

## CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Volunteer Engagement Policy**  
Policy Category: **Human Resources**  
Policy No.: H-006  
Department: Corporate Services  
Approval Date: June 17, 2019  
Revision Date: N/A  
Author: Human Resources - Volunteer Services  
Attachments: The Waterloo Code for Volunteer Involvement  
Related Documents/Legislation:  
HR Council for Nonprofit Sector, National Occupational Standards  
for Managers of Volunteer Resources  
Public Safety Canada, Best Practice Guidelines for Screening  
Volunteers  
The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement  
Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario  
Criminal Code of Canada

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The City's Volunteer Engagement Policy implements and supports the Waterloo Code for Volunteer Involvement. This guiding document provides standards and principles for the engagement of volunteers in City direct programs, services, festivals or events and is based on the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement.

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to present guidelines for the development of meaningful and viable volunteer positions, consistent placement practices and clarification of Volunteer Services and staff roles. Volunteer Services leads and supports appropriate and effective volunteer involvement by developing and promoting best practices and standards for volunteers while minimizing risk to the city.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**City Direct Programs, Services, Festivals and Events** are offered by the City of Waterloo and staffed by City employees. Other programs such as student and youth program participants and programs that are offered by affiliates such as Minor Sports

groups or Neighbourhood Associations using City facilities are responsible for their own volunteers.

**City Staff Supervisor** is a regular employee who has been assigned responsibility for working with Volunteer Services to place and supervise volunteers.

**City Volunteer** is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the City of Waterloo. A volunteer must be officially accepted and registered by the City of Waterloo, Volunteer Services for placement in approved City of Waterloo direct programs, services, festivals or events, with a designated city staff supervisor.

Volunteers are required to sign an agreement and waiver form to be eligible for third party liability insurance coverage in the event that their actions unintentionally result in harm or injury to others.

The minimum age to be accepted as a volunteer with the City of Waterloo is 14. This is in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, R.S.O. Volunteers aged 14 and 15 are typically placed in positions that are directly supervised. When a volunteer is under 18 years of age, the parent or legal guardian must complete the Volunteer Agreement and Waiver form prior to the placement.

**Vulnerable Person / Vulnerable Population Groups** is an individual or group who has difficulty protecting him or herself and is therefore at greater risk of harm. A wide range of circumstances can create or increase a person's vulnerability, including, for example: age, disability, previous history of abuse or inability to read or communicate. This can include; children, youth, seniors, persons with physical, emotional, psychological, social, learning, sensory, or other disabilities, as well as people who are survivors of abuse, or other crimes or forms of harm.

#### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all employees who recruit volunteers for the delivery of City direct programs, services, festivals and events.

Committees of Council are addressed in the Committee Policy and are not within the scope of the Volunteer Engagement Policy.

#### **POLICY COMMUNICATION:**

This policy will be made available to staff through the City's intranet.

#### **POLICY:**

### **1.0 REQUEST A VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT**

To create a new position, the direct City staff supervisor contacts Volunteer Services to discuss qualifications, responsibilities, commitment, screening requirements and staff supervision at least 12 weeks prior to the desired start date.

For an existing position, the direct City staff supervisor completes a request for volunteer assistance form and forwards to Volunteer Services, a minimum of eight weeks prior to the desired start date. This allows time for volunteer position revisions, approvals and volunteer recruitment.

The following are not acceptable volunteer placements:

- Positions that replace or displace employees or perform tasks normally performed by employees;
- Positions that require use of power tools, ladders or City of Waterloo motorized vehicles. \*Exception is Waterloo Home Support volunteer drivers who transport clients in the City of Waterloo van or their personal vehicle;
- Positions that do not have a designated direct City staff supervisor
- Positions which require the skills of a tradesperson whose trade is regulated by the provincial government;
- Positions where liquor sales are part of the volunteer assignment including floor supervisor, door monitor, server / bartender and ticket sellers;
- Positions that involve directing traffic; or
- Positions that provide security

## **2.0 VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION – ASSIGNMENT**

City Staff Supervisors are required to develop volunteer position descriptions using the format provided by Volunteer Services for any volunteer placement. This is to be forwarded to Volunteer Services for review. Volunteer position descriptions must be developed and maintained for all volunteer placements involved in the delivery of City direct programs, services, festivals or events.

## **3.0 DETERMINE THE RISK OF THE VOLUNTEER POSITION AND POSITION APPROVAL**

Volunteer Services completes a risk assessment in conjunction with the City Staff Supervisor. Volunteers must be screened according to the level of risk associated with the position. The City of Waterloo takes proactive measures to assess and minimize any risks associated with new and significantly changed volunteer position descriptions. If the level of risk is higher than previously noted, the volunteers currently involved must meet the new screening requirements.

