



MODULE 12

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS





STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS

MODULE 12 OUTCOME:

*Leaders contribute to effective staff
and volunteer engagement.*

MODULE 12 – STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 The Community Recreation Director
- 12.3 The Staffing Process
- 12.4 Working with Volunteers

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the general roles and responsibilities of a community recreation director.
- Apply a framework for working with staff and volunteers (e.g. preparation, recruiting, hiring, screening, orientation, training, performance appraisal, etc.).
- Be familiar with Labour Standards and Revenue Canada requirements impacting staff and contractors in Northern communities.
- Demonstrate the importance of recognizing and celebrating recreation leaders and volunteers.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Although not all small or remote communities have a recreation director, they always have recreation leaders. Recreation leaders may be paid or may volunteer to run programs (e.g. an after school program) or coordinate special events (e.g. Canada Day celebrations). In our rural communities, many of the recreation leaders are volunteers who contribute time and energy to make a variety of activities possible (e.g. yoga, children's soccer, trail development, craft fairs, etc.).

This module presents an approach to recruiting and retaining recreation leaders, whether they are paid (casual, part-time or full-time) or they volunteer. As this process can be applied to both staffing and volunteer management, it is important for those in supervisory positions to understand. It is also essential information for community groups who facilitate recreation through volunteers.



12.2 THE COMMUNITY RECREATION DIRECTOR

Recreation directors, particularly those in smaller, rural or remote communities, are often responsible for recreation programming and facilities that encompasses after school programs, sports and fitness, special events, arts, cultural events, and others.

The recreation director uses his or her unique knowledge of the community, recreation education and leisure literacy to positively influence individual growth and wellness, strengthen and enhance social connections, protect and preserve natural environments, and enhance economic vitality. The positive use of leisure time and participation in recreation that strengthens quality of life in our communities are almost always dependent upon the distinct, and sometimes undervalued, contribution of the community recreation director.

Increasingly, recreation directors are evolving, or returning to their roots, to play a key leadership role within their communities. An inclusive approach, as well as knowledge and understanding of communities and civic engagement, makes this role possible. Experience engaging others in recreation often leads the recreation director to become a community connector or catalyst bringing different groups and sectors together to tackle broader quality of life issues.

Dedicated recreation directors create spaces, places and opportunities for quality of life. They are passionate believing in the importance of work-life balance, families, lifelong growth and health to vibrant communities. Ultimately, these recreation directors recognize that their work is more than simply a job and that they can make a difference.

Finding the right person to fill the role of recreation director in your community is a key responsibility of those with authority (e.g. recreation board, advisory committee) as this decision shapes the future of recreation in the community.

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has identified core competencies for recreation practitioners. The Competencies for Community Recreation Leaders model (page 0-5) shows five categories of core competencies as foundations, leadership, community building, service development and organizational management. These core competencies build upon the 13 foundational competencies from which this Guide was developed and lead into the advanced competencies presented in [Module 4 - Recreation Leadership \(mod4\)](#).

