



2017 REPORT

Featuring innovations, research findings, Discussion Group ideas and tools from the November 8th, 2017 VECTor Conference for Volunteer Managers

Presented & compiled by

Volunteer
Toronto



INTRODUCTION

The 4th Annual VECTor (Volunteering, Engaging, Connecting Toronto) Conference, hosted by Volunteer Toronto, took place on November 8th, 2017 at the Toronto Central YMCA. More than 60 volunteer managers, coordinators and leaders came together to learn about innovations and new research in volunteer management. Through conversation, sharing and networking, attendees explored the innovations and research in Discussion Groups. Their ideas are captured in this report, bolstered by presentation highlights, research findings and additional resources. Volunteer Toronto thanks attendees for their contributions and we look forward to expanding on their ideas to further benefit the voluntary sector. We encourage you to use these highlights to improve your volunteer program and develop new promising practices.

This first part of this report will review the morning Innovations session, followed by thoughts that emerged from Discussion Groups about applications and opportunities to be innovative. The second part will detail highlights from the afternoon Research session, followed by ideas from the Discussion Groups about applying the research and performing research in volunteer programs. The Appendix features additional relevant resources.

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Special Thanks

Volunteer Toronto would like to thank the YMCA of Greater Toronto for hosting the 4th VECTor Conference, all presenters & Discussion Leaders for their insights and facilitation skills, attendees for their participation and all members of the Conference Planning Team for coordinating a well-planned and executed Conference. This report would not be possible without your efforts.

Discussion Leaders

VECTor participants attended Discussion Groups after each main session. The Discussion Leaders and their questions are listed below:



Bobby Hrehoruk
Manager of Development & Community Engagement, Rainbow Railroad

Morning Discussion: How can you apply/create innovations in your program by adapting to different situations and multiple responsibilities?

Afternoon Discussion: How can you apply/develop research findings locally by gaining insights and perspective from outside of Toronto?



Kelly Harbour
Senior Coordinator, Community Engagement, Volunteer Toronto

Morning Discussion: How can you apply/create innovations in your program through creativity and collaboration?

Afternoon Discussion: How can you apply/develop research findings in your program to address barriers faced by volunteers?



Adriane Beaudry
Manager, Volunteer Engagement Strategy, Heart and Stroke Foundation

Morning Discussion: How can you apply/create innovations in your program through creativity and collaboration?

Afternoon Discussion: How can you apply/develop research findings in your program to address barriers faced by volunteers?



INNOVATIONS IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

About the Innovations

VECTor featured representatives from three organizations sharing innovative new volunteer management projects and programs. Each initiative helped encourage change, create new ways of being successful and establish collaborative thinking to create a meaningful impact for volunteers and clients.



Presenter:
Amele Zewge-Teffera
*Community Program
Manager, The Stop
Community Food Centre*

Innovation: Engaging more service users as volunteers and enhancing volunteer training

The Stop Community Food Centre advocates for access to healthy food, addressing poverty and food insecurity. Their volunteer program includes participant-volunteers who make use of The Stop's services and non-participant volunteers (often middle- to higher-class, outside of the service neighbourhood). With currently 30% participant-volunteers, The Stop hopes to prioritize these volunteers, increasing to 80% of the volunteer population. The Stop is creating enhanced volunteer training based on an anti-racism, anti-oppression framework to address gaps between the two groups of volunteers, building solidarity and enhancing the volunteer experience. An evaluation was held in 2016 to assess how The Stop can better engage participants, finding that participant-volunteers feel reduced shame when accessing services and experience unique benefits of volunteering. They also found that non-participant volunteers did not understand poverty and food insecurity.



Presenter:
Mira Dineen
MSW

Impact: Thanks to Mira's social work placement at The Stop, the evaluation could be held to identify where to focus energy in enhancing the volunteer program. A Vital Ideas grant is now allowing The Stop to provide anti-racism, anti-oppression training, utilizing a train-the-trainer model for their staff. Through implementing findings of the evaluation, The Stop will address internalized stigma amongst participant-volunteers and confront the biases and assumptions of non-participant volunteers to build a stronger volunteer team.





