



**Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador**

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Guide to Writing Volunteer Position Descriptions

There are many types and styles of position descriptions – the following is just one example of the types of information that you should include.

Organization

List the name of your organization.

Position Title

This is a volunteer's identification, so give it as much prestige as possible.

Examples:

- Youth Leader, rather than Babysitter
- Office Assistant, rather than Clerk
- Special Needs Helper, rather than School Volunteer

Major Objectives

What does your organization do?

Write concise statements reflecting the goals of the services volunteers will perform. Take the perspective of a volunteer and use the goals statement to answer the question, "Why am I doing this?"

Examples:

- Minor soccer coaches will manage their teams and ensure each child is given equal opportunity to participate and enjoy the sport.
- Technology for Tots instructors will help children of low income families learn how to use information technology and the Internet.

Duties and Responsibilities

As specifically as possible, list each duty and responsibility of the position.

Qualifications and Requirements - What qualifications or equipment are needed?

Include necessary education, languages, any age limitations, preferred skills, credentials, time requirements, physical resources and human qualities necessary for performing duties.

Specific qualifications, references and screening should be required for volunteers working with vulnerable populations (children, youth, seniors, special needs clients). Similar precautions should be undertaken for positions involving management of money, assets and confidential information.

Be careful not to over qualify for the position - you could lose potential volunteers due to overly stringent educational or skills requirements, as well as burdensome time commitments.

Lines of Communication - Who will show volunteers what to do?

Identify where in the chain of command a volunteer will be working, and who will supervise her/his activities. In some cases, this will be a staff person or another volunteer with direct responsibility for the service. It may be one person or a committee of the organization's board of directors.

Orientation and Training

This includes hours of training and orientation available to volunteers, and may identify the people conducting it.

Times Needed and Place of Work

This should include hours of duty, days of the week, and where the volunteer is expected to perform the services.

Commitment Required

The minimum amount of time needed from the volunteer should be noted. This commitment is often based on your organization's investment in training and supervising the volunteer.

Benefits

List any benefits available to the volunteer, including payment of expenses. For example: free parking, liability insurance, freebies, and discounts from corporate sponsors. List less tangible benefits also, such as job experience and references. Target your benefits to the group you have targeted for recruitment, for example youth. (See sample description.)

Special Considerations

Any particular considerations **SUCH AS**: "Volunteers who work with children need lots of patience and enthusiasm." **OR**: "Volunteers who work in hospitals or seniors' homes must be able to cope with an environment of illness and / or ageing." **OR**: "This job involves a lot of outdoor activity and may require some physical labour." It is important for potential volunteers to think about their own interests and personal preferences and to self-screen as much as possible.

Contact

List contact name and other important information, such as phone and fax numbers and e-mail.

Sample Volunteer Position Description

Organization	Neighbourhood Services Co-op
Position Title	Neighbourhood Maintenance Assistant
Objectives	Neighbourhood Services Co-op works with teams of neighbourhood residents and student volunteers on specific neighbourhood improvement projects.
Duties and Responsibilities	Clean up yards and public spaces, design wall murals, sweep gutters, paint homes, plant flowers, general maintenance.
Qualifications and Requirements	Must be at least 16 and capable of performing low intensity physical labour. You must be willing to get dirty, so wear old clothes. Work gloves provided.
Lines of Communication	Team leaders will give instruction and guidance.
Orientation and Training	Volunteers meet with team leaders at 11:00 am on Saturdays for orientation and work assignments.
Time and Place of Work	Saturdays, 11:00 am to 3 pm. Meet at the Co-op office, 18 Good Place, at 11:00 am.
Commitment Required	Must commit at least 4 hours, including orientation. Work continues every Saturday May through October, except when raining. Can accommodate as many volunteers as available.
Benefits	Volunteer T-shirts will be given to each participant who completes four Saturday shifts. You will meet new people, see immediate improvements to the neighbourhood and help develop a collective sense of community pride. Student volunteers who demonstrate responsibility, reliability and teamwork skills will be given preference for part-time jobs in programs run out of the neighbourhood community centres. There will also be opportunities for full-time summer student employment for those accepted into post-secondary studies. All volunteers are covered by liability insurance.
Special Considerations	All tasks require care and thoroughness, from picking up garbage to painting flower boxes. Team leaders assign jobs, oversee the work and ask volunteers for input during each shift.
Contact	Joe Blow, Coordinator Neighbourhood Services Co-op, 18 Good Place Phone: 333-7777; email: joeblow@neighbourhoodcoop.go