### **Levels of Risk Assessment**

Volunteer position descriptions are assessed for level of risk and categorized as high, medium or low. This determines the appropriate volunteer screening level required.

#### High Risk Level Criteria

The position requires that a volunteer:

- be alone and unsupervised with a vulnerable person
- have access to financial or material resources and / or sensitive or confidential information

#### Medium Risk Level Criteria

The position requires that a volunteer:

- interacts with the public to provide and receive information with minimum supervision
- works with vulnerable persons with direct supervision
- handle small amounts of cash or prepare food for vulnerable populations with minimal supervision

#### Low Risk Level Criteria:

The position requires that a volunteer:

- is supervised and volunteers are not alone
- may handle small quantities of cash during an event, provide information and answer questions

### **Position Approval**

The position description and completed risk assessment is circulated to designated city staff members for review and approval. A signature indicates agreement with and approval of the assessed risk and position description. The designated city staff members include: Volunteer Services, Director of Human Resources, the staff member who requested the volunteer position, their Manager or Director, and Finance (for insurance approval). Any concerns about the position are addressed to Volunteer Services.

## **4.0 VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

Volunteer Services works with City staff to develop and implement a written recruitment plan to ensure that volunteer recruitment reaches out to diverse groups. All positions must be posted publicly and screened to identify the most qualified applicants.

### **Volunteer Screening Guidelines**

- All persons applying for volunteer positions complete a standardized application form. Low risk position applications may be screened by

telephone interview by Volunteer Services and when applicable, the direct City staff supervisor.

- All persons applying for volunteer positions determined to be medium or high risk will be interviewed by Volunteer Services and when applicable, the direct City staff supervisor.
- Volunteer reference checks are performed by Volunteer Services and when applicable, by the direct City staff supervisor.
- A Police Records Check is required for volunteers in high risk positions. Based on position requirements a police vulnerable sector record check or criminal record and judicial matters check will be required. Volunteer Services reviews the police records check and when satisfactory, the volunteer may be accepted.
- All volunteers in driving roles are required to provide the following additional information: valid driver's license; proof of minimum one million dollar liability insurance and an acceptable driver's abstract. Driver's abstracts will be checked at regular intervals as determined by the City of Waterloo, Human Resources practices.
- All volunteers who are accepted must sign an agreement and waiver form.

## **5.0 RECORD KEEPING**

Volunteer Services manages the creation and administration of centralized volunteer records including hard copy files and the Volunteer Information System (V.I.S.) in accordance with the City's records management policies.

Authorized City staff are trained and provided with access to volunteer records associated with their specific programs, services, festivals or events.

Direct City staff supervisors are responsible for documenting information in the V.I.S. Training and orientation attendance/participation is recorded in the V.I.S. by the volunteer's supervisor as well as any awards given.

When a volunteer is no longer active, the authorized staff advises Volunteer Services. Volunteer Services archives the electronic record and retains it as per City records retention by-law.

## **6.0 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Each department is responsible for individual volunteer recognition. This is done informally on a regular basis and can be as simple as saying thank you. Formal recognition is at the discretion of each department. It is important to verbally thank volunteers on a regular basis.

The City of Waterloo, Volunteer Services, recognizes volunteers through National Volunteer Week and corporate recognition programs such as the Community Builders Awards Program.

## **7.0 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Direct City staff supervisors provide an orientation to the city program policies and practices appropriate to each position description and ensure that volunteers receive training specific to each volunteer position.

Volunteer Services provides mandatory corporate volunteer training information to volunteers prior to the start of placement. This information may also be distributed by staff during orientation sessions for City direct programs, services, festivals and events. Training includes but is not limited to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) brochures, Safety First Guidelines, Welcome Aboard and confidentiality requirements.

## **8.0 SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS**

Direct City staff supervisors are responsible for ongoing supervision of volunteers providing feedback, support and direction. They must also report all incidents involving injury to the City's Insurance Liaison for direct volunteers covered under the City's insurance policy. Critical injuries must also be reported to the Manager of Health, Safety & Wellness.

The direct City staff supervisor is responsible for ensuring the volunteer successfully performs the requirements of the position, including addressing any issues of improper conduct or performance.

Volunteers are encouraged to speak to their city staff supervisor regarding any concerns. Any staff member or volunteer who requires further information can contact Volunteer Services directly for guidance.

## **9.0 REVIEW**

Human Resources reserves the right to review and evaluate this policy on a regular basis and amend as necessary.