Presenter:

Racine Senining
Volunteer Resource
Coordinator, Yonge Street
Mission

Innovation: Family-to-Family Mentoring Program

The Yonge Street Mission (YSM) is a Christian faith-based local development agency with a long term goal of ending chronic poverty in Toronto in one generation. One of their population groups is “Families in Crisis” and the Family-to-Family Mentoring program came out of the need for families in crisis to have positive support systems. Creating the program also introduced opportunities for families to volunteer together instead of just parents or kids. Families experiencing crisis are connected with mentor families – the whole family is involved in recruitment, screening and training and are then matched based on family size, age of children, neighbourhood and other factors. Five families have been matched since September 2016 with 4 new family pairs ready to be matched by the end of 2017.

Impact: Families are expected to meet in person at least once a month, fostering relationships throughout the minimum 8 month commitment and beyond. Four out of the 5 families matched so far continue to meet regularly and are very satisfied by the opportunities the mentorship relationship creates. As a brand new program, YSM needed to create new materials and resources to assist families, but have laid the groundwork for other organizations to follow suit.



Presenter:

Alicks Girowski
Volunteer Manager,
Hot Docs

Innovation: VAACT city-wide recognition initiative

VAACT is the Volunteer Award for Arts & Culture Toronto, an initiative started in 2016 by 7 organizations after noticing that volunteers went from festival to festival, becoming “serial” arts & culture volunteers. To address the challenges around recognition for short-term event volunteers, VAACT organizers encourage volunteerism year round and help build organizational connections. VAACT rewards and recognizes volunteers who support the arts and culture community. Any volunteer participating in 4 or more events is invited to a recognition celebration that year, with different awards based on the number of events volunteered. For VAACT recipients, knowing about the award was a factor in their decision to volunteer for more organizations – and learn about organizations they didn’t know about. Through VAACT, organizations can pool recognition resources and enhance the scope and reach of their recognition, already growing in its second year.



Presenter:

Saskia Rinkoff
Volunteer Manager,
ImagineNATIVE

Impact: Along with increased retention for organizations, VAACT assists with recruitment and facilitates the sharing of talented and experienced volunteers. In its first year, there were 220 eligible volunteers, far above the goal of 50, with more than 40 people volunteering for 5 or more events. VAACT organizations have the opportunity to work together on simplifying training, accommodating challenging volunteer needs and improving participation tracking.

Applying the Innovations

Each innovation showcased different approaches to responding to a need, in these cases providing social support for families, increasing service user volunteers or enhancing recognition. Discussion Groups discussed how they could apply these innovative ideas to their own volunteer programs.

Application #1: Collaborating on Training

In an exploration of collaboration with other organizations, groups landed on training and orientation as an opportunity. Through working together to develop online training modules, organizations can increase their capacity to focus on other areas of volunteer management:

- » If your organization has a great training video you deliver for volunteers, other organizations may be able to use it
- » Provide online training through accessible formats like YouTube and PDF files; this can make it easy for volunteers who are unable to attend training
- » Record your training (as long as it doesn't include personal information) and make the link available for other organizations to use
- » Get together with organizations from similar sectors (sports, arts & culture, community) to create training materials that address the same kinds of needs
- » Always provide training items (handouts, forms, etc.) online, even publicly, so any volunteer can access it and it can be shared easily

Application #2: Family Volunteering (Start Small!)

Through discussing YSM's Family-to-Family Mentoring program, groups looked at the ways organizations could set up family volunteer opportunities. By starting small and focusing on the initial obstacles (such as risk management, determining appropriate ages, and what paperwork needs to be completed), it can be easier to overcome challenges in the long run:

- » Start by thinking about what family volunteering would look like for you – do you have a role for everyone in a family? What does a family look like (children, parents, grandparents, etc.)?
- » Consider your risk tolerance when taking on family volunteers and how this might impact your existing retention challenges (how easy is it to retain families?)
- » Adapt existing volunteer opportunities that could allow for work to be spread out between family members, or groups of families
- » Create a plan ahead of time for communicating with families – determine a single person in the family to pass communications through, ensure that you're able to connect with the family regularly if possible
- » Reach out to organizations similar to yours and find out if they have any family volunteer roles

Application #3: Diversity and Inclusivity Training

In exploring The Stop's evaluation information and efforts to increase service user volunteers, groups discussed the role of diversity and inclusivity training for volunteers and for staff. Offering this training (and collaborating with others to develop/deliver it), can help you increase understanding amongst your volunteers:

- » Engaging service users as volunteers requires a change in mindset and approach so that existing volunteers, staff and senior leadership don't create further barriers or discomfort for these volunteers
- » Deliver diversity training (anti-racism, anti-oppression, equity, inclusivity) to staff to encourage buy-in, train staff to deliver this training to others and to volunteer
- » Seek out partners and even existing volunteers who can help deliver this training
- » Get a sense of the barriers your volunteers might be facing by moving through the recruitment, screening and placement process yourself – what does this show you?

