

SKATE ONTARIO
SKATECANADA

VOLUNTEER GUIDE



Recruit **Retain** **Recognize** **Relate**



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Volunteer Guide

Volunteers are vital to the success of any club or school. Everyone has a talent and those unique individuals who are willing to share their time and talent to contribute to the growth of a club/school are true champions. Whether you are the leader of the group or help out at a fundraising event, every volunteer is important and necessary; but, how do we get volunteers to sign up, stay motivated and remain a volunteer for years to come?

This guide is designed to help clubs and schools plan and execute a successful volunteer recruitment strategy. Whether your club/school is new to volunteer recruitment, or have a great volunteer base already established, this guide provides resources and ideas for optimizing volunteer programs by using the 4-R's system: RECRUIT, RETAIN, RECOGNIZE and RELATE.

THE 4 –R's System

Recruit: You are ready to seek out new volunteers...but who, where and how?

Retain: Now that you have a wonderful group of volunteers, you want to keep them engaged, challenged and returning to do more.

Recognize: Volunteers deserve gratitude and recognition for their work. They are giving you a fantastic gift – time! How do we show thanks and provide recognition for volunteers?

Relate: Developing a strong relationship with volunteers is vital. Creating a connection with volunteers will help to grow and build the first 3-R's – Recruit, Retain, Recognize.

Why people volunteer

It is important to acknowledge that people volunteer for many different reasons.

People volunteer to

- make new friends or because their friends volunteer,
- build self-confidence,
- experience a sense of well-being and connectedness to others,
- establish a new direction in life,
- give something back to the community,
- share talents, abilities and experiences,
- learn new skills,
- feel needed, useful and appreciated,
- gain membership benefits,
- give back because they are personally affected by the organization's cause,
- network with others and
- have fun.

Whatever the reason, it is important to remember that volunteers are a valuable and essential part of your club or school.

RECRUIT

The event is planned and volunteer positions are ready to be filled...now what? It's time for outreach! Be clear when sharing information about volunteer activities – do not misrepresent opportunities. A happy volunteer will recruit for you. Here are some resources to get you started.

Outreach

Start by looking within your closest circle of influence, then widen the search field as necessary. Here are some thoughts on where to start and how the recruitment strategy might progress.

a) Start with previous/identified volunteers

- Start by identifying previous volunteers as well as individuals who have offered to volunteer with your organization in the past.
- If your organization has a process in place to keep track of individuals who offer to volunteer throughout the year, you can pull that information and begin screening those candidates.
- If there is no pre-existing list or database of volunteers, develop a process for gathering and storing this information by creating a volunteer application form, database or spreadsheet.
 - ◊ *If you are a [Wild Apricot Membership Management Software](#) client, you can capture this information in a variety of ways, such as creating a volunteer database and/or creating groups on volunteer/membership application forms to enable data management and customized emails.*

b) Look within your immediate circle of influence

Have each recruitment team member create a list of potential contacts, from

- friends,
- family,
- co-workers,
- neighbours and
- community members (at church, clubs, sporting teams, etc.).

c) Publicize within your network

If you're having trouble identifying enough volunteers within your immediate circle, consider

- writing a newsletter article or a post on your organization's blog or forum,
- posting a request on your social media platforms, or
- creating a compelling video or series of photos from a previous event on your social media channels and ask for new recruits (and follow-up with anyone that "likes" your post).

d) Broadening your circle of influence

If you've surveyed family and friends and still come up short, you will need to widen your search to include the following ideas:

- create an advertisement in your community newspaper (and ask if they will run the ad for free)
- use the [Ontario Volunteer Centre Network](#) to find a local volunteer centre to post opportunities
- post a request at a local high school, college/university or student volunteer centre
- reach out to a public radio station (many stations highlight community events and volunteer opportunities)
- ask neighbourhood associations (Lion's Club, Rotary Club, etc.) to run an ad in their newsletter

e) Targeting Specific Skills or Needs

If you need to find volunteers with specific skills or experiences, you may need to look beyond your close circle. For example:

- If you need volunteers with website development, PR or social media skills, you should target local small businesses that might be able to offer pro bono services (note: this might require sponsor recognition)

- If you are hosting a silent auction or other fundraising event for the first time, find out who has been involved in similar events in your community and who might be willing to help (e.g., an auctioneer; member of a service club, etc.)
- You should also consider whether a local company might be willing to organize their employees to assist with your event as a corporate initiative

Volunteer Assignment Descriptions

When recruiting volunteers, it is important to provide sufficient job information so they have a clear idea of what they will be doing.

