

Volunteer Toronto New Policies & Procedures

What's the Role of Policies?

A policy is a guiding statement or document that indicates the position your organization takes, capturing a value or belief. During a pandemic, the best antidote to fear and uncertainty is setting out a clear direction or plan of action. Your policy is that plan of action, and often includes specific steps, procedures, or methods. Developed in concert with your senior management team, your volunteer program's policies will state boundaries (like acceptable and unacceptable safety procedures) and explain how transgressions will be addressed.

These new policies and procedures will most likely become part of your volunteer handbook. Remember to include your volunteers in the process. Technologies like Google Docs allow you to collaborate in real-time and ensure you have volunteer buy-in.

How do you create procedures that reflect your policies? Beyond each policy you'll also need procedures. Procedures can be forms, templates, listed guidelines or even a checklist of actions or activities that need to be carried out. When crafting your procedures, you want to make sure they are:

- Clearly linked to the policy
- Dynamic and adaptable when needed
- Can be easily accessed by everyone
- Respects the needs of volunteers, using accessible language and formats

Policy Conversation Starters

Who will be involved in the program?

Who may be in a position to harm people or misrepresent the organization's values and/or services?

What risks are involved in the program activity?
Where does the activity take place? How often will someone oversee the activity?

What risks are associated with virtual programs?
Consider confidentiality, cyber security, and inclusion.

Sources: Volunteer Toronto Screening Resources
City of Toronto

Must-Haves for New Policies

- Purpose:** A short description for the goal of the policy and what it accomplishes
- Policy Statement:** The rule or standard the policy must communicate
- Definitions:** If needed, to define terms in the policy
- Application & Responsibilities:** Details how the policy will be applied and who is responsible
- Procedures:** The "action" part of the policy, usually a guideline or process using forms or templates

How Does Policy Affect Roles?

Your policy gives you a guidepost for assessing and managing risk for volunteer roles. Many non-profits are re-evaluating in person roles and are looking to strengthen their diversity and inclusion policies. Position descriptions need to clearly communicate risk mitigation steps and anti-discrimination procedures. For position descriptions, having standard safety or inclusion text will allow volunteers to clearly grasp what's expected of them and what will be cause for redeployment or dismissal.

Other Policy Resources

- Volunteer Toronto's 30-minute webinar on [Program and Role Planning During COVID-19](#)
- Volunteer Toronto's 30-minute webinar on [Position Description and Recruitment During COVID-19](#)
- Volunteer Toronto's [Screening During COVID-19](#) one page resource
- Volunteer Canada's [Checklist](#) for Volunteers – Volunteering during COVID-19