

Community Information & Volunteer Centre

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Managing volunteers a robust, changing, complex process

I interact daily with people who manage volunteers. These people can be paid or volunteer and work full or part-time. In fact, some manage volunteers 'off the side of their desk' so to speak.

What all of these individuals share, is recognition that managing volunteers is a robust, ever changing and complex process.

How does one go about recruiting the ideal person for this position? What needs to be done and how do you write an effective position description?

The HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector has come to our rescue. They have developed National Occupational Standards for Managers of Volunteer Resources.

This guide outlines the major functions fulfilled by such a position along with the associated responsibilities and tasks. There is a separate list detailing the tools, equipment, supplies and materials needed to fulfill the work.

Knowledge, abilities and skills are listed as are behaviours, attitudes and personal characteristics required by individuals involved in this vital role in your organization.

This is an amazing resource for supervisors planning to hire a manager of volunteers or for someone currently working in the field who needs to write down what and how they do what they do.

Of the nine major functions described, the fourth is 'provide volunteer orientation'. The task list includes: arrange orientation, conduct orientation, confirm volunteer placements, and provide for placement-specific training.

Under each task is a list of subtasks and supporting knowledge and abilities.

Reading this information gave me an 'ah ha' moment. This one document provides comprehensive content in language that makes sense.

We will be using this information in our latest updating of our Overview of Volunteer Management Course.

You can find the national standards on our website at kcr.ca. Check it out and see how your position description stacks up.

Dawn Wilkinson manages the Community Information and Volunteer Centre at Kelowna Community Resources. Go to kcr.ca and click on Volunteer Opportunities Search to create



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your volunteer profile. View all the Volunteer Centre columns at: kcr.ca/volunteercolumn. Contact 250-763-8008 ext 24 or informkelowna@kcr.ca.