

North Haven Community Association Volunteer Policy 2021



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Introduction:

The North Haven Community Association could not function without volunteerism. Volunteers contribute to the mission of the NHCA and are the backbone of many events, programs, services, committees and proper governance.

The work of volunteers is essential to the future sustainability of this association and having proper systems in place to manage volunteers is an ever-increasing area of need for any not-for-profit organization. By having up-to-date policies and procedures regarding volunteerism within the NHCA, volunteers will be able to have rewarding experiences that also serve the community.

Vision:

The North Haven Community Association will be an organization that is very open and inviting to volunteers. Volunteerism will be valued, and all volunteers will be managed in a fair and supportive environment. Risks involved with volunteers and those who interact with volunteers, will be addressed to ensure the safety of all the people within the community.

The North Haven Community Association will strive to have a clear and functional management system for all personnel to use in order to understand their roles and responsibilities concerning volunteer work. As a result, volunteerism will grow within the NHCA and the association will be better equipped to serve the community.

Mission:

The North Haven Community Association ensures that the work of volunteers is properly managed. Sustainable engagement of volunteers occurs while the NHCA works with volunteers to identify pursuits and goals. In order to strengthen the community and the work of the NHCA, volunteer strategies are reviewed regularly. Volunteers are a valuable resource to this association and the future work of the NHCA depends on volunteer involvement and safety.

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

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1.0 Risk Management Policy

Background:

There are inherent risks involved when volunteers take on duties and responsibilities in the name of the North Haven Community Association. Volunteers may be working with vulnerable individuals such as children or seniors, or volunteers may be at risk themselves due to the nature of the work. Volunteer Board members may also be in some roles that put the NHCA at risk in terms of financial and legal matters.

Policy:

- 1.0 Volunteers and all individuals who are responsible for volunteers must be made aware of the varying levels of risk surrounding all volunteer duties and positions. These personnel must be familiar with applicable policies and procedures that deal with volunteer duties that involve some aspects of risk.**

Procedures:

- The level of risk is usually dependent on five things:
 - The member or individual participation
 - The persons administering the activity (staff and volunteers)
 - The level of supervision available
 - The setting of the activity
 - The type of activity
- There are three levels of risk that volunteer positions will be designated as: High Risk, Medium Risk and Low Risk
- **High Risk** volunteer positions are positions that meet any of the following criteria:
 - The position requires the volunteer to be left unsupervised in a building operated by the organization on a regularly scheduled basis.
 - The position has signing authority on financial or legal documents or contracts
 - The position entails having fiscal responsibility within the organization

- The position requires a volunteer to be alone and unsupervised with a member.
 - The position requires a volunteer to develop a close, supportive relationship with a member or group of members.
 - The position may require or encourage driving with a member as a passenger.
- **Medium Risk** volunteer positions are positions that meet any of the following criteria:
 - The position requires a volunteer to give information to NHCA members or individuals with a minimum of supervision.
 - The position requires a volunteer to act on behalf of the organization in an unsupervised setting.
 - The position requires the volunteer to handle nominal amounts of money or food with a minimum of supervision.
 - The volunteer has access to the organization's confidential files.
 - **Low Risk** volunteer positions are positions that meet all of the following criteria:
 - The position does not require close contact with members or the public.
 - The position is supervised at all times.
 - The position does not require/encourage driving.
- These risk criteria establish the level of screening for each volunteer position. The higher the risk level, the more screening that is required.
 - The person in charge of recruiting or coordinating volunteers for a specific event or program needs to be aware of all volunteer policies and procedures.
 - Volunteer managers/coordinators/recruiters need to be able to identify people who are at risk such as children, the elderly, or the disabled and the amount of interaction these people will have with volunteers.
 - All individuals involved with recruiting, managing, or coordinating volunteers must be familiar with the screening steps involved with volunteer work
 - Activities that are of potential risk to volunteers themselves must be analyzed and included into a volunteer's job description.
 - All volunteers must fill out a Liability Waiver Form once a year.
 - Insurance coverage must always be up to date and have coverage for the activity of volunteers.

- Potential volunteers who will have access to sensitive areas of the NHCA must also be carefully analyzed before volunteering.

2.0 Vulnerable Person Protection

Background:

As a social and recreational organization, it is obvious that the activities of the NHCA will involve working with several different demographics from the public. Many events are open to all ages and abilities of people, as the NHCA has a very accessible facility. A range of young babies to elderly adults may take use of the NHCA's programs and services. As such, it is vital for the NHCA to always be aware of people who are vulnerable and how their participation in the NHCA may put them at risk.