"Inclusive Training"
can be found on page
14



Creating Innovations

Discussion Groups came together around ideas on how to be innovative in organizations, the challenges and resistance that can come up when you want to try new ideas and innovative projects they're implementing at their own agencies.

Getting Buy-In

In order to create innovative practices and enhance volunteer programs, volunteer managers need to get buy-in from staff, senior leadership, community members and even volunteers:

- » Build rapport and relationships throughout the entire organization on an ongoing basis to create trust, respect and influence in the volunteer manager role – fostering positive relationships will help increase the likelihood of ideas being accepted
- » Adapt the language being used based on who you're talking to by knowing what your audience will understand and be persuaded by; for instance, senior leaders may be most interested in impact and numbers while fellow staff may want to hear more about how these changes will help them and their programs
- » Work to define and help to professionalize volunteer management within and outside of your organization to make it easier for people to understand and respect your job – it's administration, strategic planning, people management and more

"Sample Volunteer Coordinator Job Description" can be found on page 15

Small Innovations

In their groups, participants shared small innovations they're exploring and the ways they're being innovative in their own organizations. While the scale of these strategies varies, they offer insight into the opportunities you can take on within your organization:

- » Set up a system to send text messages (SMS) to volunteers who opt-in for quick info, small directed messages and sms-blasts – search for "group business SMS" for different software and tools to help you set up your own SMS platform
- » Engage teams of youth (youth often prefer to volunteer with peers instead of alone) to deliver programs, offering a variety of roles and opportunities for different youth in meeting program needs
- » Use Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as a tool to complement interviewing and volunteer selection to help ensure you have balanced, effective volunteer teams; MBTI questionnaires result in one of 16 types that indicate how people interact with others and the world (this should not be the ONLY type of screening done)
- » Collaborate with others within your organization to develop program plans – work with partners you may not normally think of, such as accounting, marketing or administration

Volunteer Toronto's Youth Audit team can help identify and overcome gaps in youth engagement in your volunteer program; learn more at volunteertoronto.ca/youthaudits2017

RESEARCH IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

About the Research

In the afternoon session, two research presentations were given on different aspects of volunteerism. From political influence of volunteering to the barriers volunteers face, this new research provided unique insights and sparked great conversation at the Conference.



Presenter:

Erin Spink, MA
(Leadership)
*National Manager,
Volunteer Engagement,
Crohn's and Colitis
Canada
Founder, spinktank*

Research: Impact of Politics on Volunteering

Erin began CARVE, the Centre for Advanced Research in Volunteer Engagement as an arm of spinktank consulting to focus on practitioner research that informs leaders of volunteers how to be more effective in their work. This research looks at whether volunteerism, alongside other civic engagement activities like donating and protesting, was also growing and changing in response to the political landscape in the past year.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between someone's support for or against a political leader and their volunteer behaviour?
2. Are we seeing growth in volunteerism as we have seen in fundraising and advocacy due to the political landscape between January 2016 and May 2017?
3. For both individuals and organizations, are there pockets of particular change?

Using an online survey tool, Erin collected data from 1700 respondents. Individual respondents were primarily from the US, with some respondents from several other countries, and represented a variety of age groups. Organizations spanned sectors, work areas, budgets and staff sizes and were split between US, Canada and other countries.

