



CULTURALLY WELCOMING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM INITIATIVE

*Training in partnership with: The Federation of
Community Social Services of BC*

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Curriculum Overview

Guiding Vision

The primary aim of the Culturally Welcoming Volunteer Program Initiative is to support organizations to create welcoming and inclusive environments for volunteers and potential volunteers, with particular attention to immigrants new to volunteering in Canada.

Background

For many agencies, volunteer programs are an essential ingredient in their ability to provide a wide range of services to the community. On a practical level, volunteers allow agencies to stretch their resources and accomplish their goals. On a deeper level, volunteerism plays an important role in citizen engagement by fostering participation, interaction and contribution to benefit society as a whole. In recent years there has been an increase in interest and involvement in volunteerism among recent immigrants to Canada. At the same time, studies show that there is more work to be done to make volunteer programs attractive, accessible and welcoming for new volunteers. According to the United Nations Volunteer Program (1), Volunteers are motivated by values like those of justice, equality and freedom as expressed in the United Nations Charter. A society which supports and encourages different forms of volunteering is likely to be a society which also promotes the well-being of its citizens.

(1) *The power of volunteerism: <https://www.unv.org/power-volunteerism>*



The curriculum for the Culturally Welcoming Volunteer Program (CWVP) Initiative was developed to support the implementation of culturally welcoming volunteer programs in organizations in communities throughout British Columbia

Purpose of the Training

The program is intended to provide participating community agencies and their staff with an enhanced capacity to create and sustain welcoming and inclusive volunteer programs, meaningful volunteer opportunities and culturally competent volunteer management practices.

More specifically, it is intended that the Coordinator of Volunteers develops the confidence and competence in creating welcoming volunteer opportunities and experiences for Canadian immigrants new to volunteering.

Target Agencies

Any community not-for-profit agency or publicly funded organization with a recognized volunteer program. Organizations with varied size, mandates and missions may be involved. Participating agencies may include, for example, hospitals, libraries, extended care homes, neighbourhood houses, crisis services, and immigrant serving agencies. More expressly, the targeted agencies are those that are currently engaged in or aspiring to invite, introduce and include immigrants new to volunteering in Canada.

Target Audience

This training will be offered to Coordinators of Volunteers or staff responsible for managing volunteers.

Length of Program

The program consists of 2 half-days of 4hrs online workshops, held over a 2 weeks period.





Learning Outcomes

By the end of the two-half days workshops, participants will be able to:

-  **DEFINE** CULTURE, INCLUSION, WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE.
-  **DESCRIBE** A FRAMEWORK FOR DIVERSITY, STAGES OF BECOMING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION, AND A MODEL FOR CHANGE
-  **EXPLORE** PERSONAL IDENTITY AND DEEPEN CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS
-  **IDENTIFY** BARRIERS AND SUCCESS FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INVITATION, INTRODUCTION AND INCLUSION OF IMMIGRANTS NEW TO VOLUNTEERING IN CANADA
-  **DESCRIBE** BEST PRACTICES FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE:
 - PLANNING
 - RECRUITMENT
 - SELECTION & PLACEMENT
 - ORIENTATION
 - TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT
 - RECOGNITION & REWARD
 - RETENTION





CREATING WELCOMING VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

VOLUNTEER KNOWLEDGE: POSSIBLE IDEAS

- Cultural knowledge is a barrier: when you are raised in Canada you “learn” how to get involved as a volunteer
- Economic disparity between new immigrants and Canadian-born

MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER

- Volunteers are engaged with the cause of the agency with which they choose to volunteer. There is often a false perception that newcomers have a short tenure as volunteers - that they are "just here to get a job," "they just want job experience." But research shows that immigrants who volunteer have the same motivations and interests of other volunteers, and benefit from the same attention to training and development as any other volunteer.

MOTIVES VS BENEFITS

- Canadian experience, the chance to practice English, making new friends are all BENEFITS of volunteering.
- Volunteers stay long-term when their MOTIVATIONS to volunteer (to apply their skills to a cause they believe in) are being met.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

- Use Appreciate inquiry (AI) as an effective method to achieve positive organizational change.
- AI comprises 4 phases: DISCOVER (identifying what is working); DREAM (envisioning a collectively desired future); DESIGN (planning & prioritizing); and DESTINY (implementing the proposed design).
- Appreciative Inquiry is a model of organizational change that starts by DISCOVERING what’s working.





■ APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT (CONT.)

- Positive change stems from encouraging more of what's working well.
- The following questions will be very helpful when you are at the discover phase of what is working well in your program:
 - What do you feel is the most valuable thing you have done within your organization towards welcoming newcomers to Canada as volunteers?
 - What has been the most brilliant way you've seen a colleague or other organization show they welcome newcomers to Canada as volunteers?

