



*Administrators of Volunteer Resources BC*

# STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

[www.avrbc.com](http://www.avrbc.com)

AVRBC  
STANDARDS  
 OF  
PRACTICE

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## About AVRBC

Administrators of Volunteer Resources - BC, AVRBC, is an organization of professionals in British Columbia, Canada dedicated to promoting leadership in the management of volunteer resources and to providing a supportive network for its members.

## Goals of the Standards of Practice

- ✓ Promote excellence in the management of volunteer resources in British Columbia by establishing standards of professionalism, responsibility, accountability and self regulation among practitioners.
- ✓ Act as a planning and evaluation framework for organizations developing new programs involving volunteers or reviewing how they currently involve volunteers.
- ✓ Provide a tool for Administrators of Volunteer Resources when advocating within their organizations for their positions, volunteers and programs.



## How to Apply the Standards of Practice to Your Organization

- ✓ Review the Standards of Practice and identify strengths and challenges in the administration of volunteers within your organization and programs.
- ✓ Meet with your colleagues and senior management to discuss what steps and resources are needed to comply with the standards.
- ✓ Include additional standards important to your organization in the pages provided in this document.
- ✓ Become active in your organization's program and policy development as they relate to volunteers.
- ✓ Refer to the Standards of Practice often for guidance and direction.



# Organizational Readiness for Volunteers

## ✓ Accepted Standards

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- Volunteer involvement is viewed as essential in achieving the goals of the organization.
  - A written statement exists on the value of volunteers to the organization, its programs and clients. This statement is developed and supported by administration, staff and the board of directors. Statements are posted in prominent places throughout the organization.
  - Where applicable, paid staff, union members, volunteers and clients provide input in designing and developing volunteer resources.
  - Volunteers enhance services and do not replace paid staff.
  - A strategic plan is developed for volunteer resources for the current year and goals are established for future growth.
  - Volunteer assignments are challenging, worthwhile and promote volunteer growth and learning.
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# Organizational Readiness for Volunteers

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- A risk management plan is in place to protect against risk to volunteers and clients and is reviewed regularly.
  - Insurance coverage is provided to protect volunteers and the organization.
  - Financial resources are allocated to meet the short and long term needs of volunteer resources including:
    - Staff salaries, professional development, professional membership fees
    - Volunteer out-of-pocket expenses, training, recognition and equipment
    - Other needs appropriate to the organization
  - Adequate space and a safe environment are provided for volunteers to carry out their duties.
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# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Volunteer Resources Staff

### 1

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ A professional Administrator of Volunteer Resources (or equivalent) is responsible for the management of volunteer resources.
  - ❑ The Administrator of Volunteer Resources is a part of the management team within the organization.
  - ❑ The Administrator of Volunteer Resources collaborates with others in the non-profit community and develops partnerships to support and strengthen volunteer resources.
  - ❑ Volunteer Resources staff includes clerical and administrative support positions when required and if appropriate.
- 

*An effectively managed volunteer program will provide the organization with appropriately placed volunteers whose efforts advance the organization's mission.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## ADMINISTRATOR OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES AVRBC Recommended Competencies

- Post secondary degree and/or Certificate in Volunteer Management and/or equivalent experience as determined by the employer
- A strong belief in the principles of volunteerism, both practical and philosophical and a commitment to excellence in the administration of volunteer resources
- Significant managerial and administrative experience
- Demonstrated program development and leadership skills
- Awareness of risk management issues and skilled at developing and implementing appropriate screening plans
- Ability to select, train, motivate and supervise volunteers
- Skilled in training and advising staff regarding the supervision and motivation of volunteers
- Computer proficiency and knowledge of current volunteer management software
- Experience as a volunteer
- An advocate for volunteers in the organization and in the community
- Familiarity with the community and local resources
- Membership in a professional organization
- Commitment to ongoing professional development



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Involvement

## 2

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- Policies and procedures (including volunteer rights and responsibilities) exist to outline the standards of performance expected of volunteers and to guide program development.
  - Policies and procedures are reviewed with volunteers.
  - Policies and procedures are consistent with Canadian and British Columbia Human Rights Codes, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the British Columbia Employment Standards Act.
  - Policies and procedures are revised regularly.
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# Administration of Volunteer Resources

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*Policies and procedures reduce risk,  
clarify responsibilities and ensure  
service consistency.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Volunteer Assignment Design

### 3

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Volunteer assignments have been developed with different levels of responsibility and commitment to appeal to a wide variety of people.
- ❑ Written volunteer assignment descriptions (placement descriptions, service guides) exist for all volunteer positions including the board of directors and committee members.
- ❑ Volunteer assignment descriptions include information about duties, responsibilities, reporting relationships, required skills, lengths of commitment, measurements for volunteer success and benefits.
- ❑ In a unionized setting, volunteer assignment descriptions are developed respecting collective bargaining agreements.



