A Guide for Cultural Competency Application of the Canadian Code

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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July 2009

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Background

The evolving diversity of Canada has significant implications and provides important opportunities for the voluntary sector. Organizations should ensure their volunteer pool is reflective of the diversity of their communities. This reflection will provide great advantage in maximizing their appeal and effectiveness within their communities. Prioritizing efforts to attract candidates from a diversity of communities will deepen organizational knowledge and skills for outreach, policy and program development.

Volunteering is seen as an important opportunity to particularly assist Newcomer communities from around the world in developing and enhancing their cultural and professional integration into Canadian society and workplace. This is an opportunity for the voluntary sector that can then benefit from the usually strong professional and technical skills that Newcomer volunteers bring to organizations. It is important that the Sector ensures opportunities for volunteer involvement are accessible and barrier free.

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (the Code) is a tool that can be used to great advantage to achieving this meaningful end.

Purpose

This Guide is designed to assist managers of volunteers, in organizations of all sizes and levels of resources, to incorporate a Cultural Competence perspective in their application of the Code. It reframes the Code as a tool to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of volunteer programs, which in turn, will lead to diverse and stronger organizations that are responsive to Newcomers, in particular, and the community at large.

Organizations with limited financial or human resources, for example where one employee has the role of managing volunteers along with other roles, may feel overwhelmed by the task of implementing the full scope of the Code. This Guide provides options for beginning to think about some key principles that are integral to any volunteer programming. Adoption of the Code indicates a strong commitment to move towards the implementation of the principles and twelve standards embedded in the Code.

This Guide provides basic strategies for organizations at the beginning stages of better engaging, integrating and reflecting the diversity of their stakeholder communities.

The Code

As a national leader, Volunteer Canada strives to ensure that volunteer efforts are promoted, recognized, supported and safeguarded. The original Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement was launched in December 2000 as a kickoff to the International Year of Volunteers (2001). It was targeted at Boards of Directors of voluntary organizations and intended to promote discussion about the role volunteers play in their organizations.

Joint efforts with Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) lead to the revision of the Code (2006). The goal was to enhance the ability of organizations to improve their existing practices and continue to ensure that solid foundations are in place for involving volunteers in their organizations.

The Code is intended to be a roadmap that proposes ways to strategically integrate volunteer involvement into the organization. It helps leaders in the organization understand the value and role of volunteers. The Code is designed to set the stage for organizations to consider how volunteers are engaged and supported to assist the organization achieve its mission.

The Code supports organizations in:

- Communicating the values and benefits of volunteer involvement
- Providing a framework for decision making, taking into account organizational values and guiding principles
- Developing standards for involving volunteers in meaningful ways to ensure the successful integration of volunteers

This Guide intends to equip managers of volunteers with tools to integrate a Cultural Competence perspective in their considerations for engaging and supporting volunteer involvement.

How to Use the Guide

For each Standard of the Code, key implications of the Cultural Competence principles for volunteer programs are presented in table format, a scenario is then provided to illustrate opportunities for implementing the standard and then examples of practical applications for implementing the standard in a culturally competent way are suggested. Organizations with limited financial or human resources are encouraged to at minimum consider implementing the first suggested practical application.

Key Terms & Definitions

Organizations using this Guide should be clear about the following key terms when considering integrating a Cultural Competence perspective. There are different variations of definitions and usage of these terms by different people in different contexts and regions as they are not standardized. They are appreciatively compiled from several sources with the acknowledgment that they will change over time as the thinking, attitudes, and discourse around related issues evolve.

However it is important to note that the definitions provided here speak to the usage of these terms in this Guide, and they are intended to support the use of the Code through a Cultural Competency perspective.

Newcomers

Persons coming from another country, or settling into a community that is new to them.

Volunteering is often seen as a means of getting involved and becoming more established in the community – gaining Canadian/local "work" experience and building a stronger network while doing something positive to help others. Volunteering is also seen as an opportunity to practice and improve English language skills.

Settlement and Newcomer Service Organizations

Organizations that help Newcomers with a variety of settlement services such as: immigration information, counselling, referrals, job searches, assistance in completing forms, and housing support.