Policy:

2.0 It is the duty of the Board to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to identify vulnerable persons and protect them from undue harms. In addition to Volunteer Screening steps, certain procedures can be used to help minimize the risk to vulnerable persons.

Procedures:

- Anyone who will be in the role of Kids in the Haven or PreTeen Dance Coordinator must go through the entire Volunteer Screening process.
- Children, the elderly, disabled persons and recent immigrants are usually the most vulnerable people in social recreational organizations.
- When combining these vulnerable people with volunteers, the following rules should be followed:
 - Work in groups rather than in one-on-one situations.
 - When appropriate, meet in an open, public space rather than a closed, private space.
 - Volunteers must not act outside the set boundaries of their position description.
 - Minor should not be taken in an adult's vehicle without parent/guardian permission and the knowledge of the supervisor/coordinator.
- All volunteer activity should occur in groups, unless the program or service doesn't allow for this.

3.0 Volunteer Screening

Background:

Every organization has a responsibility to appropriately screen any person who will have access to vulnerable people. It is much easier to recruit properly than to deal with problems that arise from poor recruiting. The NHCA is not obliged to accept everyone who wants to volunteer. However, they are obliged to do everything reasonable to protect those in their care. This responsibility is both moral and legally required under the duty of care that the NHCA has as a social organization.

Policy:

3.0 Medium and High Risk volunteers who wish to work with the NHCA, must go through a screening process. This screening process is not meant to be a barrier to volunteerism, but rather a tool to ensure a rewarding experience for all involved.

This screening process also applies to all possible Board Members.

Procedures:

- 1. Determine the risk**
The NHCA can control the risk in its programs and services. Examining the potential for danger in programs and services may lead to preventing or eliminating the risk altogether.
- 2. Write a clear position description**
Careful position descriptions send the message that the NHCA is serious about screening. Responsibilities and expectations can be clearly set out, right down to the position's dos and don'ts. A clear position description indicates the screening requirements. When a volunteer changes positions, the screening procedures may change as well.
- 3. Establish a formal recruitment process**
Whether the NHCA posts notices for volunteer positions or sends home flyers, they must indicate that screening is part of the application process.

4. **Complete Volunteer Liability Waiver**
All potential volunteers must complete a contact form and liability waiver.
5. **Conduct interviews**
For positions identified such as PreTeen Dance Coordinator, Kids in the Haven Leader and Directors, an interview is encouraged. The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, skills, interests, and availability, but also to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate. In other words, the interview will help determine the "right fit".
6. **Follow up on references**
By identifying the level of trust required in the position and asking specific questions, the applicant's suitability may be easier to determine. People often do not expect that their references will be checked. Do not assume that applicants only supply the names of people who will speak well of them.
7. **Request a Police Information Check**
A Police Information Check (PIC) is just one step in the screening process. PICs signal — in a very public way — that the NHCA is concerned about the safety of its participants. A Vulnerable Sector Check may also be required for High and Medium Risk Volunteers.
8. **Provide orientation and training**
NHCA is committed to providing orientation and training, as needed, to all levels of volunteers. Doing so informs volunteers about policies and procedures.
9. **Support and Supervise**
The identified level of risk associated with a volunteer position will determine the necessary degree of additional support and supervision. Frequent feedback and communication in the first year is particularly important.
 - Following through with these procedures is best practice, but not all steps are necessary. Only high-risk volunteer positions require all screening steps.
 - For low-level risk volunteer positions only a contact and liability form may be necessary.

4.0 Police Information Checks

Background:

Police Information Checks are an essential aspect of screening potential volunteers or employees. Whenever an individual is coming into an organization and their history is unknown and they will be in a position where they will have access to vulnerable people, sensitive information, or important resources of the organization, it is essential to ensure they do not have a criminal history. A prior conviction obviously poses too much of a threat. The process of obtaining the check also is a deterrent to many individuals who are insincere in their reasons for applying to the position.

Policy:

4.0 Kids In The Haven and PreTeen Dance Coordinators along with Officers of the Board, Hall Rentals, Hall Manager and Building & Maintenance Director will require Police Information Checks. The process of acquiring the check will be explained to the candidate and they will be provided with support and resources in order to speed up the process.

