



# Volunteer Handbook

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time – they have the heart." – Elizabeth Andrew



# Overview

Hockey Canada is Canada's largest team where we play, teach, plan, promote, coach, cheer, celebrate and work every day for one reason: to make hockey more. Volunteers are the heartbeat of this team, and Hockey Canada is thankful for all Canadians who give their time to deliver our great game to hundreds of thousands of participants each year.

## Why Volunteer in Hockey?

First and foremost, you can make positive change in the lives of others and in your community. There's a great analogy about voting versus volunteering. As Canadians, we vote every couple of years with a goal of making our community, province or country a better place – and hope for the best.

As a volunteer you can have a direct impact not only on your local hockey organization, but also on your community. Volunteers can make a difference.

Volunteering can help you grow. It can enhance your skills as an organizer, mentor or administrator, and in specific areas such as website development, event coordination or sponsorship procurement. These are things that go beyond the game.

Finally – the smiles on kids' faces. They don't happen without the heroes of hockey – our volunteers.

Hockey Canada created a task team specific to the role of the volunteer, building a volunteer program, a tool kit as it were, to help organizations, league and teams recruit, retain and reward volunteers. During this process, the task team came to several conclusions.

Organizations need a formal volunteer system to help recruit and manage volunteers. Once your team or organization commits to the volunteer program, the first thing you are going to need is a dedicated **volunteer coordinator**. Ideally this person will help your organization create a pool of great volunteers whose skills and interests cover a broad spectrum.

**Volunteers want an understanding of what is expected of them.** Job descriptions, even general ones, are important. The volunteer also wants their work to be meaningful. Hundreds of organizations use volunteers, and meaningful and rewarding tasks are the cornerstone of the most successful volunteer programs.

**They also want to know what sort of time commitment is expected.** The level of commitment will vary from person to person and role to role. As an example – you may have a volunteer who will be the equipment manager and never miss a game, at home and on the road. Or, you may have a volunteer who will sell raffle tickets once a year. Both are important to your organization.

Finally, **recognition is important.** This is more than just a thank you at the end of the season. This includes ensuring a positive experience and an environment that has limited stress and conflict. If a volunteer has a positive experience, they become your best recruiter. They bring more volunteers to your organization – volunteers that are like-minded.

Hockey Canada is here to help. The tool kit for a strong volunteer recruitment, retention and reward program is just the first step. But it doesn't work if it's on a shelf. Grab it, use it, take what you need from it, embrace it.

Volunteers are critical to your organization and, by extension, Hockey Canada. Let's get started.

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# Welcome

## Message from Hockey Canada

Thank you for giving your time to Canada's game!

Hockey is the fabric of our country and volunteers are the common thread that runs through Hockey Canada, the Members and the LHAs – from the IIHF World Junior Championship to a Tuesday night Timbits U7 game at your local rink. They are what make hockey happen.

This volunteer handbook has been designed to introduce you to Hockey Canada, your Member and your local hockey association (LHA). It includes everything you need to maximize your volunteer experience and ensure you're getting what you need to succeed.

Please remember that this handbook is a living document and requires feedback from volunteers to make it – and your experience – valuable to our game.

We look forward to following you on your volunteer journey and working together to improve our game and give our participants a fun, safe and enjoyable hockey environment. We are all part of Canada's largest team and the future of the game is ours to shape.

Thank you again, and enjoy the experience.

**Tom Renney**

Chief Executive Officer  
Hockey Canada

**Scott Smith**

President & Chief Operating Officer  
Hockey Canada

## Message from Hockey Canada Board of Directors

Without volunteers, there is no hockey. It really is that simple.

At every level of the game, in every corner of the country, volunteers are the common thread that connect the fabric of Canadian hockey – from Hockey Canada to the Members to the local hockey associations.

This volunteer resource manual has been designed to assist our Members and their LHAs, leagues and teams with maximizing the volunteer experience and ensuring our game continues to thrive. A huge thank you to the members of the Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Task Team for their work in its development.

The volunteer experience is an exciting one; giving your time to the game will help shape the hockey journeys of more than 600,000 participants from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador, and help make the hockey dreams of so many become reality.

Thank you for what you do, and for helping make hockey more.

Sincerely,

**Hockey Canada Board of Directors**

# Volunteer Engagement Philosophy Statement

Volunteers are the greatest resource in hockey. They give their time, energy and talents to provide help and inspire dreams. The volunteer is the strength of the game and is essential to delivering quality programs and quality life experiences that are fun. Most importantly, at Hockey Canada and with your local hockey association (LHA), our philosophy is to provide volunteers with an enriched and rewarding experience. We are committed to building a great environment for our volunteers so they benefit from their commitment.

