



# London Environmental Network

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

PART III: ORIENTATION, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

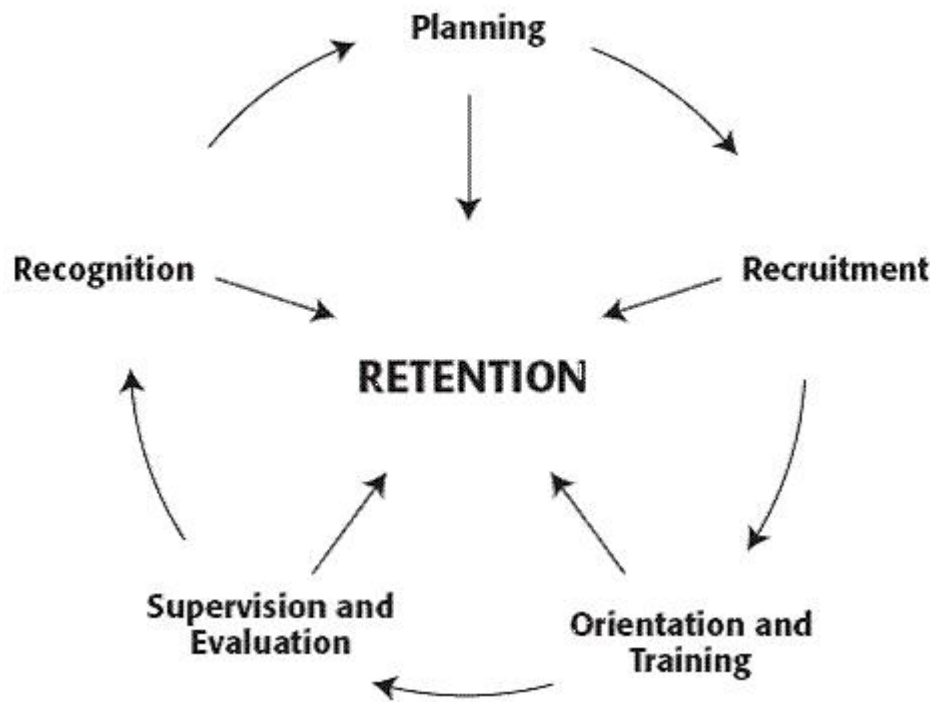
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## Orientation

Following the successful recruitment of volunteers, it is important to ensure that they are well-acquainted with your organization and understand their role in your mission.



*From Community Literacy of Ontario*

This training should be done as soon as possible after the volunteer is brought on board to maintain momentum and help your new volunteers hit the ground running in their positions.

Volunteer orientations can take a number of different forms, ranging from one-on-one meetings with an individual volunteer, to a formal presentation with multiple incoming volunteers present. The orientation style you choose (formal/informal, electronic/in-person) will go a long way in setting the tone for this new volunteer's involvement with your group, as will the timing of the orientation. The format and content of a volunteer orientation will vary depending on the duration and level of responsibility involved in a particular position. When preparing a volunteer to begin a long-term volunteer position, it is important that they also have a thorough understanding of exactly what your organization does as a whole.

**Volunteers are your ambassadors in the community!**

If a volunteer has a positive experience with your organization, they will share it with their friends and family and build more interest in the work you do. Ensure that volunteers are armed with correct information when spreading the word about your group by taking time at your orientation to **outline your mission and vision**.

Other important information to cover at a volunteer orientation could include:

- Volunteer procedures (*eg. Sign-in, hour tracking, breaks*)
- Programs and services offered by your group
- How your volunteer will be supervised and by whom
- Behavioural and performance expectations for all volunteers

Volunteer orientations are also a good time to show volunteers how to work any equipment they will need to use during their duties, and review all associated safety protocol.

Even if your organization is taking place in person, it is helpful to have a Volunteer Orientation Manual that can be given to your volunteers for future reference. See the references below for information about what to include!

## Guides to Creating a Volunteer Orientation Manual

- [Volunteer Centre of Camrose - Creating an Orientation Manual for Volunteers](#)
- [Service Leader.org - Creating a Volunteer Handbook](#)

For one-day volunteer opportunities like special events, we would recommend a brief orientation either one or two days before the event, or the day of the event, prior to the start of the volunteers' shifts. These orientations should include an overview of what your group does in the community, how this event supports that work, as well as role-specific training for tasks volunteers will be doing that day.

## Onboarding

A volunteer orientation is a great time to make sure that you have any paperwork you need from volunteers before they start in their roles.

This could include:

- A volunteer information sheet with their contact information, emergency contacts and any voluntarily-disclosed information about health or accessibility requirements
- A signed confidentiality agreement and Code of Conduct (if applicable)
- Signed liability waivers (if applicable)

When collecting information from volunteers, make sure that your organization has a plan for the safe storage of forms with sensitive information to protect your volunteers' privacy. A locked filing cabinet with restricted access would be ideal.

As your organization grows, it may be worthwhile to develop a Code of Conduct for your volunteers that explains expected standards of behaviour throughout their involvement with your organization. Requirements about confidentiality could be included in this document. Examples of Codes of Conducts are available below for reference.

## Onboarding Templates & Examples

### [Template \(Word Document\) - Volunteer Intake Form](#)

This template includes fields that may be useful when working with a new volunteer, including permission to collect and store their information. This document can be easily modified to fit the needs of your group.

### [Template \(Word Document\) - Liability Release Form](#)

This template would be useful when working with a group of volunteers for a one-time volunteer opportunity like a special event. This template was provided by [Thames Talbot Land Trust](#).

### [Template \(Word Document\) - Confidentiality Agreement](#)

This template would be useful when bringing on a volunteer for a position where they may have access to the personal information of community members, other volunteers or donors. This template was provided by [Thames Talbot Land Trust](#).

## Volunteer Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Liability Release Examples

- [University of Minnesota Centre for Public Health Preparedness- Developing a Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
- [Canadian Cancer Society Nova Scotia Division - Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

## Supervision

When preparing your group members to work with new volunteers, it is important to identify which team members are responsible for supervising which volunteers. Depending on the size of your group, it may be appropriate for your volunteer to have two supervisors: a) the person that supervises them within their role and b) the volunteer manager for your group.

A role-specific supervisor will work with the volunteer closely during all of their shifts, but may not have much interaction with other volunteers within the organization. This person should have the competence and confidence to explain all of the duties and requirements of the position to a volunteer, and be able to support a volunteer in learning the skills needed to be successful in that role.

Even if a volunteer is supervised directly within their role by another group member, the group's volunteer manager will continue to be a general point-of-contact for that volunteer. This relationship will become important if there is ever a conflict between a volunteer and their supervisor. Over the course of a volunteer's involvement, the volunteer manager may choose to check in with the volunteer outside of their shifts, either in person, on the phone or via email to see if they need any additional support within their role, or have any questions about the organization as a whole.

Within supervision, your organization should have a plan for how to track volunteer hours and assess the impact of volunteers on your group's activities. See below for an hour tracking template that can be used for your volunteers.

### [Template \(Word Document\) - Volunteer Hour Tracking](#)

This template can be used to create a volunteer hour tracker that can be used centrally by all volunteers in your organization. Your volunteer manager can refer to this tracking sheet to assess volunteer attendance and productivity, and find out what questions may have arisen for the volunteer when doing independent work.