock greater potential.

Volunteer Alberta listens to the challenges of nonprofit organizations and responds by developing forward thinking programs and providing useful resources. This is foundational to how we help strengthen the sector in Alberta.

SCiP is an example of how Volunteer Alberta addresses the needs of the nonprofit sector and connect people with opportunities to serve the common good in our province.

Volunteer Alberta, in conjunction with Alberta Students Executive Council (ASEC), Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) and the Alberta Graduate Council (AGC) submitted a proposal in 2011 to the Ministry of Advanced Education to develop a program that connected post-secondary students looking for work experience with nonprofit organizations seeking to increase their capacity.

SCiP launched on May 30, 2011 and over the history of the program, there have been thousands of internships across the province, in both rural and urban areas. Students from publically funded post-secondary institutions in Alberta can participate in meaningful internships hosted by registered nonprofit organizations across the province.

## What is SCiP?

SCiP provides mutually beneficial opportunities for both nonprofit/voluntary sector organizations and students:

- Nonprofit organizations gain valuable human capacity.
- Post-secondary students add to their resumes, skills, and network while also receiving a \$1,000 bursary.

SCiP interns have done everything from event planning, to curriculum development, to wildlife rehabilitation, to social media campaigns – the possibilities are endless!

## Why should I participate?

Participation in SCiP means access to tailor-made resources to help strengthen your human resource capacity and potential. SCiP provides an opportunity for your organization to engage students in strategic roles that cost-effectively achieve your mission, while providing guidance and mentorship to the future workforce of the nonprofit sector.

Over 95% of organizations surveyed\* since the program's inception that have engaged an intern, would recommend SCiP to another organization, and planned on participating the following year.

## Am I eligible to participate?

Organizations in Alberta can participate if they are nonprofits or charities within Alberta. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, contact our office to discuss potential options for your organization.

## How much time, resources and planning are needed to hire a SCiP intern?

Planning internships and supervising interns can take time and requires sufficient planning. While ultimately interns can save you a lot of time by increasing productivity and helping you meet your mission, it is important to consider the following before you apply:

- Does your organization have screening policies?
- Are your screening policies up-to-date?
- Do you have an onboarding process for new staff/volunteers?
- Does your organization have an employee who can successfully supervise, mentor and engage your intern?



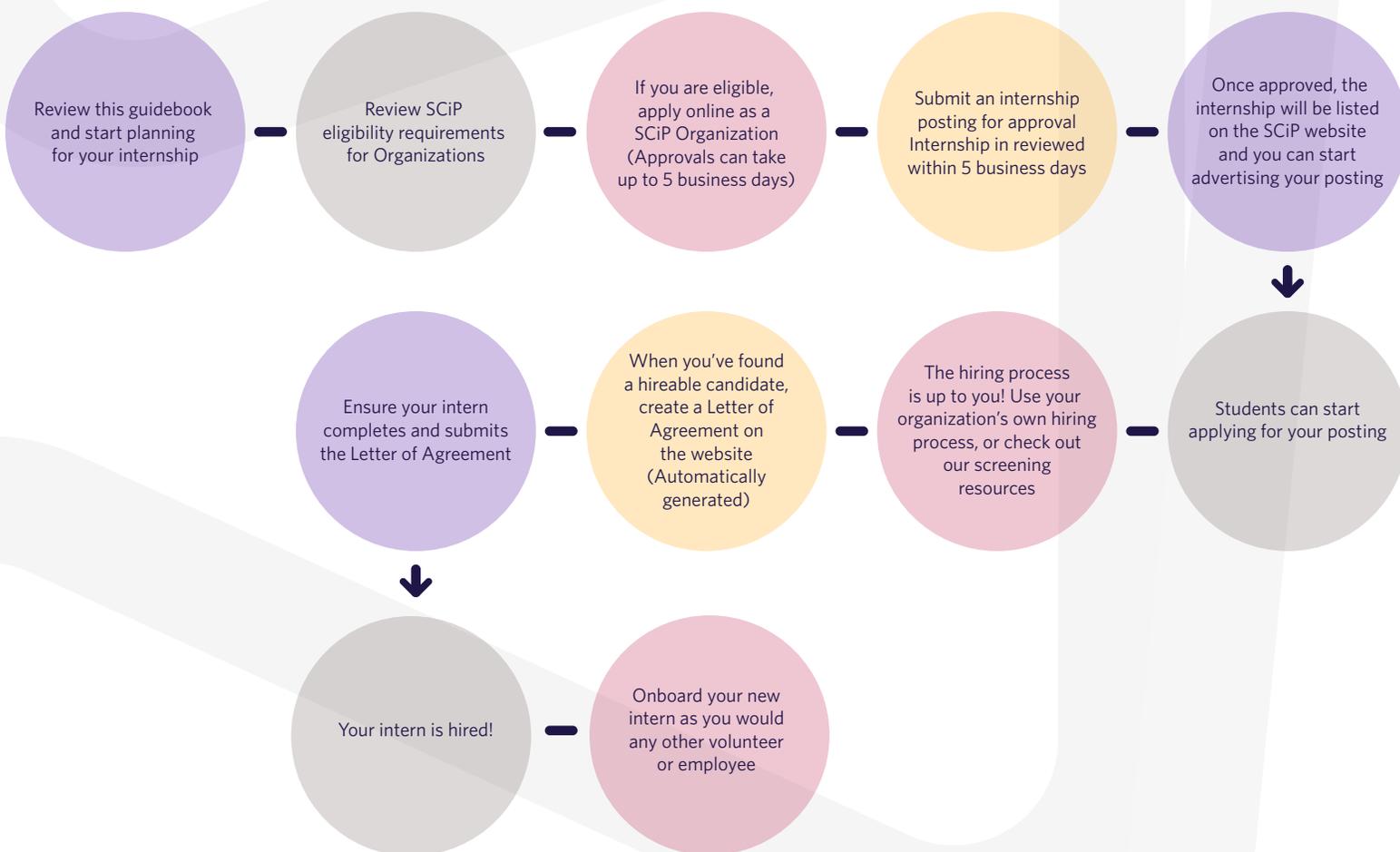
\*SCiP participation survey (2011-2017)