# Benefits of Volunteering

Hockey Canada and its partners believe that volunteers have the greatest heart for the greatest game.

You may well ask ... “What is in it for me?”

- You are a role model in your community.
- You have an opportunity to provide positive life skills to young players.
- You have an opportunity to face challenges and learn how to overcome them.
- You have an opportunity to be involved in the game you love.
- You are doing something you are passionate about.
- You have an opportunity to develop interpersonal skills that go beyond the game.
- You are gaining experience to make yourself a better person.
- You will have a positive impact on young players.
- You will help to engage your community to help grow the game.

# Volunteer Values

Volunteer Canada, a not-for-profit national organization, has created a **Code for Volunteer Involvement** that has been adapted to suit the mission of Hockey Canada, Members and LHAs. This code can be used as a foundation to develop your plan.

The purpose of the Code for Volunteer Involvement is to provide organizations with a framework for safe and effective volunteer involvement. Organizations that depend upon volunteers as a critical component of operations and success must work to keep their volunteers engaged and supported.

The Code for Volunteer Involvement consists of the following:

## Values for Volunteer Involvement

- Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society.
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities.
- Volunteers are critical to the long-term success of the game.
- Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organization.
- Volunteer involvement is based on relationships.

## Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement

- Volunteers have rights. Voluntary organizations recognize that the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.
- Volunteers have responsibilities. They make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.



## Organizational Standards for Volunteer Involvement

- **Mission-Based Approach** – Hockey Canada, the Member and the LHA acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization’s purpose and mission.
- **Human Resources** – Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of Hockey Canada, the Member and the LHA. Hockey has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mission, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support the volunteer program and establishing policies for effective management.
- **Program Planning & Policies** – Policies and procedures are adopted by the LHA to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.
- **Program Administration** – The LHA will attempt to have a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for the volunteer program.
- **Volunteer Assignments** – Volunteer assignments address the mission or purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect the abilities, needs and backgrounds of the volunteer and the organization.
- **Recruitment** – Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out and involve a diverse volunteer base.
- **Screening** – A clearly communicated screening process is adopted and consistently applied by the LHA.
- **Orientation & Training** – Each volunteer is provided with an orientation to the LHA, its policies and practices, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer receives training customized to the volunteer assignment and their individual needs.
- **Supervision** – Volunteers receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and are provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.
- **Recognition** – The contributions of volunteers are consistently acknowledged with formal and informal methods of recognition.
- **Record Management** – Standardized documentation and records management practices are followed and in line with relevant legislation.
- **Evaluation** – The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the LHA are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

These standards are the fundamentals that should be followed by all LHAs. Should an LHA hire a volunteer coordinator, the responsibility of this position is to develop and execute recruitment strategies, and oversee LHA policies as they affect volunteers.

# Definition of a Volunteer

A **volunteer** is “a person who expresses a willingness to undertake a service for free.”

Hockey Canada volunteers are the backbone of our game across the country.

## Adult Volunteer

Volunteers over the legal age (18 years old) who are mentors to our youth and are critical in building a volunteer base that will benefit the community and drive the passion for the game.

## Youth Volunteer

Volunteers under the legal age (under 18 years old) who require an adult to sign off on their involvement. These volunteers are critical to the game and will become future hockey leaders under the right mentorship.

# Volunteer Positions

There are a number of sample positions listed in Appendix I. Each position comes with a very brief job description.

It is important to understand that your organization will have specific needs or requirements from its volunteers, so these descriptions are very much for guidance purposes only. An effective recruitment and retention program will be tailored to your situation.

# Recruitment & Selection Procedures

In this section, a clear and defined process is established to assist the LHA in the recruitment and selection of volunteers. Hockey Canada suggests that for larger roles, you may want to consider two or more people to carry out one volunteer role. A clear and transparent set of procedures for recruitment and selection will allow for better succession planning in your organization.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers will be given a job description outlining the responsibilities of their role. It is their responsibility to read about the position, gain an understanding of the requirements and seek any necessary clarification from the volunteer coordinator or someone from the LHA executive. The intent is to provide a positive volunteer experience, that involves understanding the role and making sure the role provides what the volunteer wants out of it. Signing a volunteer agreement form demonstrates awareness of the duties, agreement to perform them and the return expected from the LHA in carrying out a volunteer role.