Findings

- » Organizations found a small to moderate increase in number of applications across all ages and a slight increase in short-term volunteering vs. ongoing roles
- » A fifth of organizations said applicants cited politics as a motivation to volunteer, and closer to half of organizations said volunteer hours and responsibilities increased in the research time frame
- » Two thirds of individuals stated their volunteering was politically motivated and more than half strongly intend to volunteer again next year
- » For 60% of new volunteers, their motivation to start volunteering for the first time was due to the political climate

Next Steps

- Erin will conduct a Canadian-only version of the survey for the 2019 Federal election and re-launch this survey after the 2020 American election
- A free webinar will be conducted in early 2018 with VolunteerMatch to explore the survey research more deeply

Research: Exploring Barriers to Volunteering in Marginalized Communities

Through the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Lisa is exploring how individuals face barriers in finding volunteer roles and how Volunteer Toronto can support these individuals – and organizations with volunteer opportunities – to decrease economic vulnerability. The project began in September 2017 and the research conducted so far will inform the direction for the Supportive Matching Project outputs.

Research Questions

1. Is it feasible for Volunteer Toronto to provide a supportive placement experience for individuals facing barriers to volunteering and, ultimately, increase their employability? If so, how?
2. Is it feasible for Volunteer Toronto to develop and provide tools for organizations so that they feel they are able to support individuals who face significant barriers to volunteering? If so, how?

Those facing barriers to volunteering and employment include individuals from vulnerable populations and marginalized groups. This may include newcomers, people with disabilities, people living with mental illness, those with English as a second language – anyone with a self-identified experience of barriers.

Through a literature review, observation of Volunteer Toronto referral appointments with community members and environmental scan of current service, Lisa identified specific barriers and promising practices in Toronto.

Findings So Far:

- » Barriers faced by individuals include:
 - Language/communication
 - Education/qualifications
 - Skills/past work experience
 - Process and environment (how the screening process works) and
 - Internalized beliefs
- » These barriers can stand alone or intersect, resulting in volunteers being unable to find volunteer roles or move through the recruitment and screening process
- » Organizations also face many barriers, some beyond volunteer managers' control, including:
 - The state of the non-profit sector and funding
 - Available resources
 - Physical infrastructure/capacity
 - Internalized beliefs/biases
 - Motivation



Presenter:

Lisa Robinson
Program Developer,
Supportive Matching,
Volunteer Toronto

More detailed barriers and promising practices can be found on page 17

- » Promising practices in Toronto include using the case management model to help individuals overcome barriers, recognizing assumptions when moving through the screening process, and including (and training on) a diversity and inclusivity policy in organizations, among many other practices

Next Steps

- » Research will continue with focus groups and qualitative interviews with individuals facing barriers and volunteer managers working with individuals facing barriers
- » By the end of this project in 2018, a report on barriers and recommendations to minimize them in organizations, along with toolkits and resources to support organizations and individuals in overcoming barriers will be produced

To learn more about being part of this continued research effort, please contact Lisa at lrobinson@volunteertoronto.ca or 416 961 6888 ex 237.



Applying the Research

The two studies examined different aspects of volunteerism and impact of outside influences on the interest or ability of individuals to volunteer. Discussion Groups looked at both areas of research to identify potential applications to their own volunteer programs.

Application #1: Political Influence

Through a discussion of political influence on volunteering, groups explored how Erin's research could be applied to their own volunteer programs:

- » Ask your volunteers directly if the political landscape encouraged them to volunteer or volunteer more (this data can be collected on application forms for new volunteers as well)
- » Get to know your own assumptions around politics and the political beliefs of volunteers; if your organization is politically neutral, then consider how motivations of your volunteers can be respected without “choosing a side”
- » Your volunteers and their political beliefs represent a part of Toronto, which represents a broader spectrum of diverse populations – what can this tell you about your organization, your community and your supporters?

Application #2: Supporting Volunteers Facing Barriers

In discussions on overcoming barriers, attendees talked about different strategies to address the barriers their own volunteers face, coming back to some points discussed in the morning's innovations as well:

Volunteer Toronto's Diversity Policy can be found on page 18

- » Develop a diversity & inclusivity policy, ideally applicable to everyone; provide training on your organization's stance on diversity and inclusivity and live it in all of your work
- » Consider introducing a mentorship program – start by creating a database of your volunteers who would be willing to mentor other volunteers (especially those facing barriers) to support them in their volunteer role
- » Outside of mentorship, incorporate peer-to-peer support networks for your volunteers; give them opportunities to connect and get to know each other and build support systems around mental health and other issues
- » Talk to your volunteers about what issues they might be facing; ask them to share any barriers they've encountered at your organization, or even elsewhere, to determine what you need to be doing to improve

Doing your Own Research

While discussing the research they had just learned about, participants also explored areas of opportunity to conduct their own research. Discussion Groups talked about how to collect information, what they want to learn more about and how to work together on doing research.

