



### STEPS TO BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Modified from [http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/vo\\_howto2.php](http://www.volunteerhamilton.on.ca/vo_howto2.php)

#### STEP 1: Identify your Interest and Skills

Why do you want to volunteer? Is it for work experience? To work in a specialized area? To help the community? To develop your skills? Whatever your reason(s) may be, it is best to first determine your goals and then research what the best fit would be. It is also great to try something outside of your career goals and passions by volunteering in something completely different - coach, visit seniors, sit on a board...do something that will develop new interests, skills, and abilities and uncover ones you never knew that you had! Plus, getting a variety of experience will show current and future employers that you are a well-rounded individual.

#### STEP 2: Research

Now it's time to find out what volunteer opportunities exist for you and how to access them. One great way is to visit the **Volunteer Hamilton** (or the closest volunteer centre in your area) website and browse through the opportunities. These positions are put into categories to make your search easy. There are a number of other ways to find positions: OSCARplus, following us on Twitter @MacSSC (#macvolunteering), attend volunteer fairs or ask friends and family.

#### STEP 3: Interview Process

Once you have selected a volunteer position that you would like to pursue, it's time to call the agency! If you are granted an interview, treat it as you would an interview for a paying job. This means that you should be on time, dress neatly and appropriately, bring your resume and ask questions such as:

- What work will I be doing? How much time does this position require?
- Does your organization provide me with a written evaluation and reference?
- Will your organization need to do a background check on me?

Some interview questions you might be asked include:

- How did you find out about this volunteer opportunity?
- Have you given your time previously as a volunteer?
- Why do you want to volunteer with this organization?
- What would you like to get out of this volunteer experience?
- What skills, abilities or qualities do you have to contribute to the organization?



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# Volunteer Connections

## Steps to Becoming a Volunteer



### STEP 4: Screening

Volunteer screening serves two main purposes:

1. To create and maintain a safe environment
2. To ensure an appropriate match between volunteer and task

For you, the volunteer, this process includes receiving a written position description, training, and a review of your work. The agency may ask for references and/or a police check. Remember, screening is about the position and not you! It is just one part of the process.

### STEP 5: Orientation and Training

To help you become more familiar with the organization and your duties, an orientation provided by the agency may be conducted followed by a training period to help you be successful. This is a great time to find out what the work environment is, how comfortable you feel, and how the position will suit your needs. Orientation and training are your rights as a volunteer, so make sure you are provided these opportunities before you start your volunteer experience.

Just as another reminder, make sure that you have a position description, a training period, and that you are not doing anything that goes against your moral and/or religious beliefs, or puts you at risk. You also have the right to be well supervised.

### STEP 6: Begin your Volunteer Experience

Once you have been interviewed, hired, accepted the position and you have gone through your orientation and training period, you can now truly begin your volunteer experience! What a great decision you have made to volunteer!

### STEP 7: Reflect and Evaluate

As you are volunteering, ask yourself

- Are you getting everything out of it that you want?
- Are you contributing in a way that you feel is meaningful?
- Are you achieving the goals you set out to accomplish?
- What can you do to maximize your time with your organization?
- How can I use my Learning Portfolio to connect the dots?

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