## Recruitment

A good recruitment strategy is an important part of the every-day contact needed to bring volunteers to your LHA. People volunteer when they are asked. The LHA should be reaching out to potential volunteers through their website, other internet volunteering sites, social media platforms, print publications and by word of mouth. Below are some suggested marketing and advertising practices that may assist in recruiting new volunteers.

- **Know who you want.** If you are looking for a specific skill set or certain demographics, make that clear – save yourself time screening out unsuitable candidates when they can selfscreen.
- **Emphasize the positives.** Be clear about the tangible benefits of volunteering with your organization.
- **Target specific groups and create partnerships.** Schools (secondary schools, colleges and universities), businesses, services clubs, chambers of commerce, other sports organizations, senior centres and municipalities are just a few of the sources where volunteers can be found. Make it your business to know where to access volunteers.
- **Secondary school students.** Secondary school students are often required to complete 40 hours of volunteer service in their community in order to receive credit in obtaining their diploma. It is suggested the LHA contact secondary schools for a

list of students required to complete practicum hours. Employing secondary school students not only benefits the LHA, but your activities contribute to the education of young people and help to mold and mentor them for future opportunities. Utilizing this opportunity assists with positioning youth volunteers as good corporate citizens in your community. Also consider using multiple secondary school students to carry out one volunteer position.

- **Utilize resources available to you.** Take advantage of the services offered by volunteer centres and LHA communications platforms like newsletters, social media and websites. Budget should be allotted for this type of resource.
- **Word of mouth.** Personal asks are a great way to recruit volunteers. Remember that you can ask volunteers if they are interested in taking on new and additional responsibilities. If your volunteer group is treated well and enjoys the experience, they can and will recruit friends and family. The LHA should keep a list of those volunteers that complained and invite them to be part of the solution.
- **Open houses.** If the LHA is welcoming and encourages visitors, they may be tempted to get involved.

## Administration Practices

Here are some suggested administrative practices to consider for your volunteer application process:

- Updates to recruitment materials should be finalized and implemented by the volunteer coordinator or LHA prior to the beginning of each season.
- Keep records of where, when and what has been advertised to determine what has been the most successful tool in recruitment so you can focus your attention in the future.
- The application form needs to clearly outline the responsibilities of the specific role and clearly indicate what support is being provided to the volunteer.
- Review volunteer applications and respond to all queries regarding volunteer positions, even if a candidate is not suitable for the LHA or volunteer position.
- Any personal or sensitive information gathered about a volunteer must be documented and stored in a locked, secure area in accordance with privacy of information and CASL laws.

## Selection

Volunteers will be required to complete an application as provided by your LHA. Specific programs may also require supplemental forms. LHAs can differentiate between elected positions and other volunteer positions.

Here is a suggested checklist of items used for recruitment and selection:

- Volunteer position job descriptions
- Establish selection criteria
- Receive an application/résumé
- Develop interview questions with a numerical evaluation system
- Check qualifications
- Complete reference checks
- Declaration for conflict of interest
- Obtain criminal records checks and/or vulnerable sector checks
- If applicable, ensure the individual has a valid driver's license and, if necessary, have them provide a driver's abstract.

## Selection cont.

Policies are necessary to address certain issues that you may encounter when recruiting. These policies should outline:

- What will disqualify someone from a position based on the position description, reference check outcomes and other screening measures.
- What to do if:
  - More than one candidate qualifies for a single position (consideration should be given as whether two people might job-share this role).
  - A candidate does not seem to be the right fit (consider a rejection letter).
  - A candidate's reference checks yield mixed results (one reference is less than satisfactory but another is good).
  - A candidate's interview sets off red flags.
  - A candidate's criminal record shows an offence that is old or irrelevant.

The LHA will not accept every individual who applies to volunteer. Here are some suggested practices when rejecting a candidate:

- Be prompt.
- Be sensitive.
- Keep the results confidential.
- Take a personal approach and call the candidate.
- Saying less is better. It is unnecessary to divulge ALL the reasons why someone was not hired.
- Thank candidates for their interest.

Refer these candidates to other volunteer opportunities to pursue (direct them to your local volunteer centre).

## Interviews

The LHA may consider an interview process for all, or some, of the volunteer opportunities within the organization. Most interviews will be completed when volunteers are directly supporting youth and are considered mentors/role models. The volunteer coordinator or most direct supervisor, along with one member of the LHA executive, should complete the interview. Interviews help volunteers clarify the benefits of the role and their responsibilities to the opportunity and help supervisors decide if the prospective volunteer is a good fit.

If volunteering for a one-time event, an interview before the event may not be necessary.

