**CATEGORY: Human Resources**

## Policy: A2-30 Volunteer and Placement Student Practices

**Revision Date: November 1, 2018 Approved by:**

1. General

* The organization accepts hundreds of volunteers each year, helping to create opportunities and strengthen communities. The goal of volunteer practices is to reduce barriers to volunteering and create a good, safe and fair environment for all volunteers to work in.
* Many of our volunteers are participants in programs, and they often volunteer in the same program where they receive assistance or participate in activities.
* The organization is not an Ontario Works Placement Site. Many of our volunteers are on social assistance and we provide letters to verify volunteer work, but we are not a placement monitoring site.
* Volunteers should be directly supervised by staff at all times for the safety of both volunteers and other participants.

1. Volunteer Position Descriptions

* Position Descriptions are available for all volunteer positions. These outline the general responsibilities, the program, the hours needed and the supervisor for the position.
* All Position Descriptions are kept in the Volunteer Binder available at each of our locations.
* Each location should have a contact person responsible for the Volunteer Binder.

1. Volunteer and Student Recruitment

* The supervisor is responsible for recruiting and accepting requests from internal volunteers (usually program participants) and student placements.
* Programs are responsible for advertising for volunteers for their programs.
* The organization will designate a contact person or persons for volunteers referred from the United Way Days of Caring, the website, and the Volunteer Centre.
* This contact person or persons will follow-up with people who either phone or visit one of our locations seeking volunteer work (self-referrals).

1. Application Forms

* Application forms are kept in the Volunteer Binder available at each of our locations.
* All volunteer applicants and students must complete an application form.
* A volunteer applicant can also apply online through our website. The applicant will be contacted and asked to come in to complete the application form and initial screening.
* Volunteer applicants and students may be asked to submit a resume, if applicable. Resumes are encouraged in order to promote a professional atmosphere.

1. Screening

* The organization has a moral, ethical, and legal duty to protect the children and other vulnerable people we serve. This is called the “Duty of Care.” To fulfill this duty, we have adopted the 10-step ‘Safe Steps’ recommended by Volunteer Canada.
* The 10-step ‘Safe Steps’ include: (1) a clear position description, (2) a formal recruitment process, (3) using an application form, (4) conducting interviews, (5) following up on references, (6) requesting a Police Records Check, (7 & 8) conducting orientation and training sessions, (9) supervising, and (10) evaluating volunteers.
* All volunteer and student applicants will be grated a screening interview which will help to determine whether the volunteer can be placed. This interview will be scheduled with the contact people as follows:
  + Internal Volunteers – supervisor or designated staff
  + Placement Students – supervisor or designated staff
  + External Volunteers – contact person on the position description
  + United Way, Website, Volunteer Centre and Self-Referrals – designated contact person
* During the screening interview the volunteer/student will be provided with an Orientation Package which will include the Volunteer/Student Application Form, Volunteer/Student Practices Handout, a summary of relevant Policies and Procedures, Pledge of Confidentiality Form, Annual Report, a membership application, and a Police Record Check form (if applicable).
* Volunteers/students over 18 require a Police Records Check to volunteer in Child Care, Youth Program, Newcomers, and Seniors Programs. The organization covers the cost of Police Check Records.
* If the information obtained indicates that the volunteer applicant has a criminal record, the Executive Director, in consultation with the supervisor, will determine whether a placement can be offered. The following factors will help make the decision:
  + The nature of the program
  + The nature of the offense
  + The relevance of the criminal record in the position
* The organization will try to make appropriate placements for volunteer applicants who need to complete volunteer hours as part of their Ontario Secondary School Diploma or Ontario Works, or Community Service Order requirements. The supervisor will keep a record of the number of hours completed and will provide the volunteer with a letter, on organizational letterhead, outlining the specific volunteer duties and the hours completed.
* In accepting volunteers, it is recommended that two references be followed up where possible, to verify that the information provided in the application and interviews is accurate. This should be done after receiving the results of the police check.
* If volunteers are not placed they will be referred to the Volunteer Centre at 416-961-6888.
* Unless otherwise specified, it is not our practice to keep a waiting list for volunteer positions.