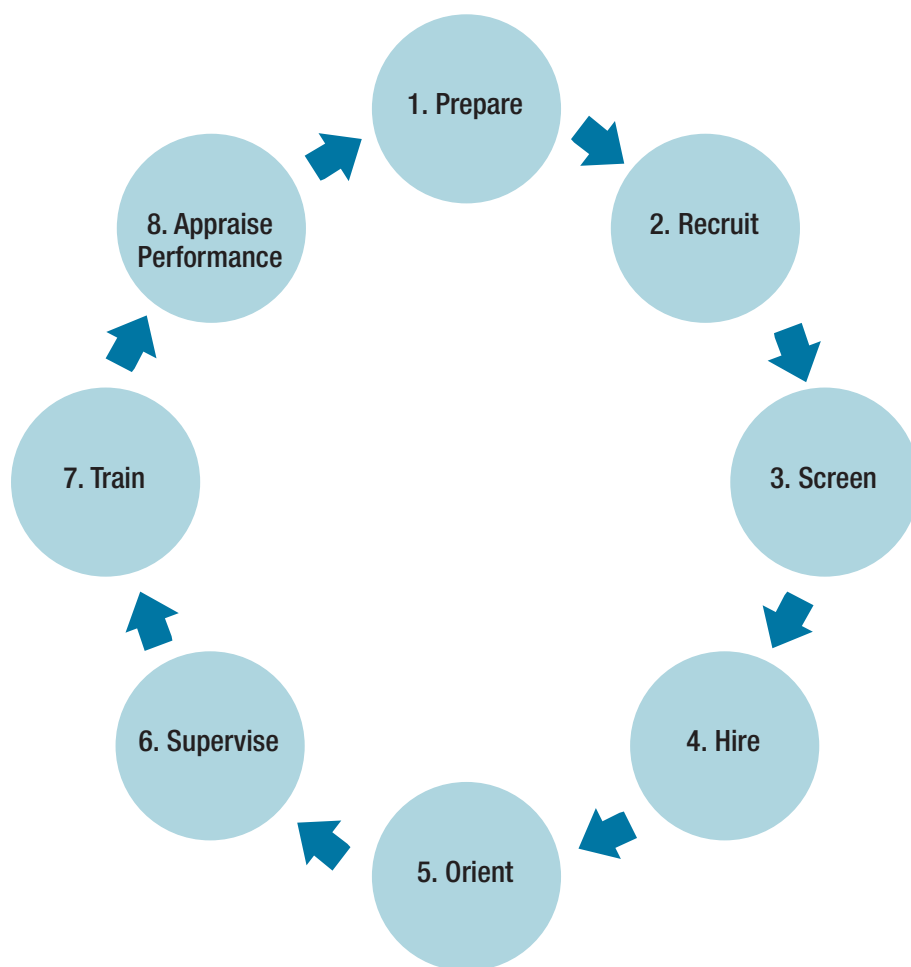
[Core Competencies for Recreation and Parks \(pdf54\)](#) provides more information about the skills, knowledge and attitudes a recreation director should bring to the community. If potential staff lack these skills and knowledge, training and support to ensure opportunities for ongoing growth and development should be provided.

[Hiring a Recreation Director: A Practical Guide for Manitoba Communities \(pdf55\)](#) is a how-to tool to assist authorities through the hiring process and to evaluate current human resource practices.

12.3 THE STAFFING PROCESS

Whether your role as a recreation leader involves hiring one or more paid staff or successfully engaging volunteers, it is helpful to think of it as a process. The following diagram illustrates this process with each element subsequently explained in greater detail.

Staffing Cycle: Managing Staff and Volunteers



1. PREPARE

Whether you want to fill a staff position or find potential volunteers, the preparation step is essential. It begins with analyzing and getting a clear idea of organizational and community priorities and then determining the kind of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to reach the strategic direction.

Reviewing the strengths and assets of your existing team is important because you want to ensure a diverse team with a variety of skills and abilities.

Understanding Your Community Leadership Style ([url75](#)) can help identify the strengths of your team as well as the gaps that may exist and could be filled by

a new position. Getting to know personal leadership styles can be a fun activity while building relationships and an appreciation for the diversity or similarity of the group.

Next, determine whether your needs can be met with full, part-time or contract staff. Sometimes staff positions are shared between one or more organizations or departments. In many cases, volunteers also play a key and vital role in serving the community.

The Position Description

Whether you want to find the best staff and/or volunteers, developing accurate and appealing position descriptions is a valuable investment of time. Rather than copying descriptions from other communities, use these as a template and develop descriptions that reflect the needs of your organization and community.

This template ([pdf56](#)) provides an outline for developing position descriptions for staff and volunteers. The template may differ to others you have seen because it encourages you to think about the benefits of the position and to describe why a potential staff person or volunteer would be interested in applying. See this example of a volunteer after school program assistant ([pdf57](#)) job description.

Preparing to Hire a Recreation Director

When a community is hiring a recreation director for the first time or as a replacement, preparations are more extensive. Forming a hiring committee, reviewing the reason for the vacancy, and reviewing or revising the position description are essential.

A sample job description for a recreation coordinator is available in the [Community Recreation Handbook for Northern Saskatchewan \(pdf12-10\)](#). Another example from NWT can be accessed here ([pdf58](#)). The [Leisure Information Network \(LIN\) \(url76\)](#) also provides a number of templates for various position descriptions in the recreation field.

Visit [SKILLS-PLUS Bridging Volunteer Experience and Career Development \(pdf59\)](#) for ideas on how to develop position descriptions for volunteers.