When writing volunteer descriptions, be sure to include the following items:

- job title
- location
- who the volunteer will report to
- purpose
- qualifications, including education, skills and experience (if necessary)
- duties and responsibilities
- time commitment
- required training
- benefits
- screening requirements
- contact information

[Sample Volunteer Job Description](#)

RETAIN

Recruiting volunteers is the first step...now you want to keep them! How do you keep volunteers engaged and coming back to help year after year?

Here are some easy things you can do to retain volunteers.

Welcome

- Providing an orientation is a great way to ensure that new volunteers understand the policies and procedures of your club/school.
- Introducing new recruits to the existing members of your team gives volunteers an instant network of people to connect with.
- Make sure your current team is engaging with new volunteers...a friendly "hello" can go a long way.
- Check-in with new volunteers often. This helps foster the relationship between new recruits and volunteer leaders and will go a long way to alleviate any nervousness they may have.
- Thank them! Every volunteer wants to feel appreciated and valued – a simple "thank you" is meaningful.
- Strive to make new volunteers feel like part of the team by giving them team apparel, a name tag with the position they hold or include them in a team bonding experience (like a team dinner or activity).

Engage

- During your time with a volunteer, ask if they are enjoying their assigned tasks. Because certain activities can be repetitive, allow volunteers to switch activities to break up the monotony.
- To keep volunteers engaged, ensure that shifts are scheduled for an appropriate amount of time for the task.

- Encourage ideas and feedback! A new volunteer's perspective might provide insight on how to run things more efficiently.
- Create a personal connection with volunteers - ask about their hobbies and try (when possible) to align assigned tasks to their interests.

Challenge

- Research reveals that volunteers who engage in activities that challenge them are more likely to volunteer again.

Training

- Following a general orientation, it is important to continue with individualized training for the specific volunteer task. The best form of training is hands-on, practical and experiential. Training should include the following:
 - how the volunteer will perform his or her task
 - what not to do when performing the task
 - what the goals are for the task and how performance will be evaluated
 - any necessary equipment that will be required and how to use it
 - a walk through of the task
 - coaching the volunteer while he or she tries out the task

Setting Expectations

Building a relationship with volunteers is instrumental in helping to retain them. To protect the club/school and the volunteer, setting clear and concise expectations is essential. The best time to start is during orientation, where you can present your expectations clearly and prevent potential problems. Some key concepts to convey are:

- Confidentiality is very important. Never share personal information with anyone. Clubs/schools should have all volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Check with the volunteer manager/coordinator/lead before taking on a new task.
- Ask if they have any questions or concerns.

Most importantly, encourage your volunteers to use common sense.

Keeping your volunteers informed

Some key components to volunteer retention are

- welcoming and respecting volunteers,
- supporting new and seasoned volunteers,
- assigning tasks to volunteers that match their skills and interests,
- communicating with volunteers regularly and
- providing opportunities for volunteers to share experiences with each other and with the club/school.

Keep your volunteers informed to help them feel valued!

Common ways to keep volunteers informed:

- meetings (keep them brief and start/end on time)
- newsletters/e-blasts/social media posts
- bulletin board(s) in the arena
- social gatherings and club/school activities

In addition, ask new recruits to share/post their stories on various social media platforms where other volunteers can learn from one another and inspire other people to get involved.

RECOGNIZE

Studies show that volunteers do not want "red carpet" treatment, but, informal and ongoing recognition is an easy and free way to help volunteers feel recognized and appreciated.