## References

The LHA may require ongoing volunteers (year-long positions) to provide three non-family references on their application. All information will remain confidential with the selection committee.

## Background Check

In accordance with Hockey Canada standards, volunteers for all positions are required to undergo a background check. The two types of checks are a criminal record check (CRC) and a vulnerable sector check (VSC). The CRC is to determine if the volunteer has been charged with or convicted of a crime. A VSC is required when individuals will be in a position of trust or authority of vulnerable persons. The VSC will check to see if a person has a record of, or a suspension (pardon) for, sexual offences. Hockey Canada also has a 10-step screening process.

# Local Hockey Association Commitment

The most important commitment the LHA can make is to the volunteer. The LHA will:

- Clearly outline volunteer responsibilities and expectations.
- Provide appropriate orientation and training.
- Treat volunteers with respect, courtesy and fairness.
- Respect a volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Provide a supportive and positive environment that ensures enjoyment of the volunteer experience.
- Provide an avenue where volunteers can voice questions or concerns.
- Encourage and recognize volunteer efforts and achievements through a predefined rewards system.
- Provide information on organizational changes or new policy decisions relevant to volunteers.

# Commitment to the LHA – Volunteer Code

As a volunteer, I agree to:

- Adhere to the volunteer policies.
- Represent the LHA, its players, fans, staff and the community in a professional and positive manner.
- Treat other volunteers, staff and particularly spectators/customers with respect.
- Support a safe, harassment-free work environment.
- Use organization property and facilities as authorized.
- Never divulge or misuse confidential information.
- Sample social media policy to establish expectations.

## Volunteer Agreement Form

In cases where a volunteer has assumed a year-long position, the LHA may require a volunteer agreement form to be signed. This form would document that volunteers have read, understood, and agreed to follow the LHA volunteer practices and procedures and feel comfortable with the responsibilities of the specific volunteer position.



# Managing Volunteers

Transparent and consistent supervision and reporting structures allow the LHA to observe, collect information on and evaluate the success of volunteers. It also provides volunteers with the opportunity to direct their suggestions, questions and concerns to the right person. Good supervision practices lead to volunteer retention. It is strongly suggested for the success of the volunteer program to identify a volunteer coordinator.

## Setting Boundaries

Managing volunteers also involves setting and enforcing boundaries. Here are some suggested practices:

- Set boundaries specific to the position and to the relationships volunteers can develop.
- Identify these boundaries in position descriptions, orientation and trainings.
- Explain what boundary breaches look like and why.
- Keep communication open – volunteers are able to questions or voice concerns about boundaries.
- Explain the consequences of breaking boundaries.

## Initial Orientation

Similar to any new hire in an organization, new volunteers must receive orientation to their positions as well as to the LHA. The volunteer coordinator (if one exists) can coordinate the orientation process and conduct the orientation. However, there may be some cases where it is essential that the orientation be conducted by the person to whom the volunteer directly reports. For example, it is probably more appropriate for a volunteer coach to receive his orientation through the Hockey Canada coach development training as provided by the Member and LHA.

## Program Orientation & Training

The volunteer coordinator or the chosen LHA executive member, or their designate, should play a vital role in orientation and training. Their responsibilities might include:

- Using this handbook as an orientation tool for volunteers.
- Ensuring new volunteers receive a position description and have signed the volunteer agreement form.
- Ensuring orientation and training is specific and relevant to the position.
- Reviewing practical information with volunteers, including work scheduling, facility tours and introductions to the LHA executive and other volunteers.
- Pairing a new volunteer with an experienced volunteer for onsite shadowing.
- For long-term positions, the LHA may want to make use of a probation period and monitor the volunteer.
- Scheduling and conducting performance reviews.
- If you decide to engage secondary school students as part of their 40-hour requirement for course credit, understanding the expectations of the Board of Education so proper follow up and reporting is implemented.

It is important to establish procedures for volunteer orientation and training. Below are some questions that will assist with creating procedures to clarify how volunteer training is completed.

- What are the necessary training materials? For example, what information can be standardized for all volunteers? What position-specific information is needed? Training materials should be ready for volunteers before they are recruited.
- Are there different training tiers for different volunteer positions?
- Who oversees training? Is the volunteer coordinator, or designate, the only person providing training?
- Is there a skills test involved?
- Have the learning needs of new volunteers been identified?
- What are the learning objectives and desired outcomes?
- What is the most appropriate location and time to complete the orientation?
- Can more than one volunteer be considered for a position?
- How is training consistency ensured?
- What records are kept on completed training?
- What kind of feedback are volunteers asked for about training?

