







# Volunteer ETIQUETTE

## Tools

### Looking for Volunteer Opportunities

When beginning to look for volunteer opportunities, here are some routes to consider:

-  **Family and Friends** – Family and friends may have good contacts or know others who volunteer. They are often your best leads to an opportunity. Let everyone know that you're looking for a volunteer opportunity.
-  **Volunteer Centres** – These are a great resource for information, support and finding volunteer opportunities in your area.
-  **Schools and Other Educational Institutions** – Teachers and guidance/career counselors can help you identify skills and find suitable volunteer placements in school or in the community.
-  **Newspapers, Community TV, and Radio Stations** – Check out the classifieds in the newspaper. Find out when your local radio stations broadcast their calendar of community events. Community TV channels also give information on community groups looking for help with events or volunteer needs.
-  **Give back at your elementary school or youth sport teams** – Consider returning to your elementary/middle school to support kids as a book buddy, with the breakfast program and more. There may be opportunities to coach or referee younger teams in leagues you play in.
-  **Online** - Start by searching your favorite organization/ cause. If you don't have access to the internet at home, try your library, school, community centre, volunteer centre, or a cybercafé.

*Adapted with permission from the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador.*









## Applying for Volunteer Opportunities

Once you find a volunteer opportunity that interests you, contact the organization to find out about their volunteer application process.



### Telephone Call

*Telephone tips ...*

-  Before calling, jot down your questions and keep the list close to take notes and write down answers.
-  Use a 3-point introduction – For example: “Could I please speak with Jane Doe? This is Joe Smith. I would like to speak with Jane about volunteering with your organization.”
-  Be upbeat and cheerful
-  Speak slowly and clearly, avoid speaking so low people can’t hear you
-  Avoid doing other things while making a call, as people can hear a keyboard clicking and paper shuffling in the background. This tells the person you are calling that they do not have your full attention.
-  Never interrupt a conversation to answer an incoming call. If you absolutely must, excuse yourself, put the caller on hold, and quickly explain to the other person on the line that you will call them back ASAP.
-  Avoid being in a noisy area if possible
-  If you need to sneeze, blow your nose, or cough, move away from the receiver. Just excuse yourself for a moment.

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### Email

*Email tips ...*

- ✉ Make sure you have an appropriate/non-offensive email address to use when contacting community organizations.
- ✉ Use a proper opening, especially if a contact name is provided. (Mr. Wilson, for example) If a contact name is not available, open your email simply with “Hello, my name is ...”
- ✉ Use full sentences and don’t write like when you are texting (Avoid terms like lol, thx and so on)
- ✉ If responding to a posted volunteer opportunity, indicate where you saw the opportunity. (website, volunteer centre, social media, etc.)
- ✉ Never communicate personal information, like passwords, bank information or your Social Insurance number in an email.
- ✉ Be careful about emails you send – proofread them. Always use spell check and even have a friend or relative review your email before you send it.



### In-Person

*In-person tips ...*

- 👍 Always make sure to confirm the correct address and office hours for the organization before heading out
- 👍 Dress for success! Dressing appropriately shows that you have respect for your workplace.
- 👍 Body language matters. This could be as simple as standing straight (look natural), have your shoulders back, arms by your side, and head up.

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### In-Person

*In-person tips ...*

-  Greet people by making eye contact, using their name, speaking slowly and clearly, shaking their hand and smiling. If you do not know their name, introduce yourself first and people will often introduce themselves after you.
-  Be positive and polite.
-  Be scent sensitive. Many organizations that deal with the public have a scent-free policy out of respect for people with severe scent allergies.

## Volunteer Recruitment Process

Once you contact the organization and want to move forward with becoming a volunteer, the organization will share its recruitment process with you.

-  **Volunteer Application Form** – Typically, organizations will ask you to complete a Volunteer Application Form. Take time to complete this form with accurate information, including your current telephone number and email address.
-  **Résumé** – Some organizations will ask for a résumé to go along with application form. Be sure to update your résumé with your current contact information, permanent address, most recent education, work history, other volunteer experience and references. If you do not have a résumé, check with your school, community centre or local volunteer centre for help in creating one.
-  **Background Check** – Some organizations will require a Police Background Check, dependent on the nature of the volunteer position. This requirement is common when working with youth, seniors, vulnerable populations.

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- ✓ **Parental Consent Form** – If you are under the age of 18, an organization will require a parental consent form be completed and signed by your parent or guardian before allowing you to participate in any volunteer opportunities.

## Volunteer Interview

When an organization is interested in you as a volunteer, they will contact you to arrange an interview. It is important they get to know you by meeting with you in addition to your resume. This is your opportunity to highlight what makes you a good fit for their volunteer opportunity, show them your enthusiasm and ask any questions you might have.

- ✓ **Be prepared** – Be sure to be well rested, well groomed, know what to wear and review the location and time of interview.
- ✓ **Research the organization** – Knowing information about the organization, its history and cause will help you be prepared to answer questions like “What do you know about us?” and “Why do you want to volunteer here?”
- ✓ **Keep your skills in mind** – Create a list of your skills and reference them during the interview.
  - Technical skills (coding, accounting, mechanical, etc.)
  - Transferable skills (customer service, time management, etc.)
  - Personable skills (organized, self-motivated, etc.)
- ✓ Do not be afraid to ask questions! Use your interview time to collect information and show you are truly interested in volunteering with the organization.
- ✓ Do not bring your cell phone into the interview. If you must carry your phone, be sure that notifications are turned off and the ringtone is set to silent.
- ✓ When the interview ends, be sure to thank the interviewer for their time and confirm they have your correct contact information for any follow-up.

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