



**VOLUNTEER**  
**BÉNÉVOLES**  
C A N A D A

**CORPORATE GROUP  
VOLUNTEERING  
CHECKLISTS**



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BÉNÉVOLES**  
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Volunteer Canada appreciates the members of the Corporate Council on Volunteering for contributing their experience and expertise throughout the development of this resource. We gratefully acknowledge the many not-for-profit organizations and charities for openly sharing the issues, challenges, and benefits of group volunteering activities. We also recognize local volunteer centres around the country for their leadership and skillful brokering of group volunteering in their communities.

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For further information on Employer-Supported Volunteering or other types of volunteering, please visit:

**[www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)**

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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

This document is a guideline for employees planning group volunteer opportunities. It is based on the experience and best practices of Volunteer Canada. It is grounded in the principles of the Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering to support effective partnerships between non-profit organizations and employers wishing to engage their employees in community service.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Volunteer Canada recommends the document be used from beginning of the planning process.

Using the checklists as your guide, open and regular communication with the non-profit organization(s)

you are working with throughout the planning is the best way to ensure reciprocity and an activity that has positive community and volunteer benefits.

Consider this a 'living document' you can edit and modify to fit your project and your workplace's culture and policies. This should be used to supplement existing documents and standard operating procedures from your employer. Certain aspects of the checklist may not be relevant in all situations.

The document is intended to support a reciprocal relationship between community partners and corporations.



# FINDING THE RIGHT NON-PROFIT PARTNER ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST



**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** A successful group volunteering event requires the right partners working together on a shared goal. Do some research to find a suitable partner for your project. Consult employees to see if they have worked with a non-profit organization that might be the right fit for your group's interests.

1. **Have flexibility** – Especially around dates. And be open to volunteer tasks you haven't thought of.
2. **Lots of lead time** – Please make your requests no later than two months before your ideal event date in order to ensure proper planning.
3. **Even more lead time for working with youth and vulnerable populations** – Volunteers need police checks and vulnerable sector screening to work with kids, seniors, persons with disabilities, etc. It can take up to 4 months to get these and there are fees to process. The good news: once employees have these checks done, they are often good for a year or more.
4. **There aren't many opportunities for groups of more than 20** – For some organizations, 10 is their maximum to make sure volunteers have something useful to do to advance the organization's mission. If you have larger groups, plan to split them up and approach several charities.
5. **Budget** – Volunteering opportunities cost community organizations in terms of both supplies and staff time. Be prepared to discuss the costs with your community partner and be willing to cover.
6. **Consider a longer-term commitment** – Some amazing transformational opportunities happen with ongoing volunteer roles for employees, such as mentoring or sharing skills like marketing, accounting, etc. Speak with community organizations about creative ways to support them over time.
7. **If not this time, come again** – If a community organization says your volunteer request doesn't fit their needs or capacity at this time, ask them about what would be a better fit and plan to chat with them again the next time employees are looking for a way to give back.



## TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES

### Single day volunteering

- This is the most common type of group volunteering and takes place in half day or full day sessions. Many community partners have organized specific tasks for groups to complete during a team building/ volunteering day. These are often termed ‘off the shelf’ opportunities, since they are premade with groups slotted in as availability exists.

### Breaking into smaller groups to participate with several charities, or the same charity at different times

- You can maintain a feeling of cohesiveness by kicking off the day with a breakfast together before heading to different locations, or by coming back together at the end of the projects to share photos, what happened and what was learned.

### Co-creating a project with a local community organization

- Try engaging a community organization in a discussion about a larger unmet need. For example, in conversation with the organization you may discover they don’t have a place to put

tools. You could offer to build a storage shed.

**Remember:** this will require the accompanying budget from your group for supplies.

### Event Based

- Charity runs, fundraising galas, parades and festivals are some examples of events that often need volunteers. Check local community calendars for upcoming events.

### Microvolunteering

- These are quick projects with short time commitments, usually done virtually. They can be done on one’s own, but some projects can benefit from many team members acting individually towards a larger goal. See [Volunteer Canada’s resource on Microvolunteering for more information and links to opportunities.](#)

### Kit building

- This kind of opportunity is well suited to a large group, with a substantial budget, and can help provide much needed resources for community organizations.



## WHEN LOOKING FOR A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION TO PARTNER WITH FOR YOUR GROUP VOLUNTEERING PROJECT, LOOK FOR AN ORGANIZATION THAT:

- Has a mission or cause that aligns with your group's interests
- Has experience with group volunteering
- Can accommodate your group size, timeframe and budget
- Has a list of specific projects that could be a fit for your group. If not, ask about the organization's needs and discuss ideas together that can advance their mission while providing meaningful involvement for volunteers





# JOINT PROJECT PLANNING CHECKLIST

 **CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** A successful group volunteering event involves the business and non-profit partner organization planning the event together.

## ESTABLISHING THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- Confirm key contacts for the company and the non-profit
- Determine how and when you will communicate during the planning process
- Discuss budget for project materials and the volunteer program expenses of the non-profit (e.g. staff time). The non-profit should be reimbursed by the volunteering group for their expenses
- Determine roles and responsibilities for the non-profit and for the company
- Be aware of any restrictions or needs unique to the non-profit organization, such as: waivers, photo permissions or encouraging client participation
- Identify specific company requirements such as t-shirts, transportation or video, and confirm who will be responsible for paying for them
- Define a cancellation policy
- Establish how you will determine if the event was a success
- Commit to a debrief meeting and establish a date
- Record decisions above in an email or agreement letter