## Supervision & Mentoring

Volunteers will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee and mentor their role within the program. This supervisor will be available for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or problems arise.

The volunteer coordinator or the chosen LHA executive member, or their designate, should be the point of contact throughout the application and orientation process and to support volunteers throughout their service.

## Record Maintenance

Keeping track of the time given by volunteers is very important to Hockey Canada, the Members and the LHAs. Each program is required to record hours for each individual volunteer and report them to their direct supervisor. Some volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to keep track of their own hours, which they must then report back to their supervisor.

It is critical to ensure appropriate and accurate documentation is kept in support of volunteer involvement reviews, disciplinary actions and legal requirements.

The information below will assist in creating recordkeeping policies and maintaining a solid system.

### Legislation

- [Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act](#)
- [Canadian Human Rights Code](#)
- [Accessibility for individuals in a province/territory with Disabilities Act see provincial/territorial legislation \(e.g. Ontario\)](#)

Personnel files may include:

- Personal data (full name, address, telephone number)
- Emergency contact information (once the volunteer is accepted)
- Pertinent medical or health information (if applicable and once the volunteer is accepted)
- References
- Start date, end date, dates of leaves of absence
- Records of orientation and training
- Records of testing
- Records of assignments
- Records of hours
- Records of performance reviews
- Records of recognition
- Copies of incident reports
- Signed forms:
  - Volunteer agreement
  - Photographic waivers
  - Discipline-related forms

## Record Maintenance cont.

Time logs may include:

- Hours each volunteer has contributed in specific time increments
- Hours contributed in each position

Activity logs may include:

- Supplies used
- Incident Reports filed
- Customer concerns brought to a volunteer

It is critical that the volunteer coordinator maintain the confidentiality and the privacy of this information. Below are some questions to guide creating recordkeeping practices.

- What information is included in volunteer records?
- Who is responsible for maintaining volunteer records?
- Who has access to volunteer records and on what conditions?
- Where are volunteer records kept?
- How are new volunteer records created?
- How long are volunteer records kept?

## Discipline

Screening continues after a volunteer is onboarded. Volunteers can be re-assigned, put on probation or dismissed at any time if it benefits the organization and the volunteer. An incident report is a great tool to track and document cases of policy infringement, accidents, or other irregular occurrences.

Below are some suggested practices related to discipline:

### CORRECTIVE ACTION

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an incident or evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer or dismissal from volunteer service. Corrective action and discipline are most effective when a volunteer's performance is addressed as early as possible.

### CONCERNS & GRIEVANCES

Decisions involving corrective action will be reviewed for appropriateness by the program director, human resources director and/or volunteer coordinator. If corrective action is taken, the volunteer shall be informed of the procedures for expressing their concern or grievance. A volunteer has the opportunity to provide a written request to air their concerns to the human resources director or volunteer coordinator.

## Discipline cont.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Documentation must be kept with observations and dates on unacceptable behaviour as well as action taken. Depending on the severity and frequency of policy violations, the supervisor (either volunteer coordinator or LHA executive) should consider:

- Reviewing policies with the volunteer.
- Reviewing expectations with the volunteer.
- Receiving feedback from the volunteer about the position.
- Asking the volunteer if they would like to leave the assignment or the organization.
- Creating a mutually agreed upon plan of next steps with the volunteer cosigning.
- Reinstating the probationary period.
- Subsequent and frequent followup.

Disciplinary action for volunteers should be clearly established. Here are some suggestions:

- First offence – verbal warning
- Second offence – written warning, meeting with volunteer coordinator and, depending on the violation, suspension from duties
- Third offence – dismissal

### DISMISSAL

Below are suggested practices related to dismissal:

- Exit interviews should be conducted in a neutral place; anticipate strong emotions but remain professional and sensitive.
- In most cases, dismissed volunteers are simply not suited to the positions they are in, so it is best to emphasize the position and not the person.

Here are some questions that will help shape dismissal policy:

- Have all incidents of policy violations or misconduct, as well as actions taken, been documented and reviewed?
- Has the position description been reviewed?
- Has the volunteer been given the opportunity to respond?
- What other options have been considered as an alternative to dismissal?
- Is this decision consistent with other volunteer dismissals?
- Have organizational policies and procedures been consulted related to discipline and dismissal?
- Are exit interview questions prepared?
- Has a statement been prepared to communicate dismissal to a volunteer?

