

Finding Volunteers On-line

So you need volunteers. How do you find them? What laws relate to volunteers? How do you manage them? Where can you get information about volunteerism? There are many important questions about volunteerism that can be answered by turning to the world wide web. Listed below are the answers that the Internet offered to the questions above.

How do you find them?

There are many avenues to find volunteers in the community. Several communities have volunteer agencies that match those willing to volunteer with organizations in need of service, including the following:

- St. Albert Community Information and Volunteer Centre (<http://home.ecn.ab.ca/~civc/>)
- Volunteer Calgary (<http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/>)
- Volunteer Centre of Edmonton (<http://www.volunteeredm.ab.ca/>) (note - undergoing some organizational changes)
- Volunteer Lethbridge (<http://www.volunteerlethbridge.com/>)
- Volunteer Center of Toronto (<http://www.volunteertoronto.on.ca/>)
- Volunteer Vancouver (<http://www.vancouver.volunteer.ca/>)

This is just a short list. For a more complete list, check out Volunteer Canada at http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/about_centres_locations_ab.htm.

There are also virtual volunteer organizations. One example is Charity Village (<http://www.charityvillage.com>)

“Canada’s supersite for the nonprofit sector – 3,000 pages of news, jobs, information and resources for executives, staffers, donors, and volunteers. If philanthropy and volunteerism are part of your world, this is your place.”

Along with online avenues to find volunteers, there are local agencies that provide information for the nonprofit sector. In Edmonton, the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations operates out of Grant MacEwan College. The RCVO maintains an excellent collection of resource materials related to volunteer management, board development, fund raising, and agency management. The RCVO also offers consultation services. You can find the RCVO online at www.rcvo.org.

What laws relate to volunteers?

A quick search for the word volunteer in Alberta legislation yields interesting results. The *Charitable Fund-Raising Act* defines “volunteer” as a person who offers their services in any capacity and does not receive remuneration. This act sets out how fund-raising must be done by charities in our province.

There is also an act entitled the *Charitable Donation of Food Act* which has yet to be put into force in our province. This act is meant to protect volunteers who are distributing food from liability for any problems arising from their work.

Alberta legislation can be viewed for free on the Queen's Printer online documents website at http://www.gov.ab.ca/pab/qpdevl/custom_page.cfm?page_id=18.

How do you manage them?

The Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) website at <http://www.cavr.org> is an excellent online resource for professional administration of volunteer resources. CAVR offers certification of membership, continuing education standards, and collaboration with

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provincial, national and international volunteer organizations. The CAVR site has a good links list which includes a link to CyberVPM.com.

CyberVPM.com states that "Volunteers are the glue that holds community together... and volunteer managers are the professionals who know where and how to apply the glue." The website includes some great tips on the basics for volunteer programs, info on how to get volunteer program management training kits, and free newsletters.

Where can you get information about volunteerism?

Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton offers a diploma program in Voluntary

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Sector Management. Part of the GMCC Library website includes links to topics such as Agency/Board Management; Educational Programs; Foundations; Fundraising; Government Sites; Journals and Newsletters; Organizations and Agencies; Proposal and Grant Writing; Statistics; Volunteer Agencies; and Volunteerism. Check out this resource by

viewing <http://www.lrc.gmcc.ab.ca/research/web/guides/to/business/volsecman.html>.

The volunteerism links include such topics as the International Year of Volunteers 2001, Volunteer Opportunities Exchange — a free on-line service that connects agencies looking for volunteers with people seeking volunteer opportunities, and A Year for Everyone - a resource guide for planning events in Alberta marking the International Year of Volunteers.

Volunteerism is an important part of our community. The Internet can provide great access to information for both those wishing to volunteer and for the organizations that need them.

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