■ BECOMING A CULTURALLY WELCOMING ORGANIZATION;

Some key steps in creating culturally welcoming volunteer programs are:

- To reflect on the multiple layers of diversity that comprise your organization and adopt broad definitions of diversity and culture.
 - Cultural competency is a skill set: A set of behaviors, attributes and policies enabling an agency (or individual) to work effectively in cross cultural situations.
 - A culturally welcoming organization is an outcome: as a culturally competent organization is experienced by others as culturally welcoming.
 - Persons of diverse background will feel accepted, honoured, and welcomed at the organization. Develop a clear framework of what it means to “becoming an inclusive organization” and a culturally competent organization.





BECOMING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

Becoming an inclusive organization include three phases:

- Early Stages (resistant, exclusive, reactive, symbolic):
 - Remember that visible diversity does not always exist
 - Those different from majority employees are implicitly, or sometimes explicitly discouraged from joining the organization.
 - Hiring or placing one person of a certain background as a symbol or token of inclusion.
- Middle Stages (transition, proactive, responsive):
 - Feedback and communication about the organization's progress regarding diversity
 - Personal work exploring knowledge, behaviour and feelings about diversity issues
 - Internal systems reviews integrating diversity into all human resources systems
- Advanced Stages (redefining, transformative, multicultural, pluralistic, inclusive).
 - Diversity is integrated into all other appropriate initiatives, e. g., quality, team building, change management, supervisory training, marketing.
 - No one considers putting together a team that is not diverse diversity becomes a habit and homogeneity causes discomfort when the organization is tackling complex issues and tasks





ACCULTURATION ADJUSTING TO A NEW

- In creating welcoming volunteer programs and inclusive organizations, volunteer managers should also learn about the cross-cultural adjustment processes and stages newcomers often experience in a new culture. These stages include:
 - initial anxiety;
 - initial excitement;
 - initial culture shock;
 - superficial adjustment;
 - depression/confusion;
 - regain emotional balance; and
 - adaptation/adjustment to new culture.
- Acculturation is the series of changes experienced by a person in order to become a fully functioning member of a new culture.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Another process, volunteer managers should also incorporate in their strategy to create welcoming volunteer programs and inclusive organizations, is to strategically review and redesign their volunteer management cycle, using the appreciative inquiry framework.





VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE (CONT.)

- **Planning:** Organizations should plan for volunteer positions that matter:
 - Any position can matter to a volunteer and an organization.
 - Volunteers add an extra layer of love, care, or service that "humanizes" the services non-profits deliver
 - Example: Coin sorting -- A volunteer with a developmental disability came to sort coins for an agency that collected coin donations, because he knew this money went in part to pay the wages of the youth worker he'd had as a teen.
 - Example: Seniors Outreach Worker -- In home country, seniors were honoured and kept within extended families. Breaks volunteer's heart to see lonely seniors in the community.
- **Recruitment:** is about attracting new volunteers
 - Fundamental change happens in small steps
 - Link back to change model on Day One
 - Choose one place as a beginning, e.g., learn about the demographics in your community or ensure that the job description is framed in inclusive, welcoming language.
 - Remind participants that they will have the chance to put these ideas in practice as they continue the program online.
- **Selection & Placement**
 - In their processes of selecting, interviewing new potential volunteers, volunteer managers and coordinators should consider the following when interviewing candidates:
 - What is the intent of asking this question?
 - What relevance does this information have to the selection decision?
 - What might be difficult or challenging about this question?
 - What could you ask instead to discover the best this person has to offer?





VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE (CONT.)

- **Orientation**
 - Volunteer orientation is foundational to creating a welcoming and inclusive volunteer program.
 - Your volunteer orientation session should provide new potential volunteers a clear overview of your organization's mission, vision, values and expectations. Your volunteer orientation is part of your volunteer training and development program.
- **Training & Development**
 - Culturally welcoming Training and Development Practices help volunteers grow in the knowledge and skills that will help them make a greater impact in our organization.
 - Some culture impacts: attitudes to time; ideas about how “students” act; importance of relationship vs task; approaches to knowing; familiar language (vocabulary, slang, acronyms); and how to say “I understand”, “I’m unsure”, “I disagree”.
- **Rewards & Recognition**
 - As volunteer coordinators and managers, always thinking about your existing reward practices: what are you doing to ensure you are recognizing different volunteers differently? What are you doing that has broad appeal across many different volunteers?
- **Culturally welcoming reward & recognition practices...**
 - Offer a range of recognition & reward options
 - If unsure how recognition will be received, private recognition is the easiest to handle in a culturally sensitive way.
 - Ask volunteers how they'd like to be recognized.
 - Manage and be aware of own expectations of how recognition will be received.
 - CVs do not need to know everything about all the diverse cultures they might encounter; they do need to know what resources are available to them, and how to find out more.





VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT CYCLE (CONT.)

- Retention

- Retention of diverse volunteers is the DESTINY of a culturally welcoming volunteer program.
- Retention is not an activity, it is an outcome.
- Volunteer managers and coordinators should manage expectations and retention goals.
- Good retention doesn't rely on 100% of volunteers staying with the organization forever.
- 30% rule of thumb: 30% never show up, 30% stay for a time, 30% will be longer term contributors.
- Measuring retention: % of volunteers who completed their commitment; number of volunteers who made a second commitment; number of volunteers who took on a more challenging position; number of volunteers who return after a break.

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