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

- ❑ Volunteer assignment descriptions are reviewed regularly. New assignments are created and others are eliminated to meet the needs of the organization and clients.
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*Assignment descriptions define in writing the duties to be accomplished by volunteers, helping to ensure that volunteers are involved in meaningful ways. Assignment descriptions act as risk management tools by clarifying roles and outlining assignment parameters.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Recruiting Volunteers

### 4

Successful recruitment convinces people to give their time and energy to the organization and will match a volunteer's needs with the needs of the organization.

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- A strategy is in place to recruit skilled and diverse volunteers reflecting the community's demographics.
  - Recruitment materials have been developed to promote volunteer opportunities.
  - Recruitment messages are marketed to specific audiences based on assignment descriptions.
- 



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## 5

## Screening Volunteers

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- Written criteria for screening volunteer applicants is standardized for each position. Required screening is related to the position, not to the person.
  - Screening is based on the requirements of the assignment and the vulnerability of clients; the higher the risk, the more in depth the screening process.
  - Screening is successfully completed before accepting applicants as volunteers.
  - Confidential records are kept of volunteer screening. Checklists/database entries are completed to ensure consistency. Access to these records is restricted to appropriate personnel.
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Screening protects clients and ensures the organization operates to the highest standards.





# Administration of Volunteer Resources

Initial  
Screening

5a

## ✓ Accepted Standards

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### Registering Volunteers

- Individuals interested in volunteering complete volunteer registration forms providing personal information. Permission to contact references and perform background checks is obtained.
- Completion of volunteer registration forms alone does not guarantee acceptance as a volunteer.

### Interviewing Volunteers

- Interviews are held with prospective volunteers to help determine suitability and to learn about their skills and needs. Information is shared with applicants about the organization and assignments available to volunteers.
- Questions are designed for each volunteer assignment.



# AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## Administration of Volunteer Resources

### Background Checks

- ❑ Background checks are performed based on the risks and requirements of each position. These may include:
    - ❑ Criminal records checks
    - ❑ Reference checks
    - ❑ Health screening
    - ❑ Driver's record checks
- 

5b

On-Going  
Screening

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Screening is on-going during the tenure of every volunteer and includes effective supervision, performance reviews, probationary periods and any other required screening.
  - ❑ Volunteers must also meet screening requirements of any assignment to which they may be reassigned.
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# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Accepting and Placing Volunteers

### 6

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ The Administrator of Volunteer Resources accepts and places volunteers based on information gathered during registration and interviews, successful completion of background checks and availability of volunteer assignments suitable to the applicant.
  - ❑ Volunteers are introduced to volunteer assignment descriptions prior to beginning service to assist them in selecting satisfying volunteer placements.
  - ❑ Volunteers are matched to assignments most suitable to their skills, interests and schedules and to the requirements of the organization.
  - ❑ Volunteers are encouraged to develop and grow during their tenure with the organization. Based on positive performance, volunteers are offered assignments with greater or additional responsibilities, if appropriate.
- 



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

The satisfaction of volunteers requires that they be placed in assignments that will meet their needs. Reciprocity is an essential element in retaining volunteers.

The needs of both the volunteer and the organization must be met.



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Orientation for Volunteers

### 7

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Each volunteer receives an orientation to the organization.
- ❑ Volunteers are informed about the mission, structure and services of the organization.
- ❑ Volunteer policies and procedures are reviewed and may be distributed.
- ❑ Agreements are reviewed and signed by volunteers and may include:
  - ❑ Agreement to abide by policies and procedures
  - ❑ Declaration of confidentiality – Volunteers may be trusted with an acceptable degree of confidentiality. Breach of confidentiality is grounds for immediate dismissal.



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

- ❑ Volunteer resources agreement – States the mutual commitment of the organization and volunteers and the rights and responsibilities of both parties and is also signed by the Administrator of Volunteer Resources.
  - ❑ Permission before photographing, quoting or publishing names of volunteers in any public materials.
  
  - ❑ Volunteers are introduced to staff, taken on a tour and are briefed on safety and sign-in procedures.
  