2. RECRUIT

After developing a position description, plan how to generate interest and recruit potential candidates. Advertising and word-of-mouth within the community are important strategies (e.g. websites, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.). Positions in small, remote communities often need advertising more widely. The following organizations have websites to help with the recruitment of potential staff and volunteers:

- Volunteer Yukon
- YuWIN - Yukon's Job Board ([url77](#))
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association ([url78](#))
- Leisure Information Network Job Board ([url79](#))
- Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC) Job Postings ([url80](#))
- Government of Canada Job Bank ([url81](#))
- Other Job Sites such as Workopolis.

3. SCREEN

Screening staff and volunteers is critical to the quality and safety of your programs and services.

While screening is often thought of as a safety precaution to reduce risk, it is essential for ensuring the staff or volunteer applicant has the necessary qualifications and experience. Working and living in rural, remote or Northern communities is not for everyone. A screening process can ensure that potential candidates have the interest and qualities necessary for working in these locations.

Screening practices enable organizations to meet ethical and legal responsibilities. This is necessary for the safety of members, clients, participants, employees and volunteers. It is even more important when staff or volunteers are brought into an organization to work with vulnerable individuals (e.g. children, youth, people with disabilities, senior adults, etc.).

While every organization needs to carefully review its moral and legal obligations, it is prudent to establish specific policies and procedures with regards to the application, interview, reference and policy checks. Recognize that reference and policy checks are never perfect. Sometimes the best strategy to reduce risk is to pay attention to the hairs on the back of your neck. Effective screening gathers facts, and uses intuition and instincts to assess safety and risk.

For more information about screening, see *The Screening Handbook* ([url82](#)) published by Public Safety Canada.

4. HIRE

When preparation is thorough, hiring and placement are more likely to be successful. Typically, hiring involves a number of activities.

- Develop a matrix to compare candidates.
- Review application forms and resumes.
- Acknowledge receipt of all applications.
- Select the candidates to be interviewed.
- Develop the interview questions.
- Conduct the interviews.
- Rank the finalists.
- Contact references .
- Notify the successful (and unsuccessful) candidate(s).
- Negotiate the salary and benefits package.

More information about each of these steps can be found in the resource, [*Hiring a Recreation Director \(pdf55\)*](#).

Employee vs. Contractor

Over the past two decades, self-employment (e.g. freelancers, consultants and independent contractors) has become more prevalent in the workplace. This is due to globalization of trade, introduction of new technologies, volatility of international and domestic markets, and workers' desire for freedom and independence. From a nonprofit perspective, contracting offers a way to cope from year-to-year with the uncertainty of operational and program funding without the commitment to staff positions.

With increased use of contractors, organizations need to be clear on the differences between an independent contractor and a paid staff. Employers, supervisors, and those responsible for staffing need to be familiar with the legalities associated with contracting and staffing. The federal government clarifies these legalities at this website ([url83](#)).

Labour Standards

Federal labour standards are established under Part III of the [Canada Labour Code \(url84\)](#) which sets out the minimum standards federally regulated employers ([url85](#)) and employees must follow. To find out more about the minimum standards regarding hours of work, vacation and holidays, layoff or dismissal, wages, pay and deductions, sexual harassment, etc. visit the federal website ([url86](#)) and Yukon Government's Department of Community Services ([url87](#)).

Employment Equity Act

The goal of the [Employment Equity Act \(url88\)](#) is to ensure that no Canadian is denied employment for reasons unrelated to their abilities. It also intends to correct the employment disadvantages sometimes encountered by designated groups (i.e. women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities).

5. ORIENT

An effective orientation reduces staff and volunteer turnover, increases productivity and increases a sense of belonging. A brief Sample Orientation Process Checklist is available from [Community Recreation Handbook for Northern Saskatchewan \(pdf12-11\)](#).

Orientation may last for a few hours or take up to several days. Generally, orientation consists of two components:

- A general introduction to the community and organizational culture, values, vision and policies.
- A job-specific orientation when the employee actually starts work.

Use an orientation checklist ([pdf60](#)) to cover all necessary information.

Employers have one opportunity to make a good first impression; during the orientation of new staff and volunteers.

6. SUPERVISE

Staff and volunteers need to be very clear about whom they report to, the reporting requirements and the boundaries for decisions they have the authority to make. Additionally, their responsibilities, outcomes, deliverables and timelines need to be clarified.

Ideally, each staff person, and in some cases volunteers, has a work plan to guide their efforts. These can be developed using a generic template ([pdf61](#)) or a [Sample Work Plan Template \(pdf12-12\)](#).