Counsellors, co-coordinators, and other staff at these organizations can connect clients to non-profit/charitable organizations and associated volunteer opportunities. This enables them to gain Canadian experience, references, enhance their communication skills and networks.

Diversity

Diversity is a broad term that refers to the variety of differences among people. Often used within the context of culture, education, organizations or workplaces, it is used to refer to differences among individuals and groups.

Diversity is commonly understood in terms of dimensions that include, but are not limited to: race, age, place of origin, religion, ancestry, skin colour, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, dis/ability, marital, parental or family status, same-sex partnership status, gender identity, creed, educational background, literacy level, geographic location, income level, cultural tradition and work experience.

Adapted from Inclusive Community Organizations: A Tool Kit (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2004). This definition focuses on what is meant by "diversity" and not on the models/frameworks to address diversity, such as Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression (ARAO); Cultural Competency; or Cultural Sensitivity.

Culture

Culture is the way a group of people do things together. It refers to the shared language, values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, or institutions of a group of people. A group of people refers simply to more than one person. Any two people together have a culture.

Culture, in this context, refers not only to issues of ethno-racial and linguistic backgrounds but also to the range of other communities and cultures in which individuals may function either voluntarily or involuntarily. *(Central East (Whitby) Mental Health Task Force.)*

Culture offers people (and groups and organizations) a design for life or "a system of informal rules about how people should behave most of the time." *(Cross et al)*

Culture provides a "mind map" or a way of interpreting and shaping situations and environments.

Anti-oppression

A commitment to anti-oppression practices is a key component of the definition of Cultural Competence. This requires vigilance to address barriers that have been systemically created through imbalanced power relationships between groups in society based on race, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, class and other elements of diversity.

It is important that organizations are mindful about not reinforcing or maintaining these experiences of oppression. For example, using arbitrary screening criteria such as levels of language skills, Canadian experience or overly zealous expectations about hearing, mobility or sight that are non-essential requirements for the volunteer position create systemic barriers.

Cultural Competence

While making efforts to ensure wide systemic Cultural Competence it is essential to be aware and mindful of the implications for individual approaches towards working with diversity. Individually, Cultural Competence can be understood as a dynamic process of framing assumptions, knowledge and meanings from another individual's background and experience which is different from our own. Cultural Competence looks beyond "culture as ethnicity" to explore the complexities of individual cultural identities.

Cultural Competence builds on cultural sensitivity, the concept that knowing as much as possible about specific cultures enhances ones ability to effectively work across differences. Exploring the knowledge, values and skills that are key in responding effectively to bridge differences regardless of knowledge of specific cultures is critical because:

- Culture is complex, dynamic, not static and therefore not always a reliable definer/indicator of peoples' beliefs and needs
- Each individual is an intersection/combination of multiple cultural identities so knowing one aspect only gives us part of their story
- It is not possible to know everything about every culture and individual even when we have done research and have experiences
- The most reliable approach is not to make assumptions but to solicit from individuals the meaning and impact of culture on their beliefs and needs
- While culture is more than just about race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, dis/ability, or sexual orientation, a strong anti-oppression analysis is required to acknowledge and address the pervasive differential impact of systemic barriers and treatment in society

Applied systemically, Cultural Competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals to work effectively with diversity.

Cultural Competence acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of the following principles:

- Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity
- Fostering human resources that are reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities
- Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated
- Valuing cultural differences
- Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers
- Practicing self-awareness and self-reflection
- Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability

It is through the lens of this systemic understanding of Cultural Competence that this Guide is framed. Namely, to propose ways in which the Code can be used to promote these principles and enhance the engagement of Newcomers and all members of diverse communities.

Cultural Competence is a developmental process that evolves over a period of time.

Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum. Explicit processes that facilitate and support common understanding, compliance and implementation are important to articulate and reinforce on an ongoing basis.

Applying the Code through the lens of Cultural Competence

This Guide is meant to support the implementation of the Code. The principles of Cultural Competence are consistent with the Code's intent to "not only strengthen…volunteer programs, but to strengthen the capacity of the organization to meet both its mandate and the needs of the community." The Code's values relate to contributing to a just and civil society and responding to community needs and its principles of recognizing the rights and value of volunteers.