Procedures:

- The NHCA is registered in the Volunteer Police Information Check Program, available in Alberta, which covers the cost of obtaining police information checks for volunteers engaging in eligible circumstances with minor children, seniors and disabled Albertans.
- KITH and PreTeen Dance Coordinators will be able to apply for a Vulnerable Sector Check through the program or paid directly by the NHCA.
- All volunteers who require a PIC will need to go through the CPS's process for obtaining the checks.

5.0 Orientation and Training

Background:

In the process of volunteer management, an orientation and training must be provided. With all aspects of the volunteering process, the higher the level of risk and responsibility attached with a respective volunteer position, the higher the degree of orientation and training that will be required.

Policy:

5.0 All volunteers deserve adequate support through the orientation and training process. The NHCA will employ a standard process throughout its activities to orientate and train volunteers.

Procedures:

- NHCA will develop a process to orientate and train volunteers that can be easily reproduced.
- Newly elected Directors will receive onboarding information immediately. Board-level orientation and training, covering more aspects of how the NHCA functions, will take place at the first Directors meeting following the AGM.
- Some low-risk volunteer positions will only require a brief orientation and training process and will not need a formal process.
- All volunteers shall be offered appropriate information and training to discharge their functions, and successful completion of this training shall be a condition of carrying out these functions.
- Volunteers should be made familiar with any other Policies or Procedures that relate to their scope of work.
- If volunteers are working for one of the NHCA's committees, they should be made aware of the in-house guidelines of the specific committee.
- Committees often have their own form of governance and volunteers should be made aware of how their activity fits into the structure of the committee.

6.0 Volunteer Support

Background:

It is important for volunteers to be supported in their roles and to be engaged from the NHCA. Individuals who are well supported by the NHCA during their work are more likely to return as volunteers or expand their commitment to the Association.

Policy:

6.0 Volunteer Coordinators, staff and the Board of the NHCA must proactively engage volunteers in a supporting role. During their work for the Association, volunteers should always have a representative of the NHCA to contact.

Procedures:

- All Board members, staff and Volunteer Coordinators should be prepared to interact with volunteers and answer any possible questions or address any possible concerns they may have.
- Volunteers should be given as much information as possible that will help them better understand their role in the Association.
- For volunteer positions that are on a higher or more complex level, a volunteer mentor may be required, or regular direction and guidance from a representative of the NHCA.
- A NHCA representative should always act as a supervisor for volunteers.

7.0 Insurance Coverage

Background:

It is crucial for social organizations to manage the liability that arises from the delivery of programs and services. For a community association it is very important to insure the activities of its personnel in order to help minimize risks. Legislation and rules and regulations concerning not-for-profit societies in Alberta also force recreational associations to have proper insurance coverage in place to manage liability in case of incidents.

Policy:

7.0 The NHCA must always fulfill its obligations to insure its operations. This includes insuring the activity of all persons who are representing the NHCA. The Board must always review the NHCA's insurance coverage to make sure that volunteer liability is always covered.

Procedures:

- All volunteers shall be protected from harm and personal liability as far as possible.
- On volunteer application forms for positions with specialized functions or expectations, a disclaimer regarding the need for volunteers to be insured should be included.
- Prospective volunteers should always be informed that their activities representing the NHCA are insured.
- Volunteers are only insured while participating in NHCA sanctioned events or carrying out duties that directly relate to their volunteer position and serve the NHCA.
- Volunteers must always conduct their behaviour in appropriate fashions and must always have their own personal insurance coverage if they are operating any motorized vehicles of their own that they are using while serving the NHCA.

8.0 Confidentiality and Disclosure

Background:

It is the responsibility and legal obligation of any organization to keep the personal information of its volunteers private and not to disclose any information to individuals who are not eligible to review such information.

Policy:

8.0 The NHCA will follow all conduct set out by PIPA (Privacy Information Protection Act) and will ensure volunteers' privacy.

Procedures:

- All information relating to volunteers that is kept on file should be held in a secure place with limited access.
- Volunteer records should only be disclosed for the purposes of volunteer recruitment, management or debriefing.
- If a volunteer wishes to have access to their information, any information on record for that person must be disclosed to them.
- Volunteers should be made aware that their information will be disclosed for the purposes of volunteer screening and management..
- If a volunteer is no longer working with the NHCA, their personal information should be destroyed if they make it clear that they will no longer volunteer with the NHCA in the future.