[The HR Council's Toolkit \(url89\)](#) offers additional resources to assist with supervision. Resources relate to human resource planning, policies and legislation, getting and keeping the right people, compensation and benefits, diversity, etc.

7. TRAIN

The ongoing growth and development of an organization's staff and volunteers is an important investment. [The Skills Assessment and Training Plan Template \(pdf62\)](#) is a helpful tool when planning for the development of skills through training and other learning opportunities.

Yukon Government's Sport and Recreation Branch and the Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) offer opportunities for recreation leaders to develop knowledge and skills, gain necessary certifications, network, attend conferences and professional development activities, etc. [RPAY's website](#) provides more information on leadership development, aquatics training and leadership certification. Training for youth leaders is available through Bringing Youth Towards Equality (BYTE) and the Youth Directorate.





8. APPRAISE PERFORMANCE

While many people are intimidated by the idea of being evaluated or assessing someone else, an evaluation is an opportunity to support ongoing growth, development and performance. Assessing performance is a process that must involve the volunteer or employee and their immediate supervisor. Together, they review the individual's performance and strengths, identify areas for improvement, and develop a plan for training and growth.

In some cases, this is a straightforward process. However, for a recreation director or manager it may be more complex because of the broad range of responsibilities assigned to these positions.

Performance appraisal for a frontline or part-time employee or volunteer

A number of questions can serve as a starting point for a conversation with frontline staff or volunteers. Regardless of what is discussed, it is recommended that the employee or volunteer respond to the questions on their own in advance. The performance appraisal kept on file is a new page, listing responses that the employee or volunteer and supervisor agree upon and complete together. The following questions can be answered in point form and in two pages or less.

- What are the key duties of your position? (summarize in point form)
- What were your goals for the year or timeframe?
- Summarize your key successes or accomplishments.
- What are you most proud of? What were the outcomes of your accomplishments?

- What issues or barriers did you experience while trying to achieve your goals?
- What training did you receive?
- What have you identified as your greatest strengths?
- What have you identified as areas for growth?

The supervisor and employee or volunteer should answer the remaining questions together.

- What are the goals for the position for the upcoming year?
- What training and resources does the employee need to reach these goals?

For more information, review the [Sample Performance Appraisal \(pdf63\)](#) from the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism or the [Performance Appraisal Template Sample \(pdf12-13\)](#) from the Community Recreation Handbook for Northern Saskatchewan.

Performance appraisal for management or recreation director

A performance appraisal for senior managers or recreation directors may need to be more complex as described in the [Performance Appraisal Template \(pdf64\)](#) or the five-step process that follows.

1. Review the organizational competencies for the position and evaluate the employee's progress in achieving these.
2. Review the position-specific competencies and evaluate the employee's progress in achieving these.
3. Establish annual performance goals that are outcome-based, align with the organization's strategic direction and demonstrate fulfillment of the employee's accountabilities.
4. Prepare a training and development plan specific to the employee or volunteer.
5. Determine the appropriate performance level.

12.4 WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are people of all ages and backgrounds who willingly give their time, talents and energy to helping others and their community. Across Yukon, volunteers are making a difference in the lives of others as well as contributing to the success of community programs and special events.



CONTEXT

In the field of recreation, volunteers are essential. They organize programs and events, write grant applications, design and lead programs, coach a variety of sports, donate art, cook for community events, promote activities, and clean up after the fun is done. We rely on volunteers to share their energy, passion and skill.

In small communities we may hear...

“Our volunteers are burnt out.”

“Young people don’t want to volunteer.”

“It’s STP... the same ten people.”

While we often hear these types of concerns in communities across Yukon, it seems somewhat contradictory because, at the same time, people are looking for a sense of community and social connection. Despite not always being involved, it is possible that they do want to give back to their community.

Volunteering has always played an important role in Yukon communities. If people did not help one another, they could never have survived the Northern environment. If they had not come together and shared resources, they would never have been able to develop infrastructure such as community halls and trails, and recreation, sport, arts and culture services. Yukoners are good at working together to implement a vision, tackling the required activities and celebrating their successes. Along the way, relationships, trust and a sense of community grow.

Sometime in the 1950s and 1960s, governments took over much of the work that used to be done by volunteers. People were hired to deliver services and build roads, recreation centres, churches and schools. This increased reliance on government shifted the nature of volunteerism so that today, we are faced with redefining what it means to volunteer.