In identifying the best practices for involving volunteers the Code highlights the awareness of trends that relate to the demographics of the clients, volunteers and the community. Similarly, the implementation of the Code through review and adoption of the Organizational Standards Checklist is the basis for a Culturally Competent volunteer program.

This Guide will focus on framing these standards through a Cultural Competence lens. It is meant to enhance and provide added value to the very comprehensive description of the Standards already outlined in the Code. Consistent with the Code, it is not meant to be a definitive guide, but rather suggested strategies to inspire further discussion and considerations about how a diversity of volunteers can be more effectively engaged and supported.

Note there will be a degree of overlap and repetitions as the Cultural Competence implications for implementation may be similar between the various Code standards. This, in fact, illustrates the consistency of the principles of Cultural Competency and the Standards of the Code.

Glossary

The following terms are used in the principles of Cultural Competence to promote and better understand the associated implications of each definition.

ACCESSIBILITY

- The degree to which a device, service, environment, is accessible by as many people as possible. Accessibility can be viewed as the "ability to access" the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity. Accessibility is often used to focus on: people with disabilities and their right of access to entities
- People whose first language differs from the dominant language to have interpretive services or translated materials
- Alternate arrangements for the faith practices of people whose differ from the dominant region

EQUITY VS EQUALITY

While achieving equality is a key goal of Cultural Competence, treating people the same based on the assumption that everyone is the same and have the same needs does not address historic systemic oppression that may have created barriers to access for members of marginalized communities.

Equity recognizes that in order to achieve real equality it is important to take into account the different histories, experiences and needs of different groups which may mean sometimes treating people differently based on their different needs in order to ensure their equality of access for the disabled.

Equity is the process for truly achieving equality for everyone.

INCLUSIVENESS / INCLUSION

The principles of inclusion involve a clear recognition that society is not homogenous and embraces the perception of diversity as enriching rather than "a problem." It requires the recognition that ideas and practices solely based on or modeled after the norms of dominant culture or society is what usually results in experiences of exclusion, discrimination and barriers.

Organizational context is comprised of a strategic process to eliminating barriers to access and implementing change, based on the acceptance that many people do not have access to services, jobs and positions of leadership due to societal and systemic factors rather than personal deficiencies. This process includes the active and meaningful involvement of people who are reflective of diverse groups and particularly newcomer immigrant communities to purposefully define and shape the culture within which people are being included.

SELF AWARENESS & SELF REFLECTION

Self-reflection and self-awareness provide the basis for Cultural Competence.

Self-reflection is the active and conscious process of inquiry into one's thoughts, feelings and actions, leading to increased self-awareness. This can happen through consideration of feedback from others, meditation, journal writing, dialogue and many creative endeavours.

Self-awareness includes recognition of personality, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes and how lived experience to date has influenced those things.

SYSTEMIC BIAS & BARRIERS

Institutional policies procedures and practices that result in the systemic exclusion or promotion of particular groups of individuals are systemic barriers. Systemic discrimination regularly relates to an entrenched recurring practice rather than to an isolated act of discrimination, resulting in barriers to equality of opportunity for members of marginalized groups. Intent to discriminate may or may not be the case.

Standard 1: Mission-based Approach

The board of directors, leadership volunteers and staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose and mission.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Adopt statement of commitment and ensure recruitment and assignment process is barrier free
Fostering human resources that are reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities.	Ensure recruitment is accessible to a wide diversity of communities through community specific promotions and media
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated.	Ensure implementation of related policy and training as well as timely addressing of oppressive behaviours
Valuing cultural differences.	Ensure an environment and practices that affirm diversity
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers.	Ensure implementation of related policy and systemic evaluation of practices and processes to ensure unbiased access
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection.	Model and encourage self reflective practice and progressive educational focused feedback
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability.	Model expected behaviour

SCENARIO

The organization publically states its commitment to diversity and ensures that the mission, vision and value statements reflect this in clear and consistent language. It would also demonstrate commitment to the value of all volunteers with the adoption of the Code by the Board on behalf of the organization.