9.0 Grievance

Background:

During volunteer work for the NHCA, certain individuals may become dissatisfied with the nature of the volunteer position. This includes the volunteer themselves, members of the public who interact with the volunteer, other volunteers, staff, or other personnel from the NHCA. It is important to have a process in place for all parties involved in volunteerism to have their concerns addressed.

Policy:

9.0 All individuals involved in a volunteers scope of work are entitled to make a grievance if there are any issues involved in the volunteer work. The NHCA should employ a standard method for reporting Grievances across all of its operations.

Procedures:

- If an individual has an issue with any aspect of volunteerism within the NHCA, they must be able to file a grievance with the NHCA.
- Any grievance filed, should be addressed to the volunteer coordinator/ supervisor for the position in question.
- Depending on the nature of the grievance, varying levels of Grievance record keeping is required. Simple problems may be dealt with quickly by having a quick conversation to resolve an issue. More complex problems may require a more formal process where reporting can be required.
- Any grievances should be kept as confidential as possible. Disclosure of grievances should only be made to individuals who are part of the solution to the problem. (Individuals who are directly affected by the issue.)
- If necessary, more NHCA personnel may be needed to help address the grievance. Only NHCA staff, Board Members and other key volunteers should become involved in the process.
- NHCA committees and Board Members should develop a standard method of grievance reporting.

10.0 Conflict Resolution

Background:

Conflict resolution is required when a grievance has been noted in relation to volunteer activity. Conflict resolution can help to quickly solve a grievance if it is conducted quickly and efficiently. Dealing with conflicts will vary between different individuals and different groups under the umbrella of the NHCA.

Conflict resolution used for volunteer work should be similar to the conflict resolution methods used in staff and Board conflict resolution procedures.

Policy:

10.0 The NHCA will establish mechanisms to promote fast and efficient resolution of personnel issues. Volunteers should feel comfortable discussing issues with Board Officers or supervisors in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

All formal avenues for handling of grievances will be fully documented and the volunteer's wishes will be taken into account in determining the appropriate steps and actions. No volunteer will be intimidated or unfairly treated in any respect if they utilise this Policy to resolve an issue.

Procedures:

- All NHCA volunteers in a position of authority must ensure that:
 - They identify, prevent and address potential problems before they become formal grievances.
 - They are aware of and are committed to the principles of communicating and information sharing with their volunteers.
 - All decisions relating to volunteer practices are made with consideration given to the ramifications for the individual, as well as the Association in general.
 - Any grievance is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity.
 - All volunteers are treated fairly and without fear of intimidation.
- All volunteers must ensure that:

- o They attempt to resolve any issues through their immediate supervisor and through internal processes at the earliest opportunity.
- The Board of Directors must ensure that:
 - o All managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to communication and information sharing with volunteers.
 - o Ongoing support and guidance is provided to all volunteers in relation to volunteer and communication issues.
 - o All managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities in relation to handling grievances.
 - o Any grievance that comes to the attention of managers or supervisors is handled in the most appropriate manner at the earliest opportunity.
- All managers and supervisors should be aware of the possible ramifications of their actions when dealing with volunteer issues. They must ensure that all volunteers are treated with fairness, equality and respect.
- If there are any doubts or queries in relation to how to deal with a particular set of circumstances, managers or supervisors should contact the Board of Directors for advice at the earliest opportunity.
- A volunteer who considers that they have a dispute or grievance should raise the matter with their immediate supervisor as a first step towards resolution. The two parties should discuss the matter openly and work together to achieve a desired outcome.
- The Manager or Supervisor should check for clarification of the issue to ensure they fully understand the complainant's concern. Managers should follow the standard procedure of offering the volunteer the opportunity to have an independent witness at the discussion, ensuring they follow the steps outlined below:
 - o If more than one person is present, establish the role of each person.
 - o Outline the process that is to be followed.
 - o Inform the parties that any information obtained in the conduct of the review is confidential.
 - o Listen to the complainant and diagnose the problem.
 - o Take accurate and detailed notes of all conversations (including dates, people involved) and attach any supporting documentation.
 - o If deemed necessary, provide the volunteer with a written summary of the meeting and clarification of the next steps to be taken.