Volunteer Touch Points

Groups discovered that they already connected with volunteers on a regular basis and this was an ideal starting point for data collection:

- » Ask your volunteer base questions that will help you understand what you need to know more about: on the organizational level, for their own programs, for volunteer strategies
- » Use applications and interviews in the screening process, along with follow-ups and evaluations, to gather data without asking for additional surveys and feedback from volunteers
- » Keep surveys short to help make data collection easier – if you can get away with five or fewer questions, you might have a better chance of getting more information back
- » Get to know your volunteer's motivations broadly and individually (or in groups) to predict future volunteer changes and trends
- » Make small changes in your volunteer program (or direct program delivery) and assess the impact these changes are having by asking volunteers directly

Practical Research Ideas

In discussions on overcoming barriers, attendees talked about different strategies to address the barriers their own volunteers face, coming back to some points discussed in the morning's innovations as well:

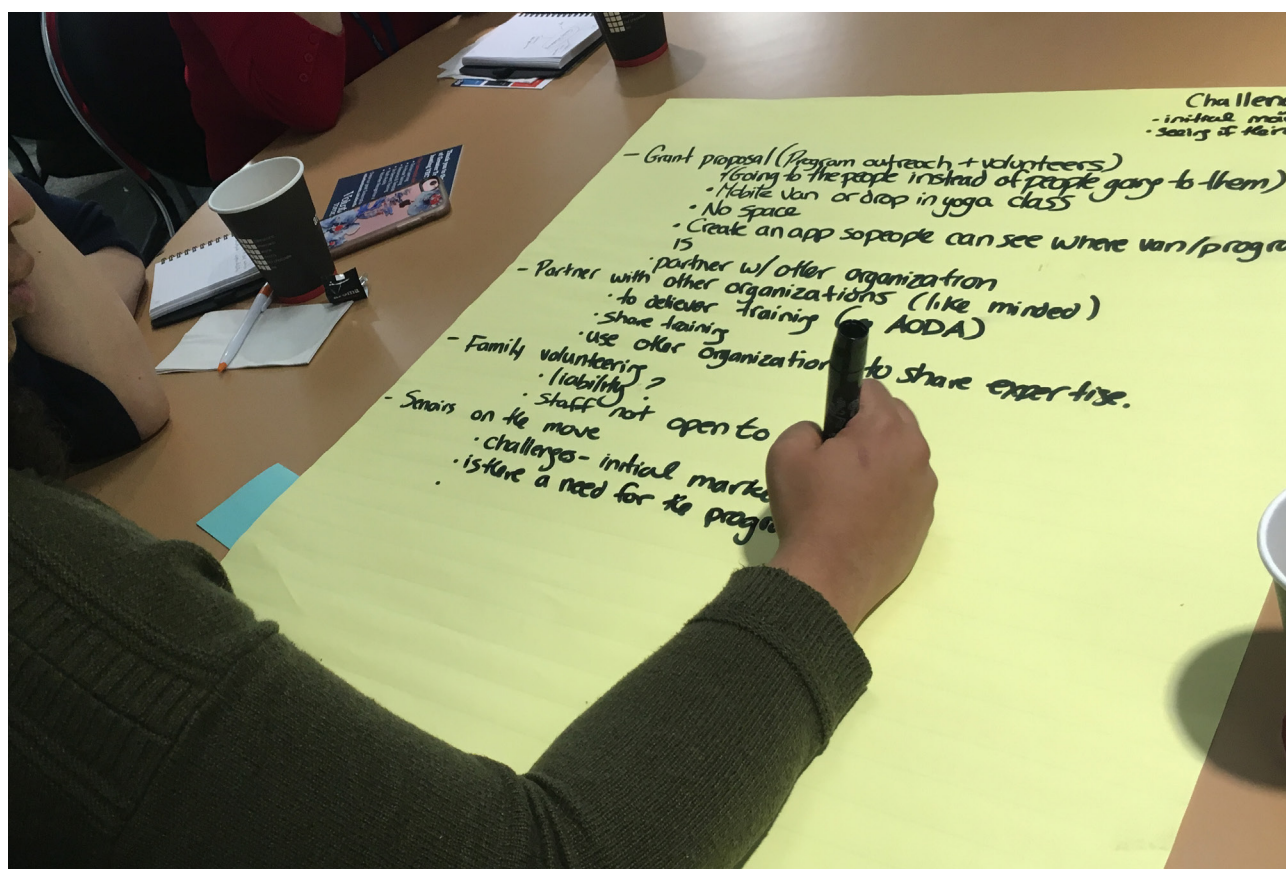
"Research Tips" can be found on page 19

- » Research can be used to build a case for funding, support, staff buy-in and development of the volunteer management team; data can point to the benefit of volunteering and the gaps that further support/funding can fill (Appendix – Research tips)
- » A program evaluation is research into your existing volunteer activities and determining the impact it's having in the short- and long-term on clients and the organization and the effectiveness of your recognition practices, recruitment efforts, and other volunteer engagement practices
- » A needs assessment could look at volunteer and client needs to identify gaps and next steps for your program
- » Outside of your organization, groups can work together to look at how corporate volunteers can be better engaged with organizations, how customized volunteer experiences can be created and how to professionalize volunteer management further

Research Collaboration

As evidenced by Erin and Lisa's work, research in the voluntary sector relies on collaboration for data collection, delegation of work and even determining research topics:

- » Connect with CARVE via Erin Spink to coordinate research efforts and learn of other research being done in the sector; CARVE can help facilitate and convene this research
- » Reach out to local post-secondary schools throughout the city to find university and college students who may want to help with research (or require a placement with a research component); volunteers can also help with research to build that particular skill
- » Do an environmental scan of other organizations in and outside of your sector – what research have they done or are they doing? Can you build on their research? Can you collaborate on next steps?



TOOLS & APPENDICES

Inclusive Training

To deliver training in an inclusive way, use the concepts of **Universal Learning Design**. Universal Learning Design is a framework for designing training that enables all individuals to gain knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for learning.