The organization has Human Resources policies and procedures reflective of Cultural Competency principles that are written and implemented for both staff and volunteers.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum have a clear inclusive statement of commitment to the involvement of volunteers that reflect the diversity of membership or communities served included in the mission, vision or values/principles of the organization.
- The Board of Directors is trained in the Cultural Competency as part of organizational and Board orientation. At a minimum, the person responsible for the coordination of the agency's volunteers will review the Code and this Guide with the Board and all of its members.
- The Board and senior staff allocate resources for the ongoing training and implementation of principles and values of Cultural Competency
- The Board ensures Culturally Competent operational HR policies and procedures are current and implemented.

Standard 2: Human Resources

Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources team. The organization has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mission, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support the volunteer program, and establishing policies for effective management.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure the role and process for volunteer involvement is clear and consistently applied
Fostering human resources that are reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities.	Ensure accessibility and inclusion considered for a diversity of communities including accommodation needs of the dis/abled
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated.	Ensure staff have resources and training to ensure their effective unbiased inclusion of a diversity of volunteers
Valuing cultural differences.	Ensure consideration of different cultural perspectives and needs
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers.	Facilitate participation of a diversity of volunteers and their input at all levels and address related systemic barriers
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection.	Encourage individual and team reflection among staff and volunteers

SCENARIO

The organization experiences the challenge of integrating volunteers across the areas of service delivery. Many staff see volunteers as good/useful for fundraising events, but can't really seem them participating in other areas that would require skills similar to staff. Furthermore, they are too busy to train or supervise volunteers, so would rather not.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that wherever they are doing strategic or program planning, this planning reflect implications for the participation of volunteers from the diversity of communities served.
- The diverse skills and experiences of volunteers can be highlighted with staff, and reviewed individually with each staff person as appropriate, so t the added value of utilizing the talents of the volunteers is seen as a support to the work instead of an addition to workload.
- Staff job descriptions can be reviewed to identify tasks that could be done by a volunteer; this is not to say that unpopular components of the job are dumped to the volunteer, rather an effective reallocation of task and responsibility.
- Training and supervising volunteers provides the opportunity to increase self esteem and enhance communications skills. It can be framed as professional development and contributing to team building.

Standard 3: Program Planning and Policies

Policies and procedures are adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Implement policies such as employment equity and disability accommodation, etc… and organizational planning to address barriers
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Implement recruitment and program policies that increase reflection and enhance the organizational experience of a diversity of volunteers
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Ensure anti-harassment/discrimination policies are in place and up to date, communicated and consistently adhered to
Valuing cultural differences	Ensure diversity related policies and practices
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Ensure anti-oppression policies consistent with law, planning and expectations in place to support real change to any systemic biases
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Policies support progressive educational focused feedback
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Ensure Code of Conduct policy with related expectations and consequences

SCENARIO

In an effort to minimize risk, the organization has a policy that all volunteers, including the Board, must have a Police Records Check completed and provide references from people who have known them for at least three years with one of the references being employment related.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that they have human resources and anti-harassment/discrimination policies compliant with legislation.
- This policy decision is not based on the volunteer position description, which it should always be. It is the tasks of the position that determine the level of risk and the appropriate administrative response.
- Response to the involvement of the Police can act as a barrier/deterrent to potential volunteers from police states/countries.
- Newcomers may not have been in the country, or community, for three years and may also not have a local work related reference. However, the potential volunteer may have the skills and experience that will support the organization and could shadow a current volunteer to provide a "living" reference.

Standard 4: Program Administration

The organization has a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for the volunteer program.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Job description includes explicit expectation to ensure this happens and recruitment prioritise these skills
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Opportunity to reflect diversity of the community in this position and also mandate position to increase reflection of volunteer pool
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Individual in the position creates and maintains an environment that makes it clear that violations will be taken seriously
Valuing cultural differences	Individual in the position promotes an affirming environment
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Individual in the position ensures practices of the program are unbiased and provides human rights related training for volunteers
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Individual in the position models related practices
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Individual in the position models related behaviour

SCENARIO

The Coordinator of Volunteers for a Community Centre has gone on maternity leave for one year. The Executive Director decides to have the Receptionist take on these duties instead of filling the position with another person. The current receptionist has not supervised before but knows the operations of the Community Centre very well. An unexpected large data entry project arises for the receptionist on the same day that two volunteers call in sick for their shift. The receptionist tries to cope with finding last minute replacements to keep the daily programs running and complete the data-entry project within the deadline of the end of business day.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that anyone responsible for volunteer involvement or otherwise filling in for an existing Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers at any time must meet some key basic requirements. Where resources allow, accurate and complete job description should be created for the Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers which includes clearly defined sections on qualifications, responsibilities, expectations, cultural competence, level of supervision and lines of authority.
- The position of Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers should not be an 'add-on' to an existing position description or be presumed to be easily filled by another staff. The position should be written as a complete entity with the inclusion of the organization's mission and core value statements.

