

### 4. Volunteers

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## Toolbox - 4. Volunteers

### Volunteer Strategy Checklist

Do we have the following in place?

Component	Description/Notes	In Place? Yes or No
Volunteer Coordinator	a good solid volunteer strategy requires that someone is responsible for it and that time is dedicated to supporting and nurturing the volunteers of today, as well as those of the future	
Volunteer Needs Assessment	what do we need based on our assessment or experience	
Volunteer Title(s) and Role(s)	what are they called and what do they do	
Reference and Criminal Record/Child Abuse Registry Checks	this is important particularly when working with children, youth and Elders	
Expectations, Authorities and Tasks	what are the should and can do – and what they cannot do – outline when and things how should it be done – and who to contact if there are problems	
Reporting	to whom do the volunteers report, how, when and about what	
Volunteer Inventory/Directory	who is available, skills, interests and contact information	
Communication	maintain regular contact – build the team – no one to be forgotten	
Training	what skills are required to do the tasks and how will they be trained – basics might include protocols, first aid or team building	
Sharing the Load	processes to avoid burnout by ensuring that regular volunteers are covered off or supported by others	
Policies and Protocol	basic rules and expectations – what to do in an emergency – confidentiality	
Key People – Contact Information	Who does what and who to ask about various things – provide a written list	
Messaging	all volunteers should know what the common messaging is if there is one theme or message that the organization wants to get across	
Evaluation	volunteers are a good source of information for evaluation	
Diversity and Succession Planning	keep new blood coming in as well as the solid core of volunteers that develop over years – bring youth in and have backups for important tasks	
Representation	volunteers are representatives of the organization and should always conduct themselves in a way that is fitting and respectful to the values and behavior of the group they are volunteering for – this is part of protocol	
Appreciation and Recognition	adequate volunteer recognition and appreciation – in many ways - and remember to thank their families too	

### How to Keep Volunteers

(Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Northeast Region. First Nations Recreation Development Project )

- Avoid giving them too much work.
- Allow them enough time to do their jobs.
- Provide enough people to do the job properly.
- Never publicly embarrass them.
- Never manipulate information or volunteers.
- Never treat volunteers badly.
- Respect their knowledge.
- Never ignore their feelings.
- Avoid making volunteers feel guilty about having other interests.
- Never play a martyr and do everything yourself.

### Recognition

Recognition, whether subtle or substantial, is an art. When practiced sensitively and honestly, it can ensure that volunteers feel acknowledged, accepted, praised, and identified as being special. Most people appreciate recognition, and for volunteers who give freely of their time and energy, recognition can be a highly potent motivator. It is important to recognize that different people will benefit from different forms of recognition (public, private, serious, comical). A part of the art is determining what type is most suitable to your volunteers.

### Creative Ways to Say Thank You

(Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Northeast Region. First Nations Recreation Development Project)

- Attach a note that says “You are a Lifesaver!” to a package of lifesavers.
- Attach a note saying “No one holds a candle to you!” with a scented candle or package of birthday candles.
- Attach a note saying “You have given our project the sweet smell of success!” to a package of potpourri.
- Give a package of cinnamon buns with a note that says “Thanks for working your buns off!”
- Attach a note that says “A toast to a job well done!” to a plastic wine glass filled with jelly beans.
- Write a song or poem about your volunteer.
- Ask a business to put a message on its bulletin board or rent one yourself to thank a group of volunteers.
- Have your clients personally hand over to your volunteers balloons, handmade cards, or flowers during volunteer week.
- Create computer printouts or large banners saluting volunteers with a suitable phrase or quote, to display at an event or in a conspicuous spot in the office or community centre.
- Present a survival kit to help ease a hectic day. Include a herbal tea bag, stick of gum, some candy or dried fruit and a coupon for fifteen minutes of uninterrupted quiet time.
- Treat a volunteer group to a field trip or a function.
- Give t-shirts with the organization logo on it.
- Throw a pizza bash – especially for young volunteers.
- Rent a movie and serve a variety of popcorn.
- Invite a group to a dessert party.
- Invite a fortune-teller to visit a group party.
- Surprise everyone with an unexpected coffee/tea party.
- Give them a “just because” gift.
- Plan a family picnic with lots of events.
- Serve a pancake breakfast.
- Host a casino night with play money.
- Host a skating party and a wiener roast at an outdoor rink.
- Put flowers or chocolates in the volunteer area.

### 100 Ways to Give Recognition to Volunteers

(Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, Northeast Region. First Nations Recreation Development Project )

1. Smile.
2. Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
3. Treat to a lunch.
4. Reimburse assignment-related expenses.
5. Ask for reports.
6. Send birthday cards.
7. Arrange for discounts.
8. Give a memento (e.g. pin or certificate) to them.
9. Maintain a coffee bar.
10. Plan annual ceremonial occasions.
11. Invite to a staff meeting.
12. Recognize personal needs.
13. Accommodate personal needs and problems.
14. Be pleasant.
15. Use in an emergency situation.
16. Provide a baby-sitter.
17. Post an "Honour Roll" in reception area.
18. Respect their wishes.
19. Give informal teas.
20. Keep challenging them.
21. Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family.
22. Provide a nursery.
23. Make good plans.
24. Have a picnic.
25. Help develop self-confidence.
26. Award plaques to sponsoring group.
27. Take time to explain fully.
28. Be verbal.
29. Encourage agency VIP's to converse.
30. Hold rap sessions.
31. Give additional responsibility.