Multiple means of representation: Give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge.

Multiple means of expression: provide learners with alternatives for demonstrating what they know.

Multiple means of engagement: Provide different ways to motivate and stimulate the learner.

Part of inclusive training also considers the different ways of learning:

Using the senses – seeing, hearing, touching, feeling & tasting

Using different processes – understanding by reading, by moving, by copying, etc.

You want to facilitate a climate of collaboration and trust. Set ground rules on how discussions will take place and create a safer space for everyone. This can help you discuss more challenging items or ensure that a conversation about diversity and inclusivity is open and honest. **Always consider who is in the room and make sure everyone has a chance to speak and share the space.**

When training volunteers and colleagues on diversity and inclusivity, refer back to your organization's policy and highlight the important aspects, primarily that all individuals are treated equitably and with respect. The principles of accommodation in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) supports this, ensuring everyone's dignity, independence and integrity is taken into account in all discussions about identity and ability.

Sample Volunteer Coordinator Job Description

This sample volunteer coordinator job description is adapted from the HR Council (non-profit human resources tools) and National Occupational Classification 4212. Use it to update your job description and show leaders that there is some standardization in the professionalism of the role.

Job Purpose

Managers of Volunteers/Volunteer Coordinators/Volunteer Resource Administrators manage volunteer resources to assist in the delivery of the organization's programs and services. This includes directly managing volunteers, and/or providing guidance, support, resources and tools to staff who supervise volunteers.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities

Managers of Volunteers perform some or all of the following duties:

- » Plan the volunteer program
- » Develop and implement goals and objectives for the volunteer program which reflect the mission of the organization
- » Assess the need for volunteers to enhance program/service delivery
- » Develop a budget for the volunteer program activities
- » Conduct ongoing evaluation of the programs and services delivered by volunteers and implement improvements as necessary

Organize the volunteer program

- » Develop, administer, and review policies, procedures & records which guide the volunteer programs and services, and reflect the overall values of the organization
- » Identify volunteer assignments that provide meaningful work for volunteers and write the volunteer position descriptions in consultation with staff as appropriate

Engage volunteers

- » Develop and implement effective strategies to recruit the right volunteers with the right skills
- » Plan a recruitment campaign using a variety of tools and best practices
- » Develop and implement a screening process for potential volunteers to ensure the best match between the skills, qualification, and interests of the volunteers and the needs of the role