Standard 4: Program Administration

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS CONTINUED

- A qualified individual should be recruited and hired and should receive a copy of a current position description. In addition, knowledge of the performance review process, past and current budgets and the support system of the organization should be shared during the Orientation session. Hiring practices should reflect the organization's commitment to diversity and the philosophy of 'Cultural Competence'.

- The Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers should attend or receive minutes from appropriate meetings at the organization which will impact the involvement of volunteers. Input should be solicited from the Coordinator/Manager before decisions are made which will affect the engagement/participation of volunteers.

- The Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers needs to have access to training and professional development in all areas of volunteer management including Cultural Competence.

- A Coordinator of Volunteers must have experience in supervision and be properly trained in the area of discipline and dismissal in order to deal effectively with serious Human Rights complaints and similar issues. It is imperative that the Coordinator/Manager of Volunteers be familiar with all the organization's policies and procedures regarding volunteer involvement in order to follow due process.

Standard 5: Volunteer Assignments

Volunteer assignments address the mission or purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect the abilities, needs and backgrounds of the volunteer and the organization.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure relevant accommodation provided as needed for equitable participation
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Opportunities identified that can engage the diversity of skills such as language or cultural experience and meet wider need
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Assignments are fairly assigned and volunteers are free from harassment and not participating in harassment when in their role
Valuing cultural differences	Engage diversity of cultural experiences and skills
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Assess and ensure job descriptions are unbiased and barrier free, particularly for the disabled
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Encourage ongoing volunteer self reflection evaluation
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Ensure related evaluation assesses for this

SCENARIO

The Coordinator of Volunteers contacts the Fundraising Manager regarding the assignment of a highly skilled new volunteer who is deaf to assist with the putting together of packages for an upcoming fundraiser. The Fundraising Manager insists that the volunteer was not suitable, as there would be a need to communicate with the other volunteers on a precise "assembly line" process of packaging. There was not the time to adjust the established system.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure an inclusive/barrier free environment so that assignments can be carried out effectively by all volunteers.
- Assignments should be based on the essential requirements/qualifications. For example, a role such as stuffing envelopes may not require fluency in a particular language or advanced level of education. Accommodation should be provided through flexibility when the assignment may need more time or supports a volunteer with a disability.
- A position analysis checklist should be developed/adapted and an analysis carried out on all positions taking into consideration the tasks, location of position, time requirements, physical task demands, cognitive factors, environmental conditions.
- Organizations determine what resources (internally and externally) are available that provide support for volunteers to enhance language, communication, adaptability/safety and networking skills to help enrich their assignment performance skills.

Standard 5: Volunteer Assignments

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS CONTINUED

- A "mentoring" program could be established within the agency that would partner a Newcomer with a longer-service volunteer to provide support when being assigned to a new position or being presented with a new/additional assignment.
- A "skills bank" should be established either by manual or electronic means in order to track the skills and interests of volunteers so that they can be called upon and utilized in the best way possible to maintain interest and keep them challenged in a positive way.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of recognized/important celebrations/holidays and religious days of various cultural groups that could impact volunteer availability and coordinate a "back-up" accommodation plan or alternate schedule for volunteer positions as required to meet agency volunteer shift/scheduling needs.
- Succession planning should be built into assignments so that continuous learning through training and development can be part of the process for all volunteers.
- Develop Measurement Tools that track progress, setbacks, outcomes in relation to volunteer morale, development and client/agency satisfaction, etc.