## Evaluation

The evaluation of volunteers is one of the most important responsibilities of those who supervise the volunteers and is integral to the retention of volunteers. Evaluation takes several forms – here are some pointers:

- Volunteer performance feedback should not be reserved for formal evaluations, especially positive feedback. Communicate with volunteers often, even just a conversation!
- Keeping records of volunteer performance, including hours, discipline and awards/recognition, makes for easier formal evaluation.
- Encourage volunteers to be open and communicate with their supervisor or an LHA executive member
- Encourage volunteers to provide feedback on programs.

Remember, the details of a volunteer's performance evaluation are confidential.

## Exit Interviews

When a volunteer submits a resignation or is dismissed, it is the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator to conduct an exit interview. Exit interviews should occur in neutral settings, such as outside regular volunteering hours, and without the presence of clients, other staff or other volunteers. However, if there are safety concerns, it may be necessary to have another staff member present. The details of a volunteer's resignation are confidential.

Ask for and review feedback received during the exit interview; why someone leaves your volunteer program is just as important as why someone stays.

## Volunteer Recognition

Recognition and rewards are an extremely important aspect of supervising volunteers that warrant special attention. Volunteers provide their time and expertise free of charge. A well-developed and thoughtful recognition/rewards program should be an integral part of a volunteer strategy. It will help to motivate volunteers, and make them feel needed and important to the team. A volunteer's compensation is recognition that they are an equal, respected and valued partner of the LHA. As a result, recognition must be an integral part of the management process.

An effective, targeted recognition program can support the LHA in many ways. If managed properly, a recognition program will motivate volunteers by satisfying their individual needs and supporting the goals of the LHA.

Volunteer Canada has developed information that will help structure a recognition and rewards program.

- **Contribute to productivity.** Volunteers who are given meaningful tasks will feel rewarded by their own accomplishments. They benefit while the LHA benefits from making good use of an important asset.
- **Contribute to retention.** By identifying and addressing specific needs of individuals and providing recognition that satisfies these needs, volunteers are encouraged to stay with the LHA.
- **Contribute to morale.** As the LHA demonstrates concern for volunteers through appropriate task assignment and performance recognition, the volunteer's personal satisfaction and willingness to participate will increase.

### PROGRAMS THAT WORK

- Base rewards on an appreciation of the volunteer as a unique person and address individual needs.
- Are based on individual jobs or tasks.
- Have consistent reward policies, resulting in a sense of trust that effort will receive the proper reward.
- Recognize longevity and special contributions frequently.
- Offer rewards which can be shared by teams of volunteers or the entire organization.

### PROGRAMS THAT FAIL

- Are based on what managers value rather than what volunteers value.
- Assume certain rewards to be good for everyone without regard for individuality.
- Are inconsistently administered.
- Are external to the volunteer, with no connection to the work or person.
- Provide rewards whether performance merits them or not.
- Assume the LHA's mission is sufficient justification to volunteer with no recognition or celebration.
- Offer excessive recognition and celebration.

## Volunteer Recognition cont.

### 10 GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION

- Give it or else
- Give it frequently
- Give it via a variety of methods
- Give it honestly
- Give it to the person, not to the work
- Give it appropriately to the achievement
- Give it consistently
- Give it on a timely basis
- Give it in an individualized fashion
- Give it for what you want more of

### MATCHING RECOGNITION TO THE VOLUNTEER

Many people believe the best way to recognize volunteers is to throw them a party or hold a similar recognition event during National Volunteer Week. Your efforts will be ineffective if you don't follow the above guidelines.

In order to properly recognize the efforts of the volunteers, first understand what motivates people to volunteer.

Four typical motivators of volunteers include:

**Praise.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer by praise typically enjoy recognition for their talents and like being singled out for their accomplishments. Since these volunteer efforts are readily seen by others, offer them public recognition at an event, a recognition spot on the website or in a newsletter, or a letter thanking their boss, teacher or family.

**Affiliation.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer for affiliation enjoy opportunities to get together with others with similar beliefs, backgrounds and goals, and don't often find working alone very satisfying. As a result, recognize the efforts of these volunteers through social gettogethers, namebadges or a public posting of all LHA volunteers.

**Accomplishments.** Individuals who volunteer for a sense of accomplishment enjoy seeking concrete evidence of their work and like practical, tangible projects. To recognize these volunteers effectively, offer them certificates of accomplishment at specific stages in their work.

**Power and Influence.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer for power and influence typically like persuading people to see or do things their way, enjoy showing people a better, easier way of accomplishing an objective and like positions where they can help make decisions or train people. These volunteers will most appreciate titles or rank insignia, a special parking spot or involvement as a speaker at an LHA workshop.