Lead the volunteer program

- » Train staff to work effectively and cooperatively with volunteers
- » Orient volunteers to increase their understanding of the organization, its clients, its services and the role and responsibilities of volunteers
- » Ensure that volunteers are given appropriate training to be safe, effective & successful in their positions
- » Ensure that records of volunteer hours are maintained according to established procedures
- » Ensure that volunteers receive the appropriate level of supervision
- » Assist with conflict resolution among volunteers and others according to established procedures
- » Establish and implement a process for evaluating the contribution of individual volunteers
- » Plan and implement formal and informal volunteer recognition activities to recognize the contribution of volunteers to the organization

Oversee the volunteer program

- » Evaluate the risks associated with each volunteer position and take appropriate action to control the risks associated with the program or service
- » Ensure that volunteers work in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment in accordance with all appropriate legislation and regulations
- » Evaluate the contribution of each volunteer on an annual basis
- » Prepare an annual report on the contribution of the volunteer program to the organization
- » Administer and monitor expenditures for the volunteer program against the approved budget

Qualifications

Education and Experience

- » Experience with supervision, management, volunteer leadership, program coordination and/or project management
- » College certificate in Volunteer Management is an asset
- » Post-secondary education in social sciences, human resources, community development, or adult education is an asset

Professional designation

- » Certification from the Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources, Certificate in Volunteer Resource Management or the equivalent provincial association is an asset
- » Membership in VMPC, PAVRO or the equivalent provincial association is an asset

Knowledge, skills and abilities

- » Knowledge of current trends, resources and information related to volunteerism
- » Knowledge of the management of volunteer resources
- » Proficiency in the use of computers for word processing & database management

Personal characteristics

- » Build relationships: Establish and maintain positive working relationships with others, both internally and externally, to achieve the goals of the organization.
- » Creativity/innovation: Develop new and unique ways to improve operations of the organization and to create new opportunities.
- » Foster teamwork: Work cooperatively and effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems, and make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness.
- » Make decisions: Assess situations to determine the importance, urgency and risks, and make clear decisions which are timely and in the best interests of the organization.
- » Organize: Set priorities, develop a work schedule, monitor progress towards goals, and track details, data, information and activities.
- » Plan: Determine strategies to move the organization forward, set goals, create and implement actions plans, and evaluate the process and results.
- » Solve Problems: Assess problem situations to identify causes, gather and process relevant information, generate possible solutions, and make recommendations and/or resolve the problem.

Working Conditions

- » Managers of volunteers work in an office environment, but monitoring the activities of volunteers may sometimes take them into non-standard workplaces

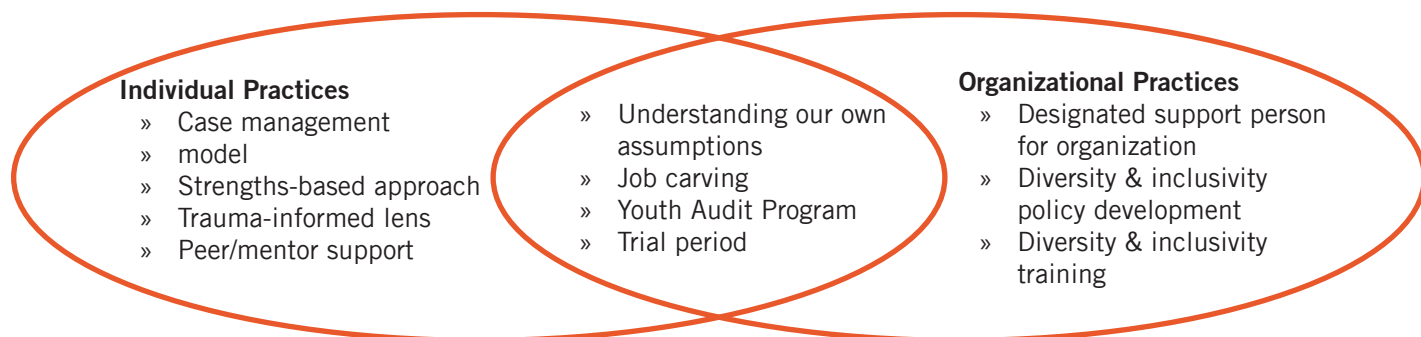
Detailed Findings from Research into Volunteer Barriers

Lisa's research into barriers faced by volunteers in marginalized communities (page 9) found a number of individual and organizational barriers in specific categories, listed below.

