



## New Canadian Volunteers

Welcome to Fredericton!

We applaud you for considering volunteering in your new community. Volunteering can be an excellent way to learn more about our local culture while sharing your skills with the community. We encourage you to read the following pages to learn more about how you can get involved.

Volunteering can help you providing an opportunity to:

- Meet new people and avoid the feeling isolated.
- Feel welcomed, respected and valued.
- Understand our local culture and society.
- Practice your English and French language skills.
- Help build a strong and supportive democratic society.
- Use your skills and talents to support a cause in which you believe.
- Learn more about the local job market and hiring practices.
- Earn a professional reference which is key to entering the Canadian job market
- Gain Canadian work experience.
- Learn more about Canadian workplace culture.

### **Key facts about volunteering:**

It is an unpaid contribution of your time, skill and effort for the betterment of the community.

Close to half of all Canadian citizens volunteer each year.

Volunteer experience is often regarded as job experience in Canada.

Is highly organized, well managed, and very respected in Canada.

Volunteer positions can have different time frames: some of them want a commitment of a couple months while some others are shorter in length with flexible timing. You should choose a position that suits your schedule, interest, and experience.

You may or may not find Volunteer opportunities in the specific field of your expertise. However, there are always opportunities to volunteer in the areas of your interests and hobbies.

There are wide ranges of areas in which you can volunteer.

Volunteers are expected to be punctual, reliable, committed, professional, willing to learn, and respectful of differences.

You will find the best opportunities to volunteer with recognized non-profit organizations.

A good organization will provide you with appropriate orientation and training, depending on your Volunteer position.

You should give and receive feedback on a regular basis. It's the way you and the organization will grow together.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is volunteering?**

Volunteering is a commitment of time and energy doing something to benefit your community (individuals, groups, or a particular cause) without being paid.

### Where can I volunteer?

All of our Volunteer opportunities come from registered non-profit organizations in the Fredericton area. We represent over 300 such organizations which provide services in the arts, health, education, social services, sports, the environment and more.

### What will I do as a Volunteer?

There are many different Volunteer assignments. A Volunteer may assist an organization's clients directly or help with administrative duties (examples – serving meals at a community kitchen, visiting the elderly, editing content for an agency newsletter, helping to organize a special event). Volunteers assist paid staff to support their clients.

### How much time do I need to volunteer?

Most volunteer positions ask for two to four hours a week and a minimum three-month commitment. There are also positions that are more flexible where you can volunteer for shorter periods, or, on an "on call" basis, or for special events.

### Will volunteering help me find a paid job?

Volunteering can provide a chance to gain work experience in Fredericton, which is often required by future employers; it may help you obtain references; it will often encourage you to practice your language skills and will provide opportunities to meet interesting people. But it will not generally lead to a job in the organization for which you are volunteering. Other reasons for volunteering include broadening your network, making new friends, working for a cause you care about, and discovering new interests.

### What is the difference between volunteering and an internship?

An internship is normally linked to an academic program and related to a specific profession, for a defined period of time. It can be offered by both non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses. It has a greater chance of leading to a paid job than volunteering.

### Can I get Volunteer experience in my field or profession?

It will depend on your field or profession. We only work with non-profit organizations and thus do not offer Volunteer positions in businesses. Many professions are governed by Professional Associations with strict practice regulations or which require specific local knowledge (health professionals, engineers, lawyers etc) making it difficult to volunteer in these fields. There may however, be ways to volunteer in a position that is related to your field to give you valuable local experience.

We encourage you to look at volunteering in an activity, for a cause or with a clientele that allows you to pursue an interest, hobby or passion, whether it is related or not to your normal work experience. The closer your volunteering is to your personal interests, the more likely it is to be a positive experience both for you and the organization.



Do I have to speak French or English well?

Depending on the type of volunteer work you choose, you will need to be able to communicate and follow directions in English or French. Some positions, such as those that require communication with the general public, or answering the telephone, will require a fluency in English and possibly French as well. There may also be limited positions where you can use your first language (if it is not English or French) or where a good command of English or French is not required.

What are the responsibilities that come with volunteering?

Once you have been accepted as a Volunteer, the organization will expect you to be:

Punctual and Reliable – you arrive on time on the day you have committed to.

Committed – you will stay the required duration of time for the particular project or task you are involved with.

Professional – you will keep information confidential about the clients at the organization, follow the rules of the organization and represent it appropriately.

Enthusiastic – you are interested in the cause and that you share your skills and experience with the organization.

Willing to learn – you will attend all training, ask for help, help others, and continue to learn about the organization.

Respectful – you will respect differences in volunteers, staff, and clients, and work as a team player. Remember that an organization's main goal is to fulfill its clients' needs, not those of the Volunteers.

How to choose?

There are many Volunteer positions that may fit your interests, needs and schedule.

- To find a Volunteer position that is right for you, you may want to consider:
- How much time you are able to commit?
- Whether you would like a long-term position or a short-term position?
- What are the skills, interests and experience that you would like to share?
- What experience you are looking to gain?
- What issues in the community you think are important (e.g. environment, arts, health, etc) and how you would like to help?
- What location do you prefer – do you want to volunteer in your community or close to your workplace?

How do I get started?

For one on one consultation, consider asking for assistance from a placement counselor at the Multi-Cultural Association of Fredericton or a placement counselor at the Fredericton Volunteer Center at [coordinator@volunteerfredericton.ca](mailto:coordinator@volunteerfredericton.ca)