

National Definition of Volunteer Centres



V O L U N T E E R
B É N É V O L E S
C A N A D A

Volunteer Centres, as defined by Volunteer Canada, are organizations which:

1. **a) Have non-profit status preferably with registered charitable status or have a 'qualified donee'¹ status (as defined by the Charities Division of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency) or**
b) Are hosted by a non-profit status organization preferably with registered charitable status. If (b), must have:
 - (i) An advisory committee and / or terms of reference clearly indicating a mandate to promote volunteerism to the entire community, and how this will be accomplished within the structure of the host organization; and
 - (ii) The word "volunteer" contained in the name of the volunteer centre or its host organization; and
 - (iii) A designated person responsible for the Volunteer Centre; and
 - (iv) A separate budget for the Volunteer Centre.
2. **Are eligible for membership with their provincial Volunteer Centre body (where they exist);**
3. **Have a statement of purpose (mission/ mandate/ vision) that aligns with the *national definition*.**

National Definition: Volunteer Centres exist primarily to foster and develop volunteerism in the community as a whole. Volunteer Centres engage in four general kinds of activities:

❖ **promoting volunteerism**

Volunteer Centres raise awareness of the power of service, encourage people to volunteer, provide information about volunteerism and recognize the contribution of volunteers. Some examples include celebrating National Volunteer Week and conducting volunteer fairs.

❖ **building capacity for effective local volunteering**

Volunteer Centres help voluntary sector organizations, and other groups and individuals that work with volunteers, do a better job recruiting, managing and retaining volunteers. Some examples include offering training programs, one to one consultations, and providing support to organizations that work with volunteers.

❖ **providing leadership on issues relating to volunteerism**

Volunteer Centres serve as a convener for the community and a catalyst for action. They work through local partnerships and collaborations with various groups and organizations, government, schools, and community leaders to identify needs and mobilize volunteer response. Some examples include speaking on behalf of volunteers, convening or participating on committees & collaborations, and advising volunteers of community needs.

❖ **connecting people with opportunities to serve**

Volunteer Centres provide people with easy access to a wide variety of opportunities to connect to their community through service. Some examples include targeting programs for special populations, offering recruitment and referral services, and managing direct services involving volunteers.

¹ Under the *Income Tax Act*, qualified donees are organizations that can issue official donation receipts for gifts that individuals and corporations make to them (including municipalities). For full description see: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/csp/csp-q01-e.html>