

Working with Volunteers

Volunteers play critical roles across many healthcare entities and the communities they serve. Healthcare entities benefit from their services, as volunteers can enhance their capacity to deliver services within their respective organizations and communities. In addition, volunteering also provides individuals with opportunities to learn new skills and contribute their time and expertise.

As healthcare entities continue to make the most of volunteers as a strategic enabler, many entities are turning their attention to establishing and operating programs to manage volunteers and the services they deliver. As part of establishing and operating a volunteer program, healthcare entities need to consider a wide variety of risks that range from volunteer recruitment, screening, and supervision. Many of these risks can be addressed through the implementation of a comprehensive volunteer program that includes a layer of risk controls.

The following guidance highlights key areas of considerations for healthcare entities to help them adopt appropriate measures as part of their volunteer program. It should not be seen as an exhaustive list and should be used in conjunction with internal policies and procedures, as well as in compliance with local laws and regulations.

Policy and Procedures

As part of establishing and operating a volunteer program, healthcare entities require a policy that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of volunteers and the manner in which they are expected to provide services on behalf of the organization. The policy should address the various components of the volunteer programs and have accompanying procedures that outline detailed steps involved in the administration of the program. Ideally, the volunteer program policy and procedures should address the following:

- I. Recruitment
 - A. Job description
 - B. Screening
 - C. Interview
- II. Onboarding
 - A. Training
 - B. Orientation
- III. Supervision

The remainder of this guidance document will highlight each of the above components of a volunteer program; the information provided should be adapted to fit the unique needs of healthcare entities.

I. Recruitment

Ensuring volunteers are able to carry out their duties start by selecting candidates who are the right fit towards the requirements of the position. This is achieved through following best practices in the recruitment and selection process by having targeted controls and practices during the recruitment and assessment of candidates who have applied or being considered for a volunteer position.

A. Job Description

The following information should be supplied as part of the volunteer job description. The job description should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the organization and reflect roles and responsibilities of the volunteers for a specific activity, engagement, or event.

- Roles and responsibilities
- Required/preferred skill(s) and experience(s)
- Required/preferred license(s) and certification(s)
- Reporting relationship
- Frequency/duration of volunteer activity

B. Screening

The following measures should be adopted as part of the screening process to assess fit and eligibility of candidates for volunteer positions:

- Job description declaration
- Application self-disclosure
- Reference checks
- Criminal record checks
- Vulnerable sector checks, where warranted

The following information and/or documents should be requested from candidates who have applied and are being considered for volunteer positions:

- Employee resume
- Copy of valid license(s), if required
- Copy of first aid certification(s), if required
- Copies of criminal or vulnerable sector checks
- Copies of other certificates relevant to the position

C. Interview

The following practices can be adopted as part of the volunteer interview to assess fit and eligibility of candidates for volunteer positions. The candidate shall be provided with the following:

- Overview of the healthcare entity and the volunteer program
- Overview of the activity, engagement, or event with which the volunteer(s) will be involved
- Overview of the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer(s)
- The interviewer should ask the following types of questions which have been designed to gather specific information about the qualifications & experiences related to personality, work style and behaviour of the candidate.
 - Competency interview questions
 - Behavioural interview questions (past focused)
 - Situational interview questions (forward focused)

II. Onboarding

Once candidates have been selected, they will need to complete a mandatory onboarding to ensure they receive the appropriate volunteer training that will make them aware of the policies and procedures of the organisation, as well as provide them with on-the-job guidance through a structured orientation program.

A. Training

Ensure that volunteers can perform their duties to the best of their abilities includes maintaining a robust training program.

- Require that all volunteers attend a general onboarding training (either in-class, virtual, or on-site), which will involve a review of relevant policies and procedures.
- For opportunities that necessitate specific skills, require that those volunteers complete additional onboarding training (either in-class, virtual, or on-site) as designed by your healthcare entity.
- Require that the volunteer complete all onboarding training prior to assuming their volunteer duties.

B. Orientation

Healthcare entities should provide volunteers with on-the-job training when initially assuming their volunteer duties. This can be achieved by appointing the following designated individual(s) to act as a resource:

- Manager or supervisor
- Peer volunteer
- Provide volunteers with the opportunity to ask questions and seek feedback regarding their performance as it relates to carrying out their volunteer duties.

III. Supervision

Effective supervision helps ensure that service level standards are maintained or exceeded and that safety measures are upheld.

- Establish a performance review to regularly monitor and evaluate the performance of volunteers; this can include utilizing the following mechanisms to collect information:
 - Manager or supervisor rounds
 - Regular one-on-one meetings between the supervisor and volunteer
 - Collection of service feedback, as it relates to:
 - Complaints
 - Compliments
- Establish a system to connect with the volunteers to provide and collect feedback on volunteer operations. This can include utilizing the following:
 - Huddles
 - Surveys (e.g. either through an anonymous or confidential survey)
 - Regular team meetings



RISKCHECK

BY MARSH CANADA LTD.

Spring 2023

Summary

As volunteers play a critical role in the delivery of services across many healthcare entities, they need to take appropriate steps to manage volunteers as strategic assets for their organization. By establishing a comprehensive volunteer program, healthcare entities are able to take a balanced approach that enhances their service delivery capacity within their respective organizations, while addressing a wide-variety of risks.