## ESTABLISHING THE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

- Identify the types of possible activities that are available. Canvass your group on their preference
- Determine the number of events you want to organize (e.g. one event or a series of events on different dates in various locations)
- Identify how long the event will be (half day, full day, reoccurring, etc.)
- Determine when to hold the event(s). (Tip: Opting for a span of possible days rather than a single target date will be easier on the non-profit to plan).
- Consider where the event should take place (e.g. at the non-profit, at the workplace, or elsewhere). If activity is outside, establish a plan in the event of severe weather

## CONFIRMING EVENT DETAILS

- Create volunteer role descriptions that include tasks and volunteers per
- Identify any specific skills, training, equipment or clothing required
- Ensure there will be enough non-profit staff or group leaders in relation to the number of volunteers
- Confirm that there will be an introductory briefing/ introduction by the community partner.
- Determine how best to communicate the results of the event and assign responsibility of it. Agree on hashtags and handles.
- Confirm if snacks and drinks will be provided, who is paying for them. If confirmed, plan for timing and delivery of food and materials



- Identify volunteer any health and dietary restrictions or accessibility needs
- Conduct a site visit. Look for logistical considerations (e.g. bus parking, delivery area) and conduct a health and safety assessment (see Checklist)
- Plan a discussion to debrief with volunteers before they leave they activity and decide who will lead it. Plan to discuss the wider implications of the volunteer task for the community. For example ask: What did you experience today and how was it different than what you thought it would be? Make clear this question isn't about logistics but about what they learned. [Click here](#) for more ideas on leading the discussion and why it matters.
- Ensure that the volunteers are thanked for their time/energy and help
- Using the information above, create a final project outline that includes timelines, deliverables, logistics and responsibilities
- Communicate key information from the outline to volunteers, including: compelling information about the non-profit/activity and why it is important, time, location, what to wear/bring and health and safety considerations (see Health and Safety Checklist).



# HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST



**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** Keep in mind that employer-supported volunteering activities have health and safety issues. Organizers should be aware of their responsibilities to ensure a safe environment for employees who volunteer.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Non-profit organization

- They know which skills are required for performing specific tasks. If volunteering at their location, they know their work environment best and can identify potential health and safety issues.

### Company/workplace organizer

- Should be fully informed about company policies, legal issues and insurance needs associated with group volunteering activities on and off company property.

### Employees

- Are responsible for following health and safety requirements of the group volunteering activity that are clearly communicated to them.

### Broker (if one is to be used)

- Ensures each party is aware of the health and safety issues and that they are implemented during the group volunteering activity.



## TIPS FOR PROMOTING EMPLOYEE SAFETY



**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** Always consult your company health and safety protocols. All items below may not apply to every group volunteering activity or every company. Partners need to discuss which tasks are the responsibility of the non-profit organization, the workplace organizer or the broker.

### Prior to the Event

- Confirm the non-profit organization can provide adequate health and safety training and supervision for participating volunteers
- With the non-profit organization, identify if any protective clothing is required for the project (for example gloves, helmets, safety glasses, shoes) and confirm health and safety procedures to be followed
- Perform an on-site risk assessment. Locate elevators, stairways and consider accessibility requirements for people with special needs. Ensure the first aid kit/station is well stocked
- Verify that employees are covered under the company insurance policy during the group volunteering event
- Verify that the employer has a policy for any injury that occurs off-site and during the volunteering project. Confirm the process for reporting any incidents and injuries while on an employee volunteering project
- Obtain emergency contact details for employees participating in the group volunteering project



### During the Event

- Ensure any team leaders for the group know and enforce health and safety standards
- Provide any protective gear required for volunteering
- Inform employees on immediate action to take should a volunteer become injured
- Ensure employees and team leaders know the location of the first aid kit/station
- Ensure employees receive a clear message that if at any point they are uncomfortable with a task, they can come to the leader for reassignment or can stop altogether, no questions asked



## FINAL REPORT CHECKLIST



**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** A non-profit will often book group volunteering opportunities months ahead. If employees enjoyed the opportunity, consider asking the non-profit about future availability during a debrief call.

### Conduct an Evaluation:

- Conduct debrief call with the non-profit organization.
- Determine if the event was a success. Did it meet agreed goals against the criteria you established with the non-profit in your planning stage? Describe the impact the event created for the non-profit, the volunteers, the company and the community
- Identify any lessons learned
- Develop recommendations for the next event
- Collate impact and findings into a report

### Remember to:

- Share feedback with each other (e.g. share quotes from employees)
- Share photos and achievements with volunteers and non-profit partners and/or staff/beneficiaries of the non-profit
- Thank and recognize volunteers for their participation and the non-profit for their partnership



# EMPLOYEE POST-EVENT FEEDBACK CHECKLIST



**CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:** Feedback and evaluation will depend on the type of event: it may be informal questions of the group during the wrap up or a quick email after the event or an online survey. Develop feedback questions for your group volunteering event based on the goals established for the event. The evaluation should be short – 5-7 questions – and conducted as soon as possible after the event.

## Consider including questions like these when soliciting event feedback:

- Why did you choose to participate in this event? (check boxes: Interest in the cause/organization, develop skills, network with work colleagues, make a difference in the community, learn something new, have fun)
- Did the activity increase your knowledge of the related social/environmental concerns in your community? (Scale of 1-10, 10 being extremely likely)
- Do you feel you made a difference during the opportunity? (Scale of 1-10, 10 being extremely likely)
- What one thing could be improved if the company does another similar event?
- Based on this event, how interested are you in volunteering again for the non-profit organization? For another organization? (Scale of 1-10, 10 being extremely likely)
- Based on your experience at this activity, how likely are you to recommend to a colleague that he/she sign up for a volunteering activity? (Scale of 1-10, 10 being extremely likely)
- Did participating in the activity increase your pride in working for the company?  
(Scale of 1-10, 10 being extremely likely)