Ideas to Recognize your Volunteers

- nomination for Skate Ontario and/or Skate Canada awards
- thank you letter or card (personally written)
- set time aside to speak to volunteers and listen to their experiences
- highlight volunteer accomplishments at a board meeting
- invite volunteers to social outings
- provide ongoing training opportunities
- offer spontaneous and genuine praise
- appreciation plaque/trophy at the club/school
- acknowledge volunteers in the club/school newsletter, notice board and/or on social media
- letter of reference

The importance of this step is to personally connect with volunteers to convey your gratitude.

A study done by [Volunteer Canada](#) reveals that 80% of volunteers want to be made aware of the impact their time and effort has on the organization. The study also reports that less than 60% of organizations are relaying this information to their volunteers. This lack of communication highlights a need for organizations to focus on relaying the positive impact volunteers have and is a way to express appreciation without having to spend money!

For a sample letter of recommendation (good for volunteers applying for post-secondary school or part-time jobs, etc.), please see Appendix B on page 11 of 12.

[Skate Canada National Award Criteria](#)

[Skate Canada Section Award Criteria](#)

RELATE

Creating a relationship with volunteers is an ongoing process. Having a positive attitude will benefit everyone and will inspire volunteers to continue to nurture the relationship you have formed.

Encourage volunteers to

- take their time with the work (to reduce the feeling of being pressured or rushed) and
- minimize distractions from smart phones, etc. when performing tasks (this will help to fully engage the volunteers and they will see the benefit of their efforts).

It is paramount to be fully engaged with volunteers; reducing distractions and focusing on listening to volunteers will go a long way in building trust and respect. Forming meaningful relationships can be the thing that turns a one-time volunteer into a life-time volunteer.

Cultivating a relationship with a volunteer hinges on creating a connection with them and your club/school. Being an active listener is a good way to show volunteers that you value and appreciate their input.

Active listeners

- use affirmative and encouraging phrases, like "yes" and "oh" during conversations,
- summarize important points of the discussion to confirm the volunteer has been heard and

- take note of body language.

It is important to note that

- ◇ facial expressions provide emotional insight,
- ◇ gestures such as crossed arms portray a closed off impression, while an open stance projects a more friendly attitude and
- ◇ eye contact communicates engagement and interest.

When appropriate, conduct conversations with volunteers in a pleasant and quiet environment. Being seated in a comfortable space can help to convey the message that you are going to take the time to listen to them.

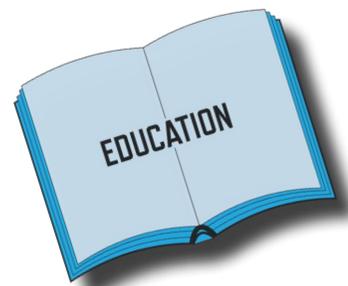
In summary...

RECRUIT – start with past volunteers and then branch out to identify new individuals who will benefit the organization

RETAIN – now that you have some volunteers, ensure they are educated, trained and given feedback on an ongoing basis to establish a solid relationship and make them part of the process

RECOGNIZE - make volunteers feel valued and aware that their time and effort is appreciated – tell them about the positive impact they are making on the organization and its members

RELATE – establish and continue to grow the relationship you have with volunteers



