

## RESOURCE DOCUMENT FOR VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

### 1. Rationale

Filling out the Volunteer Role Description thoroughly and accurately is a crucial step in creating a safe, effective, and satisfying experience for volunteers.

1. **Clarity of Responsibilities.** When each volunteer role is clearly defined, employees and volunteers understand the scope of duties and responsibilities.
2. **Risk Management and Safety.** By identifying potential risks, your team can perform a proper risk assessment and avoid placing volunteers in areas of high risk.
3. **Consistency Across Roles.** Having a single, well-structured template for volunteer roles ensures that everyone follows the same best practices regardless of location
4. **Compliance and Accountability.** It must be demonstrated that each volunteer role has been reviewed from a risk perspective and that appropriate policies were referenced.

### 2. How to Use and Fill-out the Document Properly

Below are the main sections from the Volunteer Role Description, each with a suggested title and expanded details on how to fill them out. These instructions will help you capture all necessary information thoroughly.

#### 1. Defining the Purpose of the Role

##### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Establishes how the volunteer role supports the team's overall mission and strategic goals.
- Serves as the role summary that volunteer applicants or staff can review.

##### *What to Include*

- **Key Function:** A concise statement of the role's primary objective.
- **Mission Alignment:** An explanation of how this volunteer position furthers the team's mission (e.g., providing community support, increasing literacy, enriching recreational programs).

##### *Tips for Completion*

- Use clear, action-oriented language (e.g., "to support," "to coordinate," "to enhance").

## **2. Detailing Duties and Activities**

### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Outlines what tasks or role a volunteer will perform, enabling a clear understanding of daily responsibilities and expectations.

### *What to Include*

- List of Tasks: Bullet out major tasks (e.g., organizing materials, greeting clients, maintaining records).

### *Tips for Completion*

- Be detailed but concise; enough information for clarity, but not so much that it becomes overwhelming.
- Ensure role is clearly differentiated from any employee position
- Avoid use of the words work, working, job description, job, contract  
Instead use words like volunteering/helping/supporting/giving time, role description/volunteering advertisement, role/activity/task, volunteer agreement.

## **3. Identifying the Clients or People Served**

### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Ensures volunteers understand who they are helping and why.
- Encourages sensitivity and professionalism when engaging with different clients.

### *What to Include*

- Demographics or Key Characteristics: Age groups, backgrounds, or special considerations (e.g., seniors, youth, newcomers).

### *Tips for Completion*

- Be mindful of privacy. Only include relevant information.

## **4. Describing the Location or Setting**

### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Provides clarity on where the volunteer will work (e.g., a recreation room, gym, office, or field site).
- Prepares the volunteer for environmental considerations (e.g., outdoor conditions, shared office space).

### *What to Include*

- Physical Environment: Indoor/outdoor, specific facilities (e.g., front desk, program room).

### *Tips for Completion*

- Indicate whether the environment is barrier free or has barriers that may limit access.
- Note any special requirements (e.g., long periods of standing, exposure to weather).

## **5. Outlining the Time Commitment**

### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Sets clear expectations on the amount of time volunteers are being asked to contribute, which helps with scheduling and planning.

*What to Include*

- Duration and Frequency: How many hours per day/week/month, or whether the role is project-based.

## **6. Defining Supervision, Training, and Orientation**

*Why This Section Is Important*

- Supports volunteer success by outlining the level of oversight and guidance they can expect.

*What to Include*

- Supervisor or Contact Person: Name, title, and contact information for the individual responsible for direct supervision.
- Training Requirements: Mandatory courses or workshops (e.g., safety training, orientation to procedures).
- Onboarding Process: How and when orientation is delivered

*Tips for Completion*

- Clearly state who volunteers should contact for questions or concerns.

## **7. Adding Other Relevant Details**

*Why This Section Is Important*

- Provides room for unique or additional information not covered, ensuring no important detail is overlooked.

## **8. Risk Assessment of Volunteer Role**

*Why This Section Is Important*

- Ensure all aspects of the volunteer role have been considered for risk assessment.
- Identifies potential risks, outlines what actions to take with appropriate precautions and which actions to avoid altogether.

*What to Include*

- Identify the risks
- A hazard is anything that can cause harm, a risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard.
  - **Hazards to consider**
    - Display screen equipment – level of use, comfort of volunteer
    - Electrical equipment – visual checks, routine maintenance
    - Fire – means of escape, fire alarm, storage, smoking
    - Slips, trips, falls – maintenance, housekeeping, training
    - Lone working – checking-in procedures, emergency contact numbers
    - Violence or aggression – from members of the public
    - Adverse weather conditions – extreme heat, storms

- Volunteer comfort – adequate breaks
- Wellbeing – does the volunteer need emotional support in their role?
- Analyze the risks by scoring the likelihood of them happening and the potential impact.
  - List the additional actions needed to reduce the risk further.
  - Rescore the likelihood and potential impact of each risk with the controls in place.
    - If the risk is not adequately controlled, then include a list of further controls or precautions required.
    - Record who is responsible for each risk and when.
    - Set regular intervals to review the risk assessment for the role.

#### *Tips for Completion*

- Consult with managers, coordinators, or a safety officer to ensure a thorough risk assessment.
- Keep language clear and constructive, focusing on transfer of risk.

## 9. Policy Considerations

### *Why This Section Is Important*

- Policies provide a framework that guides decision-making and aligns volunteer actions with enterprise standards.

## 3. Best Practices for Completing the Volunteer Role Description

- **Gather Necessary Information Beforehand.** Collaborate with relevant team members to gather detailed job responsibilities, risk factors, and policies before filling out the template.
- **Use Clear, Inclusive Language.** Write in plain language that is easy for everyone to understand, including volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- **Review for Completeness.** Once you fill out each section, double-check to ensure no crucial information is missing, particularly in areas of risk, policy, and training.
- **Keep the Document Updated.** Roles and policies may evolve over time. Revisit the document regularly, especially if procedures, legal requirements, or volunteer duties change.
- **Ensure Accessibility.** Make the final version easy to access, whether it's digital (in a shared drive or volunteer portal) or physical (posted at the volunteer office).
- **Provide Ongoing Support.** Refer volunteers to the role descriptions document during onboarding, training, and whenever they need clarification on any aspect of their role.

For questions, please contact the National Volunteer Office at [volunteer@cfmws.com](mailto:volunteer@cfmws.com).