- The Manager must ensure that the manner in which the meeting is conducted will be conducive to maintaining positive working relationships, and will provide a fair, objective and independent analysis of the situation.
- All parties are to maintain complete confidentiality at all times.
- If the matter is not resolved and the volunteer wishes to pursue it, the issue should be discussed with a Board Member, then, if necessary, the President. Again, the matter is to be discussed openly and objectively with management to ensure it is fully understood.
- If necessary, outside help may be brought in to help settle the conflict.
- If the grievance/dispute is one of a confidential or serious nature involving the volunteer's Manager, the complainant may discuss the issue directly with the Board or the President.

11.0 Termination of Volunteers

Background:

Volunteer positions are obviously not as formal as paid staff positions are. Therefore, terminating volunteers will not require as many rules and regulations that would have to be adhered to. Nonetheless, if there is a need to terminate a volunteer, or a volunteer wishes to terminate their work for the NHCA, certain procedures can help to make the process easier for the parties involved.

Policy:

11.0 Volunteers may be terminated by the NHCA for severe breaches of ethics and detrimental behaviour. Volunteers may also terminate their involvement with the NHCA if they are no longer able to commit to the position. Depending on the nature of the volunteer's position and the nature of the reason for termination, a certain level of procedures should be followed.

Procedures:

- Since volunteers are not employees, many aspects of the Employment Standards Code of Alberta do not apply to them.
- If a volunteer wishes to terminate their position with the NHCA for their own convenience, they are free to do so.
- Volunteers terminating their position should inform the NHCA representative, before or after the event/program that they are volunteering for takes place.
- For short-term volunteer positions, individuals can end their service on short-notice, preferably before or after an event/program takes place.
- Long-term volunteers should be required to give as much notice as possible if they wish to terminate so that the NHCA can replace them.
- Volunteers shall perform their assignments within the specifics of the position description.
- Volunteers who consistently fail to conform to the specifics of their position description or exhibit inappropriate behaviour or poor performance shall be required to meet with their supervisor and one other impartial supervisor.

- This meeting will attempt to identify the problems, find ways to improve the situation and suggest adequate solutions, concluding with a recommended course of action and an appropriate time frame in which the volunteer will be expected to improve to the satisfaction of the NHCA.
- Details of the meeting will be documented, signed by all parties as a correct representation of points discussed and placed in the volunteer's personal file.
- If the situation persists, a verbal warning will be given to the volunteer by the supervisor and will be supported by written documentation distributed to both the volunteer and the NHCA Board, with a copy signed by both parties put in the volunteer's file.
- If the volunteer's inappropriate behaviour or performance continues, the volunteer shall be terminated. Dismissal shall only occur when all other efforts to correct the problem have failed.
- Dismissal shall take place only after consultation with the President or another NHCA Executive Officer.
- A volunteer may be terminated for just cause and without notice after consultation between the supervisor and a representative of the NHCA for the following breaches in Code of Ethics and/or Guiding Principles:
 - Gross misconduct or insubordination.
 - Sexual harassment.
 - Performance of assignments while under the influence of mind-altering drugs or alcohol.
 - Misappropriation of NHCA funds.
 - Abuse of NHCA equipment or materials.
 - Falsification of NHCA records.
 - Misrepresentation of personal information.
 - Illegal, violent, or unsafe actions.
 - Abusive treatment of members or co-workers, either physically or mentally.
 - Failure or inability to project a positive image of the services of the NHCA
- Prior to dismissal all property belonging to the NHCA will be returned to the supervisor.
- Prompt notification to the staff and the appropriate employees regarding immediate dismissal of a NHCA volunteer shall be the responsibility of the President or appropriate NHCA supervisor.

12.0 Volunteer Debriefing

Background:

When a volunteer position ends, it is very useful to conduct a volunteer debriefing interview with the volunteer in question. These exit interviews are a very useful tool in gauging how useful the volunteer's work was to the NHCA, if there were any problems with the position, if the NHCA could have spent more resources towards the position, or if the volunteer has any suggestions on how to improve the position.

Policy:

12.0 Every out-going Director or mid level volunteer must have the opportunity to have an exit-interview with a representative of the NHCA. Some volunteers may not wish to go through the process, this is acceptable as long as the NHCA has made an effort to engage the volunteer.

Procedures:

- Before a volunteer position is coming to an end, a representative of the NHCA must engage the volunteer and ask them if they would like to participate in an exit interview.
- The volunteer will be given the choice of either going through an open dialogue in-person discussion or fill in an exit interview questionnaire (but it will not be mandatory to do either)