## Volunteer Recognition cont.

Remember, an effectively managed volunteer recognition program will not only keep volunteers motivated but will ultimately benefit the LHA.

Many of us close to hockey are exposed to logoed apparel on a frequent basis. Most volunteers are not. A jacket, a hat and access to a special area at games or even recognition by Hockey Canada for consideration of tickets for international events, or something as simple as a coffee or a snack can be considered a reward to many volunteers. Be aware that this program will need to be a budgeted portion of the annual budget.

Other suggestions to formal recognition include:

- Tokens for milestones and achievements.
- Profiling volunteers (newspaper, newsletter, website, bulletin board, etc.).
- Staff socials and other LHA-building events.

Informal recognition is also strongly encouraged. A kind word or thanking a volunteer and trying to include them whenever possible in decision-making are two simple ways to recognize the commitment from a volunteer.



# Participation Guidelines

This manual is attempting to provide LHAs with the background information to build a good volunteer program. It is critical to provide volunteers with some guiding principles and policies. The following list is not comprehensive but should provide enough information to devise policies to help guide volunteers in a safe and fun environment.

## Drug-Free Policy

Although cannabis is not longer considered a controlled substance, it should be treated no differently than alcohol. In any involvement with kids, the distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled or un-controlled substance is not allowed. Any volunteer impaired by any substance while volunteering will result in an immediate dismissal.

## Non-Smoking Policy/Vaping

Smoking and/or vaping by staff, employees, volunteers, fans/patrons or vendors anywhere inside or outside an LHA event, other than where smoking/vaping is allowed, will be asked to leave the venue. All LHA events are considered non-smoking.

## Dress Code

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive image for the LHA and to the community. They should dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

## Driving Policy

LHAs need to recognize there is a strong liability for transporting players and/or teams to events. Any driver should submit for both: a motor vehicle check and criminal record check. No cell phones are allowed while the vehicle is running. The LHA reserves the right to refuse any driver and is responsible to check on the insurance and liability aspect of the driver.

## Safety

Hockey Canada, the Member and the LHA are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for the volunteer and the organization they serve. Volunteers should be provided with a safety plan and protocols related to their assigned volunteer position.

## Harassment and Abuse Policy

Considered to be an extremely important aspect of a fun and safe environment, Hockey Canada and its Members have harassment and abuse policies that should be incorporated into the volunteer handbook. It is our commitment to provide a work environment that is professional, fun and harassment-free. LHAs have the legal obligation to provide or submit information on any issue relating to harassment and abuse that are observed.

# Retention

Hockey Canada, the Member and the LHA want to keep the volunteer commitment alive. The following are some key tips to motivate your volunteers and keep them coming back:

- Say thanks. Be honest and genuine.
- Build a proud community within the LHA.
- Equip them with the right training.
- Respect their time.
- Show they have a profound and direct impact on the LHA.
- Exit interviews are critical in adapting the LHA to retain volunteers.

## High-Impact Offboarding

A key traction initiative in retention is high impact offboarding, which is asking high-talent volunteers to maintain a relationship with the LHA through an alumni group. The LHA can follow up with periodic check-ins and keep the role open for a period of time, maybe as a co-position opportunity. With the alumni program, encourage departing volunteers to stay engaged through an email distribution list or other communication tool.

There are three important factors in high-impact offboarding:

**Identify unhealthy or toxic work environments.** If you suspect harassment, bullying or discrimination, post-service interviews or surveys can help unearth sensitive issues that former volunteers may have felt were unsafe to mention during their tenure. Even if the situation isn't illegal or unethical in the workplace, a simple lack of teamwork or support can impact whether volunteers stay or leave. If you don't know, you can't fix it!

**Assess your brand image.** Whether your LHA wants to admit it or not, volunteers post comments online and brand reputation can be tarnished by disgruntled former volunteers (social media policy is very important in holding volunteers accountable). It is critical to pose the question during the exit interview – "How likely is it that you would recommend volunteering with us to a friend or colleague?" You can track your results and progress over time. The most powerful question to ask the volunteer is why they rated you that way. If you suspect you have a reputation issue, address the issue as soon as you can.

**Ask how they want to stay in touch.** The volunteer may not be able to commit the same amount of time and energy they have in the past, and the post-exit survey can be used to explore other ways they might continue support the LHA.

