

# Strengthening the Caring Community

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## - Step 3, Recruitment Procedures -

### **Recruitment**

Volunteer recruitment is usually done less formally than the recruitment of employees. For example, faith communities sometimes encourage parents to move from watching their children participate to helping out with the activities or those already in ministry positions often encourage friends and neighbours to help out. These personal ties between volunteers and the program complicate the screening process. The more informal volunteer recruitment is, the less comfortable recruiters are in applying formal steps. Be careful to establish balance between formalizing the recruitment process and either deterring volunteers from coming forward or appearing desperate for volunteers. Ministry Position Descriptions along with careful promotion and recruitment provide your group with powerful screening measures even before anyone offers herself or himself for a ministry position.

### **Who will be Recruiting**

The Parish Volunteer Screening Committee will provide procedures, tips and related materials. Exactly who is responsible for the recruitment of new volunteers is handled differently from parish to parish but the procedures outlined here are consistent throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto.

### **Recruitment Guidelines**

- Achieve balance between formalizing the recruitment process and appearing desperate for volunteers.
- Be careful about how you recruit, especially for positions of trust with vulnerable positions.
- Ensure that your recruiting materials and message clearly outlines that your parish takes its responsibility towards participants seriously, and screens all applicants thoroughly.
- Do not leave people with the impression that everyone who applies will be accepted.
- Be very clear that you are extremely careful about selecting volunteers and do not apologize for that fact.
- Being asked to volunteer is a privilege and a calling to a sacred trust, so remember that every volunteer must be placed in a suitable role.
- Use the Ministry Position Description to tell them about the position. There must be a Ministry Position Description for the position being recruited for.
- Ensure that you indicate that screening is part of the application process. It is only fair that there are no surprises, so that people may screen themselves out at this point.
- Maintain consistency in your recruitment process.

**“Dos” of Recruiting**

- Do always practice an ongoing formal recruitment process.
- Do make sure that your Ministry Position Descriptions are kept accurate and up-to-date with all of the information available about the position and about the screening measures.
- Do be open about your screening program and make it clear that not everyone is accepted for the ministry they apply for.
- Do ensure that recruitment materials indicate that you screen applicants.
- Do have a plan of action!

**“Don’ts” of Recruiting**

- Don’t avoid recruiting!
- Don’t appear desperate for volunteers when you are recruiting.
- Don’t hide the screening procedures that applicants will experience.
- Don’t leave people with the impression that anyone who applies will be accepted.
- Don’t rush through the recruitment process.
- Don’t make any exceptions.

**Recruitment Tools**

One of the ways to move from an informal to a formal process is to use tools such as;

- Print or post notices
- Bulletin/newsletter inserts
- Bulletin boards postings
- Ministry Position Description
- Announcements to whole parish or to smaller groups
- Personal invitations from the a member of the Pastoral Team

**Actions to be taken**

- Provide Ministry Coordinators/Leaders with the procedures and guidelines for recruitment and be available to assist them in appropriate recruitment strategies.

**Remember, there is always a choice**

It is better to live with a vacancy than to compromise and put the wrong volunteer into that position. Ask for what you want – no matter how demanding it may sound. As clearly – and truthfully – as possible, describe;

1. The tasks that need to be done. Refer to the Ministry Position Description.
2. An overview of the work. Refer to the Ministry Position Description.
3. Time considerations. Refer to the Ministry Position Description.
4. The ideal qualifications/characteristics. Refer to the Ministry Position Description.
5. Indicate the benefits – tangible and intangible – volunteers can expect in return for their service. Refer to the Ministry Position Description.
6. Highlight training that is offered. Both at the parish and through other means.
7. Explain any possible out-of-pocket costs and what, if anything, will be reimbursed.

## Strengthening the Caring Community

### – Recruitment is INVITING; Not Pleading, Begging or Arm Twisting –

Volunteering is a vital part of our church. Through our Baptism we are each called to service within our communities.

#### Crafting your message appropriately is crucial

Tone conveys a lot of information. Be welcoming in your tone. It is possible to convey the seriousness of the work to be done and still talk about the fun side of volunteering.

Invite potential volunteers to *select* the opportunities that you are offering.

The manner in which you present the invitation to become involved is very important.

You also want to sound welcoming to newcomers without implying that every applicant will be immediately accepted.

“This ministry position is worth your time and effort. We offer you the opportunity to become involved so that your gifts and talents are utilized and you will be answering your baptismal call while also making a very important contribution to the community.”

If we accept the truism that a majority of people volunteer because they were “asked,” then we should expect to do as much personal one-to-one recruiting as possible. This means that once we have identified prospective candidates, we need to frame our individual conversations so that we are successful in issuing our invitation to volunteer.

Face-to-face recruitment offers people the opportunity to explore with you whether or not they fit into the ministry position.

Your most important tools are *listening* and *observation*. Give the person a chance to ask questions and react to what you have said. Does the person seem interested? What aspects of what you have said are getting the most attention?

At recruitment stage, explain only the basics. The Ministry Position Description has *all* the important information.

- Introduce the ministry position as succinctly and clearly as possible. What is the ministry about and whom does it serve?
- Explain what work needs to be done and why a volunteer may be well suited to do it.
- Also, explain how volunteers contribute to the work of the Parish. What have volunteers achieved in the past? What kinds of people volunteer? Participating in the life of the Parish is our baptismal call.

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### - Tips on Inviting People to Volunteer -

1. Remember that you are giving people the marvelous *opportunity* to participate in an important project. You don't want them to be left out.
2. Be motivated yourself. Sincerity wins out over technique every time.
3. Be clear on what you want people to do. Use Ministry Position Descriptions whenever possible.
4. Refer to the position by the proper position title.
5. Be honest. Tell prospective volunteers what the work entails, even if you think it may sound like a lot. Avoid minimizing the work.
6. Remember that it is better to live with a vacancy a little while longer than to convince the wrong person to become a volunteer.
7. Define the training, supervision and support the volunteer will have. This isn't sink or swim.
8. Identify and express the benefits to the volunteer from accomplishing the task.
9. Explain why you decided to ask this particular person to help - what skills or personality traits make her or him a good candidate for the position.
10. Keep in mind that you can never insult people by asking them to volunteer. In fact, you are usually flattering them by implying that they have the talent to do the job.
11. Paint an upbeat picture of the work. Volunteering should be fun.
12. The best way to recruit volunteers is to publicly and formally ask people to help.