Standard 6: Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out and involve a diverse volunteer base.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure recruitment strategies are broad based and accessible and are based on skills
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Audit volunteer pool to assess gaps in representation and recruitment addresses these gaps through purposeful strategies
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Ensure the environment into which you are recruiting a diversity of communities is prepared to welcome and include them
Valuing cultural differences	Recruitment message should reflect diversity
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Ensure recruitment process is unbiased and open. Ensure that candidates are assessed for their ability to be unbiased
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Be mindful of own personal biases about who will make an ideal volunteer
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Commit and be vigilant to address any personal biases or barriers

SCENARIO

An organization arranges mandatory training for all volunteers on a Saturday. This discriminates against any volunteer with appropriate background experience and skills requirements for fulfilling the role if their religion's Sabbath is on a Saturday or if they work on that day. This regularly happens when meetings are scheduled with any stakeholders.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that their promotional and communication mechanisms such as brochures and website depict and relate to a diversity of communities and that there are links to other appropriate resources or sites to reflect agency's commitment to cultural competency.
- Review a diversity calendar whenever choosing a date and time for training, meeting or event.
- Conduct a position analysis to determine full understanding of all aspects of the position and the essential requirements/qualifications For example, consider level of English language skills requirements, schedules/shifts.
- Review Position Descriptions to ensure they reflect the essential requirements of the position and make adjustments as required.
- Accessible language and vocabulary level should be used for all position description, postings, advertising (flyers, media), presentation/display outreach so that there is a clear understanding of the role, requirements and expectations.
- Review screening procedures to ensure they meet human rights requirements and make necessary adjustments.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS CONTINUED

- Assess all components of the Recruitment Outreach Program of the agency to ensure there is a plan in place to reach diverse communities, build awareness among staff and address need for their support.
- Make effective community connections in order to establish and build relationships with appropriate organizations and multi-cultural media personnel.
- Develop Measurement Tools - various resources, tools and data bases that can be utilized to track success.

Standard 7: Screening

A clearly communicated screening process is adopted and consistently applied by the organization.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	The screening process should be fairly based on the essential job related skills
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Where relevant screening processes should be sensitive to differences such as language and understandings of volunteerism that may be culture based
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Articulate and assess for related behaviours and attitudes
Valuing cultural differences	Use diverse screening strategies and tools
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Ensure screening tools and instruments are unbiased and that those applying them are also trained to be mindful of potential for bias
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Articulate and assess for this as a competency among all volunteers
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Commit and be vigilant to address any personal biases or barriers

SCENARIO

Seniors in a retirement home routinely have one-on-one friendly visits. Twice per week, a Newcomer who plays the piano leads a song-fest. In the common room, a Newcomer teaches a senior to use the internet. There are a number of volunteers who provide other services that are not highlighted in this scenario.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that screening steps are consistently based on the elements of the position, not the applicant. This should be made clear to all applicants.
- High risk positions require a Police Records Check (PRC), which is only available to Newcomers who are citizens, landed immigrants or who have been in Canada for a required number of years.
- PRC consent forms, and the request to have a police records check done at all, can be intimidating and may be particularly so for someone new to Canada from a country where security forces were experienced as repressive and abusive.
- To reduce barriers to involving Newcomers or other people new to volunteering in programs where most positions are high risk, modify one or more elements of the position to reduce the risk. In addition, allow modification of the screening protocol.

Standard 8: Orientation and Training

Each volunteer is provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and practices, including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. Each volunteer receives training customized to the volunteer assignment and the individual needs of the volunteer.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Provide training in a diversity of formats such as e-learning online, etc…
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Consider holding joint trainings with organizations that serve the communities you want to attract to your volunteer pool
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Provide ongoing anti-harassment, anti-oppression, human rights, and cultural competence related training
Valuing cultural differences	Reflect diversity in trainers and materials
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Provide ongoing training and awareness opportunities to enhance ability to recognize and address biases
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Training should reinforce and enhance self reflective practice
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Build in expectations for personal development as part of ongoing evaluation