  - ❑ Confidential records are kept of orientations received and documents signed. Checklists/data base entries are completed to ensure consistency. Access to these records is restricted to appropriate personnel.
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*Volunteers need to feel welcome  
and understand how they fit into the  
organization's team.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Training Volunteers

## 8

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- All volunteers receive training.
  - Training plans are designed for each volunteer assignment based on what skills and knowledge are required.
  - On-going training is provided to further develop volunteer skills and knowledge.
  - Volunteers are provided with off-site educational opportunities, if possible.
  - Training is evaluated and updated regularly.
  - Records are kept of volunteers' attendance at training sessions. Checklists/database entries are completed to ensure consistency.
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# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Volunteer/Employee Relations

## 9

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Staff and volunteers are trained in developing positive, mutually beneficial relationships.
- ❑ Staff responsibilities regarding volunteers are clearly defined.
- ❑ Staff is involved in volunteer programming and activities.
- ❑ Staff is recognized for their excellence in working with volunteers.
- ❑ Volunteers are kept informed about important developments within the organization and are treated with respect as valued team members.
- ❑ Volunteers are encouraged to voice opinions and make suggestions when appropriate. Suggestions are taken into consideration when planning programs.



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## Administration of Volunteer Resources

- ❑ Volunteers participate in staff meetings and events, when appropriate.
  - ❑ When possible, the Administrator of Volunteer Resources attends orientations for new staff to provide information about volunteer resources and to review staff involvement with volunteers.
  - ❑ In unionized settings, policies regarding volunteer involvement during labour disruptions are in place.
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*Good relationships between  
volunteers and staff encourage  
teamwork and reduce conflict.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Supervising, Guiding and Evaluating Volunteers

# 10

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Levels of supervision are based on volunteer needs and assignment requirements.
- ❑ On-site and off-site volunteers have access to contact information for their supervisors while on duty.
- ❑ Supervisors for volunteers may include the Administrator of Volunteer Resources, leadership volunteers or staff responsible for the program areas where volunteers are assigned.
- ❑ There are procedures for supervising off-site volunteers.
- ❑ Individual performance reviews are conducted regularly where volunteer feedback is encouraged.
- ❑ There are procedures in place for disciplining and terminating volunteers.



# AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## Administration of Volunteer Resources

- ❑ Letters of reference are provided to volunteers upon request after a predetermined length or quantity of service.
  - ❑ Exit interviews are performed when volunteers leave their assignments.
  - ❑ Records of volunteer duties and training are available to volunteers.
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*Proper supervision ensures  
better communication and  
increases volunteer satisfaction  
and performance.*



# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Recognizing Volunteers

## 11

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Volunteers are consistently and regularly recognized by the organization.
  - ❑ Volunteers are thanked in meaningful ways that are appropriate to each person and their contribution.
  - ❑ Regular feedback is given to volunteers on the quality and value of their performance.
  - ❑ National Volunteer Week is celebrated by the organization.
  - ❑ The accomplishments of volunteers are shared with the public, funders and other supporters with the consent of volunteers.
  - ❑ Records are kept of recognition received by volunteers. Checklists/database entries are completed to ensure consistency.
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# Administration of Volunteer Resources

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Volunteer recognition demonstrates appreciation for the time, talent and energy volunteers provide.



# AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## Administration of Volunteer Resources

### Record Keeping

# 12

*Efficient record keeping is key to volunteer program accountability and integrity.*

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- Confidential records are kept for each volunteer. These include:
    - Information on registration
    - Interview notes
    - Screening documents
    - Assignments
    - Training and recognition records
    - Evaluations
  
  - Systems are in place to gather and record hours and length of service.
  
  - Systems are in place to schedule volunteers.
  
  - Records are kept using protected volunteer management computer software and/or a secure and confidential filing system.
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# AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

## Administration of Volunteer Resources

### 13

### Reporting Success

#### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ Regular reports are provided to senior administration and the board of directors demonstrating the impact of volunteer resources in achieving the organization's goals.
  - ❑ Success stories are shared with the entire organization in annual reports, newsletters and in a variety of other creative ways.
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Reporting the positive impact of volunteer resources maintains and increases support among staff and the board of directors and is valuable for fundraising and grant applications.





# Administration of Volunteer Resources

## Evaluating and Refining Volunteer Programs

# 14

### ✓ Accepted Standards

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- ❑ The Administrator of Volunteer Resources constantly looks for new ways to improve the delivery of volunteer resources.
  - ❑ All areas of volunteer resources are evaluated at least annually and necessary changes are made.
  - ❑ Staff, volunteers and clients provide input during these evaluations.
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*It is important to evaluate the impact of volunteer resources regularly to discover whether those services are still meaningful and being delivered in efficient and effective ways.*





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# Notes



AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE  
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AVRBC STANDARDS OF PRACTICE  
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## Acknowledgements •

Thank you to contributing AVRBC members for their expertise, support and enthusiasm

## Comments •

Please email your comments to [info@avrbc.org](mailto:info@avrbc.org) *com*

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