Additional Resources

1. Citizens Information Board - [Managing Volunteers A Good Practice Guide](#)
2. Community Tool Box - [Section 2. Recruiting Volunteers](#)
3. Engaging Volunteers - [4 Unusual Ways To Attract Volunteers To Your Nonprofit](#)
4. enVision.ca - [Guide to Writing Volunteer Position Descriptions](#)
5. Georgia Center for Nonprofits - [12 Ways to Connect with Volunteers](#)
6. Girlguiding - [Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers](#)
7. Government of Canada - [Lessons in volunteer recruitment and retention](#)
8. hotDOCS - [Guidelines for Volunteer Management](#)
9. Imagine Canada/Sector Source - [Research About Volunteering in Canada](#)
10. Mayo Sports Partnership - [how can I recruit retain recognise volunteers in sport](#)
11. Ontario.ca - [Volunteering in Ontario](#)
12. RCVO @ Volunteer Alberta - [Volunteer Recruitment](#)
13. Sector Source - [Volunteering in Canada](#)
14. Squash+ Education Alliance - [Best Practice Guides Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Support](#)
15. Statistics Canada - [Volunteering](#)
16. Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services - [Volunteer... You'll be amazed 4 R's Toolkit](#)
17. The balance careers - [Positive Recommendation Letter Samples](#)
18. The balance small business - [How to Write a Job Description That Your Volunteers Will Love](#)
19. The balance small business - [The Basics of Volunteer Orientation and Training](#)
20. The Conference Board of Canada - [The Value of Volunteering in Canada](#)
21. Volunteer.ca - [2013 Volunteer Recognition Study](#)
22. Wild Apricot Blog - [How to Recruit Volunteers from Start to Finish](#)

John Smith

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September 1, 2019

XYZ Skating Club
123 Spinning Rd.
Jump City, ON
A1B 2C3

To Whom It May Concern:

Kathleen Doe volunteered for three years as a Program Assistant (PA) on our CanSkate sessions at the XYZ Skating Club, where I am the head coach. During this time, she was a dependable and positive PA who never missed a session.

Kathleen was an asset to our skating club; she was always cheerful and willing to assist with any task. In addition, Kathleen was motivated and interested in learning. She often arrived early at the arena to assist parents with skating equipment and provided excellent guidance and support.

Kathleen is relocating due to family circumstances, and, unfortunately, we will no longer be lucky enough to have her as a PA at our club.

She will be missed and I highly recommend her to any future skating organization.

Sincerely,



John Smith
Professional Coach

VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

1

→ Abide by Skate Ontario's Code of Conduct

- comply with Skate Ontario by-laws, policies, procedures, rules and regulations
- demonstrate **respect** to all individuals and groups
- refrain from any behaviour that constitutes harassment



Click here to view Skate Ontario's Code of Conduct



SKATE ONTARIO
CODE OF CONDUCT



2

→ Follow the Safe Sport principle of the Rule of Two

- never be alone or out of sight with a skater
- be within earshot and view of another volunteer
- include parents/guardians on all forms of communication (texts, emails, social media, etc.)



RULE OF 2
2 adults, 1 child



RULE OF 2
1 adult, 2 children



1 adult, 1 child

3

→ Act in a kind and positive manner with all stakeholders

- interact using positive and professional language (**in person** and on **social media**)
- remember that the needs of the skaters are most important
- understand that skaters may be under stress



be **POSITIVE**

PROFESSIONAL

& PRIORITIZE
skaters first!

4

→ Understand your requirements as a volunteer

- refer to the **Event Volunteer Risk Level Matrix** to determine your risk level
- review the Event Volunteer Risk Level Matrix document plus complete additional requirements as needed
- complete a BackCheck if required (high risk positions only)

RISK LEVEL

-  low
-  moderate
-  high

5

→ Take appropriate action if something is wrong

- respond to the needs of the situation to ensure the well-being of all stakeholders
 - * inform medical services if required
 - * trust your gut: **if you see something, say something**
 - * speak to the volunteer contact/coordinator



Club/School Volunteer Risk Level Matrix

POSITION	RISK LEVEL	REQUIREMENTS
Director	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Past President	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Assessment Day Coordinator	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Parent Volunteers	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Music Players	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Committee Members	low	review of Volunteer Conduct document
Secretary	moderate	review of Volunteer Conduct document, position orientation
President	moderate	review of Volunteer Conduct document, position orientation
Vice President	moderate	review of Volunteer Conduct document, position orientation
Treasurer	moderate	review of Volunteer Conduct document, position orientation
Professional Coaching Staff	high	interview, review of Volunteer Conduct document, BackCheck (via Skate Canada)

RISK LEVEL
 low
 moderate
 high



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