## SCiP at a glance

The SCiP website, JoinSCiP.ca, provides organizations access to resources to support and engage interns. In turn, they gain an intern with knowledge of current trends in their field of study and enhanced capacity to assist with specific projects. Organizations must adhere to the SCiP Terms and Conditions, as well as support the intern to succeed through appropriate mentorship and supervision.

Please check out the step by step guide online for more details.

### Hiring an intern



### Ending the internship

When the student has completed all of the deliverables to the best of their ability:



*\*This is not automatic and there are some steps your intern will have to complete.*

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## Planning for your intern

Through SCiP, your organization gains access to a variety of students. Students bring fresh perspectives and a desire to apply their learning to projects and tasks that propel your organization's mission forward. Interns are valuable assets to the nonprofit sector. By contributing their time, energy and talents, they help transform our communities. Nonprofits provide interns with their first look at the nonprofit sector, real life work experience.

The following questions will help kick-start and guide your intern planning process.

### When should I start planning for an intern?

As soon as possible! When your organization plans the future or discusses human resources, this is a great time to consider where an intern may be a good fit. Take time in the planning stage of any project or event to consider involving an intern.

### Who will apply?

SCiP is open to students enrolled in a degree, diploma, certificate or post-graduate program at any eligible post-secondary institution in Alberta during the program year (August 1st - July 31st) for which they are applying.

Alberta has well over 200, 000 post-secondary students from around the world, in over 500 different eligible programs at 26 publically funded institutions across the province. SCiP participants have ranged from 17 years-old to 50+, though the average age of a SCiP intern is in their early 20s.\*

This means all types of students, undergraduate or post-graduate students, view your organization's internship posting on the SCiP website.

When planning, consider how an intern's roles and duties will supplement their current studies. Students have specialized knowledge from their academic experiences, and require professional experience to be hired after they graduate. Consider how their educational background and skillset might help improve your organization's capacity while building their resume.

### How do I create a meaningful work experience for my intern?

Meaningful work experience is more than a SCiP intern completing menial tasks like filing, making photocopies, answering phones, etc. SCiP interns have skills and knowledge to contribute to your organization and engaging them meaningfully allows them to use those skills. For example, any volunteer can file paperwork, but a SCiP intern can help write a grant application you have not had a chance to write.

Instead of hiring a consultant or being unable to take on projects for any reason, involve an intern or two with specific knowledge to help get the project off the ground. During your planning stages, consider how your intern's deliverables tie into your organization's objectives.

The value of a SCiP intern lies in their expertise and ability to contribute to a specific aspect of your nonprofit's capacity building. SCiP interns are not an ad-hoc solution to fill gaps in your workforce.