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32. Allow participation in team planning.
33. Respect sensitivities.
34. Enable to grow on the job.
35. Enable to grow off the job.
36. Send newsworthy information about them to the media.
37. Have a wine and cheese party.
38. Ask client to evaluate their service.
39. Say “good afternoon”.
40. Honour their preferences.
41. Create pleasant surroundings.
42. Welcome to staff coffee breaks.
43. Enlist to train other volunteers.
44. Have a public reception.
45. Take time to talk.
46. Defend against a hostile or negative staff.
47. Say “good morning”.
48. Greet by name.
49. Provide good pre-service training.
50. Persuade “personnel” to equate volunteer with work experiences.
51. Encourage partnership with paid staff.
52. Recommend to prospective employers.
53. Provide scholarships to volunteer conferences or workshops.
54. Offer advocacy roles.
55. Use as consultants.
56. Write thank-you notes.
57. Invite participation in policy formulation.
58. Surprise with coffee and cake.
59. Celebrate outstanding achievements.
60. Nominate for volunteer awards.
61. Have a “President’s Day” for new presidents of sponsoring groups.
62. Carefully match volunteer with job.
63. Praise them to their friends.
64. Provide substantive in-service training.
65. Provide useful tools in good working conditions.
66. Say “good night”.

## Toolbox - 4. Volunteers

67. Plan staff and volunteer social events.
68. Be a real person.
69. Rent billboard space for public praise.
70. Accept their individuality.
71. Plan a theatre party.
72. Provide opportunities for conferences.
73. Maintain meaningful records.
74. Commend volunteers to supervisory staff.
75. Send valentines.
76. Make thorough arrangements.
77. Instigate client-planned surprises.
78. Mention in purchased newspaper space.
79. Promote a "Volunteer of the Month".
80. Send a letter of appreciation to employer.
81. Plan a "recognition edition" of the agency newsletter.
82. Color code name tags to indicate particular achievements (hours, years).
83. Send commendatory letters to prominent public figures.
84. Say "we missed you".
85. Praise the sponsoring group or club.
86. Promote staff smiles.
87. Facilitate personal maturation.
88. Distinguish between group and individuals in the group.
89. Maintain safe working conditions.
90. Orient adequately.
91. Award special citations for extraordinary achievements.
92. Fully educate regarding the agency.
93. Send Christmas or New Years cards.
94. Be familiar with details of assignments.
95. Conduct community wide interagency recognition events.
96. Attend a sports event.
97. Say "thank you".
98. Send impromptu fun cards.
99. Plan occasional extravaganzas.
100. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Volunteer Policy Sample

(Source: Canoe Lake Minor Sport, Culture and Recreation)

<b>Policy Title</b>	Volunteers
<b>Reason for policy</b>	To provide standards of management and recognition to our community's volunteers
<b>Date/Year Developed</b>	May 14, 2010
<b>Last Reviewed/Revised</b>	

"Community" sports, culture and recreation values our volunteers. The following procedures are undertaken to treat our volunteers with consistency, respect and appreciation.

1. All volunteers are provided with instructions on their roles as volunteers.
2. After every special event, volunteers are named and thanked on the local radio station.
3. Any direct expenses required by volunteers in their role are approved and supported, ex. travel to a First Nations' Games or special events.
4. Volunteer recognition events and/or gifts are held after major events and periodically throughout the year to thank the volunteers.
5. A screening process is utilized when recruiting volunteers.
6. All volunteer van drivers must be noted on the van insurance policy.
7. Paid positions are not volunteers. Paid positions are developed from time to time as needed such as for head cooks/food services for a large event.

### Online Volunteer Training Centre Overview

(Source: Sask Sport)

Volunteers are the backbone of the amateur sport system in Saskatchewan. Sask Sport Inc. recognizes the importance of continuing to develop our volunteers and ensure the next generation of volunteers has the skills required to meet future needs.

The Online Volunteer Training Centre delivers key education and training opportunities throughout the volunteer system. Participants are able to select and register for an online training program at no charge. Registrants receive a user ID and password which allows them access to the training module. They will be able to receive a training program certificate after successfully completing a course.

Current courses include:

- Volunteer Management and Motivation
- Risk Management and Insurance
- Recruitment and Retention
- Policies and Procedures
- Fundraising
- Communications
- Board Governance
- Basic Finance

The benefit of the Online Volunteer Training Centre is that it enables the registrants to access the training at their convenience and complete the training at their own pace. It is an affordable alternative to formal workshops, seminars or classrooms, and increases accessibility to training opportunities, especially to rural, northern or isolated communities. This web-based training program is offered free to all Saskatchewan residents involved in the volunteer sector.

The Online Volunteer Training Centre is made possible through the generous support of the Canada Games Building Dreams and Champions Legacy Program, which was created through the financial surplus of the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina. Sask Sport Inc. provided the initial investment and will administer the site as well as look at opportunities for further development.

Visit [www.ovtc.sk.ca](http://www.ovtc.sk.ca) for more information and to register.