1. Orientation and Training

* All volunteers/students will receive an orientation from their supervisor, and will be given clear directions about their responsibilities.
* The supervisor will review the Orientation Package with the volunteer/student.
* Volunteers/Students must sign the Pledge of Confidentiality Form.
* Ongoing training will be provided as it is critical to the success of the volunteer/ student.
* Volunteers/Students should be encouraged to attend the Orientation Tour.

1. Supervision and Evaluation

* Supervisors should ensure that all volunteers/students meet general administrative requirements, ie. arrive on time, call in sick and attend supervision meetings.
* Ongoing training will be reinforced through ongoing supervision provided by the supervisor or designated staff.
* It is the organization’s practice to provide regular supervision meetings and a minimum of monthly contact with active volunteers, which will prepare the supervisor for the evaluation once the volunteer/student has completed their placement.
* The evaluation of volunteers/students will be completed when the volunteer/student is finished their placement, or at least every 2 years, and will be kept in the volunteer/ student file. The volunteers/students should be given a copy.
* Volunteer/student files should be kept short and free of confidential sensitive information.
* Volunteers/Students may have access to their file, upon reasonable notice.

1. Statistics

* The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that volunteer statistics are kept. A Monthly Volunteer Timesheet is available to help track hours. It should be filled out by the volunteer/student.

1. Volunteer/Student Recognition

* Volunteers who travel some distance may be provided with TTC tokens upon request. Supervisors determine the eligibility based on distance and their budgets. It is recommended that volunteers complete at least 3 hours of service each time to be eligible.
* All volunteers will be awarded a Certificate of Service once a year, during an Annual Volunteer Recognition event.
* Programs may also initiate their own recognition events.

1. Exit

* Volunteers/students leave for many good reasons, including new opportunities, finding employment, going back to school, or retiring. If a volunteer tells you of their intention to leave, ask them to write a letter for their file that states his/her resignation and leaving date. Otherwise, supervisors should place a note in the file.
* Volunteers/students may be terminated for poor performance, poor attendance, because of conflict, or a breach of policies.
* Grounds for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:
  + Gross misconduct or insubordination
  + Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  + Theft or misuse of agency funds, equipment or materials
  + Falsifying statements on the application or interview
  + Illegal, violent or unsafe acts
  + Abuse or mistreatment of staff, clients or other volunteers
  + Releasing confidential information
* It is good practice to inform the volunteer/student in writing. Both the organization and the volunteer/student deserve fair and respectful treatment. Inform the volunteer that his/her role is terminated and the reason why in an objective, concise manner. Allow the individual an opportunity to speak and ask questions.
* Exiting is a good time to reflect and evaluate. You may want to conduct a voluntary exit interview. Ensure that the discussion is documented.
* You may provide a letter of reference if requested. If you were not satisfied with the performance of the volunteer, you can refuse to provide a reference letter. You may want to provide a simpler letter confirming the volunteer’s hours only.
* It is good practice not to provide telephone references unless the volunteer has discussed this with you in advance.

1. Communications and Membership

* Volunteers who contribute 25 hours or more will get a free membership. Programs must submit the names of these volunteers annually to the Executive Director.
* All relevant policies in the Policy Manual also apply to volunteers/ students, including those under the categories “Standards of Conduct,” “Anti-Oppression,” “Anti-Harassment,” and “Complaints Procedure.” A summary of these policies will be given out during the screening interview.

1. Serious Occurrences

A Serious Occurrence Form must be completed for any injury to a volunteer or any incident involving a volunteer and placement student. The organization provides limited coverage under our liability insurance policy for volunteers injured while acting on behalf of the organization. Supervisors must notify the Executive Director as soon as practicable of a possible insurance claim.