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\*SCiP participation survey (2011-2017)

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## Submit your internship description for approval

You may want to consider using our Internship Description Template on our website. Once you have decided on a meaningful role for your intern, you can submit your internship description for approval on JoinSCiP.ca.

**Please note:**

Volunteer Alberta reviews and approves your internship posting before it goes live on the SCiP website. The review and approval process can take up to five business days.

Approval of your internship posting does not mean that funding is reserved for your intern yet. Funding is allocated when a student has completed the Letter of Agreement.

## Hiring your intern

The next step in planning for your SCiP intern is to ensure your organization has an adequate screening process in place. This is a key part of the recruitment process and helps guide your decision making when you start receiving resumes.

## Screening applicants

Tasks, responsibilities and risk of the role itself determines the degree of screening necessary regardless of whether a person is an intern, volunteer or employee. That is, your organization should have the same screening process for interns as you do for volunteers or staff.

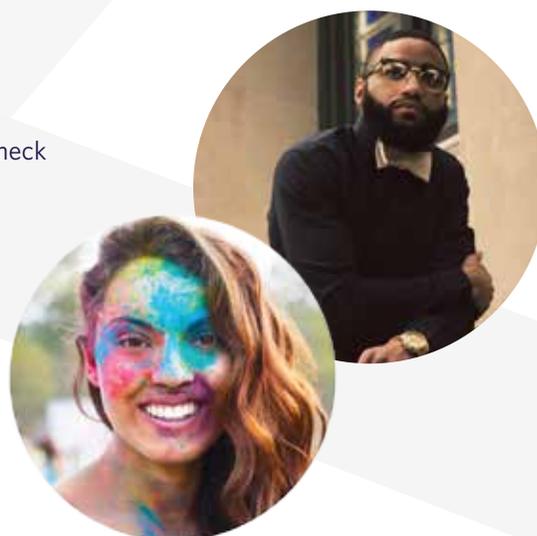
If screening sounds like a chore, remember its purpose is to make sure you get the best fit and reduce risk for your organization, your clients and your interns!

## What is screening?

Volunteer Canada's 10 Steps to Screening is the industry standard for the nonprofit sector. Screening starts before you post your internship position and continues all the way through the internship.

We recommend that you review the 10 Steps in more depth, but here is a brief overview:

1. Determine policies & risks
2. Write clear volunteer position/role descriptions
3. Establish a formal recruitment process
4. Use an application form
5. Conduct interviews – get to know the volunteer
6. Follow-up with references
7. When necessary, request the appropriate Police Information Check
8. Conduct orientation & training sessions
9. Supervise & evaluate
10. Participant/recipient follow-up & feedback



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## Resources to help engage your intern

Let Volunteer Alberta help with that! Check out our resources!

### Onboarding Process Development Guide

If your organization does not have an onboarding process, this guide can empower you to onboard consistently and effectively. We recommend incorporating key elements in onboarding process described in this document. Doing so will provide a strong foundation for your onboarding process and your internship!

### Professional Communication Policy Development Guide

If your organization does not have a professional communication guide is intended to act as an outline to support a strong, professional relationship between you and your intern.

### Conflict Resolution Procedure

If an issue arises during the internship, please reach out to Volunteer Alberta as soon as possible – that is what we are here for! If your organization does not have a conflict resolution procedure, this guide outlines how to tackle conflict during an internship should any occur.

### Weekly Check-in Agenda

A weekly check-in with your intern should not be a one-way conversation. Rather, it should provide both parties an opportunity to discuss current priorities and performance. This does not have to be a formal meeting, and as time goes on you and your intern will settle on an approach that works for everyone. Use the following pointers below as a guide if you need ideas on how to structure these meetings.

#### 1. RECOGNITION OF STAFF

- **Celebrate:** Share a milestone or achievement that is related to your personal growth or work you are doing.

#### 2. INDIVIDUAL UPDATES

- **Workflow:** Not busy, busy, or extremely busy?
- **Priorities:** Top three for the following week, do these priorities impact other areas? What should be on the supervisor's radar?
- **The messenger:** What do you want leadership to know? Questions for leadership? Anything leadership should address?
- **Obstacles:** What's not working? What supports do you need from the team and from the supervisor?

#### 3. ACTION ITEMS

- Confirm any action items from discussion.
- Updates on last week's action items.