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL A VOLUNTEER LEAVES TO FIND OUT WHAT IS WRONG. ALWAYS COMMUNICATE!!!**

## APPENDIX I

# Position Descriptions

### President/Chair

The president is the head of the executive committee and a member of the board of directors. They report to the membership and are responsible for steering the operational activity of the LHA and ensuring the board is well informed in order to provide strategic guidance and oversight. In order to fulfil these responsibilities, this position presides over meetings, sits on various committees, monitors the performance of officers and delegates, and assigns specific duties to the executive committee where appropriate. The president/chair is the main point of contact for the Member.

Time commitment: **Significant. Year round.**

### Vice-President/Vice-Chair

Most commonly, the vice-president/vice-chair (VP/VC) is next in line to ascend to the president's role with some mentorship. The VP/VC will perform the president's duties in their absence and can be responsible for the operation and organization of leagues under the LHA. This position will ensure the LHA appoints league directors for each division and will enforce the rules, regulations and guidelines. The VP/VC will provide a report at all LHA meetings and may serve on such things as coach selection, development, policy and discipline committees. The VP/VC is the second point of contact for the Member should the president not be available.

Time commitment: **Significant. Year round.**

### Finance Chair

Reporting to the president, this person is primarily responsible for the finances of the LHA. The finance chair ensures adherence to and implementation of financial policies and controls accounting procedures in the administration of the association. They prepare, oversee and regularly present the annual operating budget and forecasts, and the financial status of the organization to the board and executive and, by extension, the membership. The finance chair also works with the president to file paperwork pertaining to society status, gaming and/or liquor accounts.

Time commitment: **Moderate. Year round.**

### Board member

Individuals who sit on the board of directors are responsible for oversight of operations consistent with LHA by-laws, best practices and strategic planning. Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the association towards a sustainable future by adopting and promoting sound ethical, legal governance and financial management policies. Board members, first and foremost, have a responsibility to the organization and therefore must be impartial and operate in the best interest of the LHA, and not represent specific interests.

Time commitment: **Moderate. Year round.**



### Director/Governor

The primary duty of the director/governor is to manage the day-to-day administration, information and activities of the players, teams and coaches within a specific division. Directors/governors are expected to be familiar with the rules, regulations and policies of the LHA. Their most significant responsibility is the operational coordination and delivery of games, which will include the playoffs and determining a champion.

Time commitment: **Significant. In-season.**

### Coach Coordinator

The coach coordinator develops and presents on-ice programs within the LHA and is in charge of selection of coaches for various divisions. They meet regularly with coaches to discuss problems and solutions and provide mentoring. On a broader scale, they are the point person for the direction of the organization when it comes to coaching and development.

Time commitment: **Significant. Year round.**

### Team Manager

The team manager works very closely with the head coach and is largely responsible for off-ice decisions such as developing an operating budget for the team, the collection of money and the financial operation of the team. That may also include coordinating, where applicable, travel. They also operate as a liaison between the coaches, organization, parents and players. In some cases, this role is a parent volunteer.

Time commitment: **Significant. In-season.**

### Trainer

The first responsibility of the trainer is the distribution of team equipment, as well as approval of the players' personal equipment. The role may vary between teams and LHAs, but it is common for the trainer to oversee skate sharpening, organize training equipment for games and ensure the necessary items are in place to guarantee a positive and safe experience for players. Most importantly, the trainer has an acumen and skill to help a player who has been injured; they work with medical professionals in the event of a more serious injury. It is important to note that Hockey Canada has training and certification expectations for this position.

Time commitment: **Significant. In-season.**

### Equipment Manager

Working closely with the trainer, the role of the equipment manager will also vary from one LHA to another. In most cases, key tasks include laundering of jerseys and non-protective items such as socks and undergarments. It is also common for the dressing room and trainer's room to be part of the responsibility as well. It is common for the equipment manager to be at games, both home and away.

Time commitment: **Significant. In-season.**

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Time commitment: **Significant. In-season.**

## Fundraising/Sponsorship/Special Events

This position is responsible for identifying, planning and delivering successful fundraisers, including special events. Revenue generation is a priority, as is making sure that the fundraisers, sponsors and special events are in line with the principles of the LHA. This requires some consultation and discussions with the board prior to approaching sponsors or planning fundraisers. To be successful, they will work very closely with the volunteer coordinator.

Time commitment: **Significant. Off-season.**

## Volunteer Coordinator

This person is critical to the success of the volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition/reward program and, in order to be successful, will be very familiar with this document. In addition to building a pool of capable volunteers, they will work closely with others in the LHA who, from time to time or on a recurring basis, need volunteers. This not only includes team operations, but also fundraising and special events. This person will be the primary point of contact for most volunteers in the LHA.

Time commitment: **Significant. Year round.**