We live in communities where, although we have connections with those who share the same interests, we do not always have trusted relationships and a sense of belonging. Instead, we ask, “Why should I be involved in my community?” and we are challenging local groups to prove that their initiatives are worth our time and talents. We need to encourage new thinking about volunteering by fostering an understanding of community and what it means to build community.

So what do we do? It is important to acknowledge that volunteering:

- changes throughout our life cycle,
- is different today,
- is a two-way relationship,
- is personal, and
- is a way to transfer and develop skills (Volunteer Canada, 2013).

If we want to engage volunteers, we need to invest time and energy into building relationships. It takes one-on-one conversations to discover and embrace the passion for community we all hold, and to find ways for potential volunteers to choose where they want to focus their energy and time.

Ultimately, volunteers stay where they are valued and treated well, where they feel a sense of connection and belonging, and where they are provided with opportunities to learn and grow.



WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Encouraging citizen engagement and responsibility may involve recruiting, supervising and retaining volunteers. Local volunteers need to work alongside staff to ensure the delivery of individual, social, environmental and economic benefits of recreation and sport across Yukon.

So how do you find volunteers? How do you support and inspire them? How do you make sure the volunteers are the right people for the work you have identified?

A valuable resource for ensuring the match between a potential volunteer and the work your organization needs doing is [Window of Work \(url90\)](#). This document explains the concept and provides a sample of an engaging volunteer application/interview form.

Volunteer Yukon knows that managing volunteers is important. However, it can be overwhelming for small, rural communities where one paid staff or even another volunteer is responsible for recruiting, selecting, supervising and recognizing volunteers. Larger organizations may have a full-time staff person tasked with volunteer management, but in rural and remote communities this is often one more thing on a long list of responsibilities.

The Volunteer Management Kit for Recreation Leaders (pdf65) was prepared by the Government of Northwest Territories to help recreation leaders provide their volunteers with a positive experience. The Kit contains tools, information and a way to help manage and organize volunteers. It also includes sections on recruitment, training, evaluation and recognition.

Best Practices in Volunteer Management: An Action Planning Guide For Small and Rural Nonprofit Organizations (pdf66) helps groups in small and rural communities use a framework of ten best practices to strengthen volunteer management practices. These are similar to the staffing and volunteer management process described earlier.

Laying the Foundation:

1. Valuing the role of volunteers
2. Defining rules and expectations
3. Developing volunteer management skills

Developing the jobs and getting the right people:

4. Reducing client and group risk
5. Creating clear assignments
6. Reaching beyond the circle

Creating an environment where volunteers feel they belong and want to stay:

7. Orienting and training volunteers
8. Providing supervision
9. Making volunteers feel they belong
10. Recognizing volunteer contributions

CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Volunteer Screening (url91) is a process that helps match people with volunteer positions while improving the quality and safety of the programs and services offered in communities. Screening involves making sure there is a good match between work or volunteer tasks and the person who will do it. For more information on volunteer screening, refer to the *2012 Screening Handbook (url82)* produced by Volunteer Canada.

One part of volunteer screening is a Criminal Records Check. Recreation leaders are responsible for taking reasonable measures to protect children and other vulnerable people. A Criminal Records Check (*pdf67*) involves a search of the Canadian Police Information Centre database operated by the RCMP for relevant criminal record information. For more information, contact your local RCMP detachment.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Recognizing where volunteers are in their lifecycle and what role helping others plays in their life is critical to the recruitment, retention and recognition process. The conditions, schedule and format of volunteering are important factors for people when selecting an organization.

Giving recognition is an important part of retaining volunteers. Today's volunteers are goal-oriented, tech-savvy and mobile. As a result, the types of volunteer positions they seek have changed. Being flexible and offering the roles and type of work they want is a form of recognition. Of course, not all volunteers want to be acknowledged in the same way, so getting to know them as individuals is important.

The Volunteer Experience Recognition Program (url92) helps organizations officially acknowledge and affirm their volunteers' contributions by providing each person with an individualized certificate that lists the knowledge and skills acquired and/or demonstrated while volunteering.

Volunteer Canada's Facebook (url93) provides additional ideas and events for recruiting, recognizing and retaining volunteers. Talk to others to find creative ways for showing appreciation to your volunteers.

Nominating your volunteers for awards is also an important recognition strategy. The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon, Sport Yukon, and Volunteer Yukon have volunteer award and recognition programs.