SCENARIOS

The organization runs its regular Volunteer Orientation session for a variety of volunteer positions that are available. One of the positions is with a "Meals on Wheels" Program for assistance in the accounting and budget work. A hired volunteer who works as a corporate accountant doesn't understand why he needs to attend training sessions since he already has education and experience related to position.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure all new volunteers know and understand through accessible and barrier free orientation and training processes the explicit details of their role/position, including: requirements, boundaries, reporting relationships and process and other relevant elements of the volunteer program.
- Make sure that language is not a barrier during orientation and training sessions or in orientation and training materials. Check for euphemisms. Clear language will benefit all volunteers.
- Build in opportunity for feedback from participants to see that information and/or instructions have been understood.
- Invite existing volunteers to mentor new volunteers.
- Use buddy system between trainees during orientation and training process.
- Introduce, and include in sessions where possible, staff who will supervise volunteer work assignments of new volunteers.

Standard 9: Supervision

Volunteers receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and are provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure supervisory format, process and tools are accessible and unbiased
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Solicit feedback re volunteer experience of inclusiveness or barriers to inform ongoing evaluation and development
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Include evaluation and feedback re expectations of non-oppressive behaviours and conduct consistent with code of conduct
Valuing cultural differences	Ensure supervisory format, process and tools are culturally inclusive
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Regularly evaluate and update supervisory format, process and tools to ensure they are barrier free
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Provide guidelines and tools to assist ongoing self awareness and reflection
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Evaluate feedback re adherence and contribution to all cultural competence principles

SCENARIO

A new volunteer is helping to look after a community garden. One of the community residents, who uses a walker, with whom a good rapport has been built gives the volunteer money to make a quick trip to the near by store to pick some personal items. The Manager of Volunteers arranges an evaluation interview, but the volunteer who is taking ESL classes confuses the translation of the word evaluation and doesn't come because of the assumption of having done something wrong and the expectation of being fired.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure clarity about what supervision means – it is a supportive 'check-in', not a 'checking-out' based on suspicion or mistrust and clearly communicate this to all volunteers.
- It may be necessary to adapt the process to suit the needs and comfort level of a diversity of volunteers, e.g. personal 'check-in' instead of phone call or email.
- Group discussion may be a useful way to present general concerns, to get feedback on problems being experienced or to give praise.
- Do not make assumptions that 'no news is good news'. Check in on a regular basis.
- Be clear about what happens next if a problem arises.
- Provide support an organizational climate/culture that encourages problem/questions sharing before small problems become large issues.

Standard 10: Recognition

The contributions of volunteers are consistently acknowledged with formal and informal methods of recognition.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure criteria for recognition is clear and consistently and fairly applied
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Review and provide a variety of mechanisms for recognition, i.e. internal peer recognition, specific community recognition, etc.
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Include specific recognition of contribution to respectful climate and/or include as key criteria in general recognition program
Valuing cultural differences	Consider different cultural values/perspectives re recognition and integrate accordingly
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Regularly evaluate and recognition program to ensure it is consistent, inclusive and fair
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Include as criteria for recognition
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Include as criteria for recognition

SCENARIO

The organization has traditionally had volunteers that were retirees. Their annual recognition party was held on a weekday afternoon. As the volunteer base became more diversified, some volunteers were either working, attending ESL classes until late afternoon, or who had young children. They were unable to attend. Seeing that many were absent, the Manager of Volunteers polled the group on their preference for the time of the activity. A new time was set and volunteers were able to meet each other, interact as well as benefit from the recognition the organization was offering.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum examine and ensure your current practices around recognition are inclusive. Is it possible that any of these may be inappropriate to offer as a gift to certain cultures (i.e.: bottle of wine) or does the timing of recognition events inadvertently exclude certain people from attending?
- Effective recognition is based on individual taste not necessarily on cultural origin. When looking to recognize a volunteer, base your choices on what you know the individual would appreciate and not on possible perceptions on what you feel people from that community enjoy.
- Informal and regular acknowledgment such as saying hello to the volunteer and thank you at the end of the volunteer shift go a long way in making the person feel appreciated and connected to the organization.