Individual Barriers		
Language/Communication	- Working knowledge of English language - Sector-specific knowledge	- "Normal" patterns of communication/social skills - Access to e-mail and/or computer
Education/Qualifications	- Familiarity with the concept of volunteering - Credentials that are not recognized in Canadian workforce	- Over-qualification - Lack of access to education (financial, academic, personal beliefs)
Skills/Past Work Experience	- History of unemployment/gaps in resume - Access to references	- Idea of 'jack of all trades' - Articulation of skills and past experience
Process and Environment	- Access to information on volunteering - Online application processes - Unwritten scripts of interviewing	- Physical environment (wheelchair accessibility, over-stimulation, access to transportation) - Financial resources (police check, cost of transportation)
Internalized Beliefs	- Consumer/provider of services (imposter syndrome)	- Internalized experiences of exclusion - History of trauma

Organizational Barriers		
Current State of the Sector	-Project-based funding -Risk management	-Professionalization of volunteering and the sector
Available Resources	-Staff roles -Time limitations -Finances	-Lack of guidance on how to develop more inclusive volunteer programs
Physical Infrastructure	-Limited resources to adapt space -Renters vs owners	-Knowledge about and availability of adaptive tools
Beliefs/Biases	-Lack of awareness	-Internalization of beliefs
Motivations	-Lack of urgency	-Invisibility of those most affected -Vastness of change effort

As part of her research, Lisa encountered a variety of promising practices used in 40 different organizations in Toronto offering employment, education and volunteer-related programming for marginalized groups:



Volunteer Toronto Diversity Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Every effort will be made to select volunteers and staff, including Board and working group members, who reflect the diverse community served by Volunteer Toronto and provide services to diverse individuals and communities within the City of Toronto. This is including but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity, gender expression race, language spoken, ancestry, creed, (dis)ability, place of origin, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, citizenship, marital status and family status.

2.0 PROCEDURES FOR RECRUITMENT:

- a. Recruitment advertisements and posters will state explicitly that Volunteer Toronto is committed to recruiting volunteers and serving clients from Toronto's diverse communities.
- b. Where available the advertisement will be available through minority-serving websites, newspapers and other platforms.
- c. Recruitment strategies will include liaison with social service agencies, cultural groups etc. who serve minority communities.

3.0 PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH AND SERVICE PROVISION:

- a. Services will be structured and delivered in such a manner as to be as accessible and reflective of diversity as possible, including reflecting the diverse needs of service users and clients to the extent possible;
- b. With no exception, all service delivery will be consistent with Volunteer Toronto's values, Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Accessibility Policies
- c. Developing, delivering and evaluating services delivered to diverse populations will occur in consultation with social service agencies and representative cultural groups who serve minority communities.

Research Tips

Guidelines on ensuring that research is practical and useful:

Choose SMART goals

Focus on a specific area of your volunteer program that you'd like to understand better or improve, such as recruitment effectiveness or success of recognition. Use SMART goals to make sure your research topic is:

- » Specific – clear and concise, to the point
- » Measurable – will you be able to see (in numbers or words) what you're trying to understand
- » Attainable – is it something that can actually be accomplished at all, will you be able to get the information you're looking for with the resources you have
- » Relevant – is it important and valuable to your volunteer program and your organization's mission
- » Time-Bound – can you complete it in your expected timeframe

Set parameters ahead of time - how much will you do?

Determine who will be involved in the research project, including assistance from volunteers or students along with other staff. Consider how much work you'll put in ahead of time and stick to that. Also define:

- » A timeline when the project will start and end
- » Data collection methods, including surveys, interviews and focus groups
- » A deadline for data collection and interpretation

Plan evaluation structure and what you'll do with outcomes

How will you know your research project was successful or got the right amount of data? Plan what the evaluation will look like in advance.

Once you have your findings, determine what you'll do with the outcomes. Finding retention is better than you thought? Plan to focus energy elsewhere. Discover that recognition isn't very successful? Use the research findings to change your recognition practice.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR

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