Standard 11: Record Management

Standardized documentation and records management practices are followed and in line with relevant legislation.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure consistency of data collected and stored
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Opportunity to confidentially and collect voluntary data to track and enhance reflection and representation of diversity of communities
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Opportunity to collect voluntary data on experiences of discrimination or harassment to help address issues
Valuing cultural differences	Mindful of different experiences with sharing personal information
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Ensure adherence to legislative guidelines, i.e. privacy, voluntary submission of identity information and volunteer access to their information
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Administrators of data collection instruments to ensure unbiased collection
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Administrators of data collection instruments to ensure unbiased collection

SCENARIO

The organization has been using the same volunteer handbook for the last several years. It was outdated in many respects, with outdated statistics, services that were no longer offered and omitted new procedures important to volunteers. All the images of volunteers illustrated in the handbook were not representational of the current volunteer base and not conducive to the recruitment of a diversity of volunteers. The Manager of Volunteers put together a committee made up of volunteers to revamp and update the manual. They updated the information, the images as well as a mission that included their commitment to a vibrant and diverse volunteer team.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure that their records and forms use inclusive language and images.
- Review application forms, agreements, and volunteer handbooks, position descriptions for any unnecessarily complicated language or jargon that may be inaccessible to someone who is learning English or who has lower levels of literacy.
- Review and explain content and the purpose of any document that must be signed by volunteer. (i.e.: A Confidentiality Agreement)
- Include mission statements about commitments to diversity, accommodation and respect of Human Rights legislation on documents such as application forms, agreements etc.

Standard 12: Evaluation

The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the organization are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

Cultural Competence Principles	Implications
Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity	Ensure goals for volunteer performance is fair and accommodation considered
Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities	Ensure volunteer involvement goals include engaging a diversity of communities and relevant feedback from said communities
Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated	Evaluation of Volunteer involvement should also reflect experiences of the climate or environment of the organization
Valuing cultural differences	Ensure evaluation assesses experiences of cultural inclusivity
Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers	Solicit feedback re experiences of barriers and recommendations to address them
Practising self-awareness and self-reflection	Include in individual volunteer evaluations
Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability	Include in individual volunteer evaluations

SCENARIO

As part of its yearly evaluation of the volunteer program, the organization asked volunteers to complete a survey on the Volunteer Program. It included such questions as "In what ways do you think the program could be more inclusive?" "Have you ever personally felt offended or excluded due to a process of the volunteer program?" After the results were in, the Manager of Volunteers shared them with the volunteers and had a brainstorming session about how the suggested improvements could be implemented.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Organizations of all sizes and levels of resources should at minimum ensure some process for feedback from volunteers about their experience of volunteering with the organization.
- The success of the volunteer program depends on the understanding by volunteers of its objectives as well as their commitment and participation in attaining them. Share these with the volunteers so that they may see their part in the fulfillment of the mission of the organization.
- Evaluate the diversity of your volunteer team to determine to what degree it is reflective of the organization's client base and the community.

Conclusions

Organizations using this Guide as a starting point for the integration of Newcomer volunteers into programs and the organizational infrastructure are encouraged to consider going beyond this tool in their implementation process. This Guide can particularly assist organizations with limited financial or human resources in critical discussions and considerations for more effectively reflecting, and becoming more fairly inclusive, of the diversity of stakeholders within their communities.

While a specific framework for the voluntary sector has not identified, there are a number of comprehensive toolkits designed for mental health and residential services that are readily transferable.

In particular, the organizational audit tool in Achieving Cultural Competence – A Residential Toolkit for Residential Care Settings, http://www.gov.on.ca/children/graphics/250781.pdf, is a dynamic self-assessment tool designed for Licensed Residential Settings to measure their progress towards cultural competence could be readily adapted.

As the author Bernice Cipparone writes, "Use of the tool enables an organization to create a baseline within a clear framework for gradual progression. Use of the tool should not be considered as a pass or fail experience. Organizations will be in various stages in the area of cultural competence. The objective is to assist the organization in setting goals and identifying areas for growth rather than just merely rating performance."

Other tools to consider:

- Achieving Cultural Competence – Children's Mental Health
- Cultural Competency - *A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS, http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/PDF/Saldana.pdf*

Access current information to complement the contents of this Guide at these two websites:

- Ontario Volunteer Centre Network: www.ovcn.ca
- Volunteer Canada: www.volunteer.ca

Hopefully much of the effort and strategies established by this Guide will basically involve reframing or enhancing how current processes are implemented within programs and the organization.