A Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures

VOLUME TWO

in Ontario's Community Literacy Agencies

by Fiona Huebner
Community Literacy of Ontario
2000

Use of This Guide

Important Notices

Since there is no one typical literacy agency, there is not one set of policies and procedures to fit all. Suggestions contained within this document are offered as a guide and are not intended to be prescriptive. You are invited to use or adapt only what is applicable to the needs of your organization. Community Literacy of Ontario accepts no liability for the use of these policies. It is the responsibility of each agency to seek out appropriate professional and/or legal counsel for matters specific to their agency.

All sources have been cited, where known. If you recognize a source which has not been credited, please contact Community Literacy of Ontario.

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SECTION ONE: ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This section puts the Guide in context: **why it was written and how to use it**. This Guide is offered as a companion to Volume One of the *Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures in Ontario's Community Literacy Agencies*. While the material contained in this volume stands alone, it is assumed that most readers have already viewed the first volume. Although it is unnecessary to have both documents, the two are an ideal companion set for agencies undertaking the development of a comprehensive policy manual. In an attempt to avoid confusion and to keep the titles short, they will simply be referred to as Volume One and Volume Two.

Topics in this Section

This Guide builds on the process for developing your own policies and procedures presented in Volume One by offering additional policy development information on some of the key issues which face community literacy agencies.

1.1 How to Use This Guide

As in Volume One, each section will contain the following units of information:

New Topic	Some basic background information on the subject.
Your Turn	A checklist to help you summarize your own agency's current position and practices.
Tips and Resources	Practical insights as well as leads for further information. Please note that there are also Resources at the end of each section, in addition to the Supporting Resources sections at the end of both volumes of the Guide.
For Reference	Sample policy statements are provided from which procedures may be derived. In some cases, procedures are spelled out. Samples provided are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by CLO, but are offered to illustrate possible style, sense and wording. Some are included just to generate discussion within your own agency. You are encouraged to adapt rather than adopt.

1.2 Notes on Terminology

- The terms **board members** and **directors** are both used to refer to those who sit on the boards of directors of non-profit agencies.
- The terms **agencies** and **organizations** are also used interchangeably to identify community-based literacy program providers
- The term **executive director** is used to identify the senior staff person, although agencies may choose other titles for this position.
- The terms **learner** and **student** and sometimes **client** are used interchangeably to indicate the clients of literacy agencies.
- The term **Coordinator of Volunteers** is used as the title for the person who manages the volunteers (also known in the field as Student-Tutor Coordinator or One-to-One Coordinator or Volunteer Program Manager).
- **He** and **she** are used interchangeably throughout the text to refer to persons of either gender.
- Keep in mind that, depending on your agency's model of board governance, not all types of policy outlined in this Guide may be appropriate to your organization.
- **CLO** is the abbreviation for Community Literacy of Ontario.
- The 1998 *Literacy and Basic Skills Program Guidelines* is also referred to as the **LBS Guidelines**, for convenience and brevity
- **Job description** and **position description** are used interchangeably to identify all aspects of any particular job or position (whether paid or unpaid) within an organization.

- Volume One refers to *A Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures in Ontario's Community Literacy Agencies*. Volume Two refers to this document.

1.3 Welcome to Volume Two

While Volumes One and Two of this Guide are each stand-alone documents, they present a framework of four essential policy types. The following chart may be helpful in determining how the special topics featured in Volume Two can be placed in the context of the overall policy types.

Type of Policy Such	as... (examples here)	Found in...
1) Organizational	- Constitution and By-laws - Mission Statement - Beliefs and Values - Structure - Planning - Decision-Making - Liability and Risk	Volume One " " " " " Volume Two
2) Administrative	Directing the day-to-day **functions** of: - board members - volunteers - staff - students	Volume One " " " "
3) Operational Policies	Directing the **activities** of: - Human Resources - Volunteer Recruitment - Volunteer Recognition - Volunteer Screening - Financial Management - Fundraising - Fee-for-Service - Program & Service Delivery - Evaluation	 Volume One Volume Two Volume Two Volume Two Volume One Volume Two Volume Two Volume Two Volume Two
4) Rules	Directing the **conduct** and practices of the agency.	Volume Two

Please note that a combined Table of Contents for Volumes One and Two is included with this volume in the SD.5 of the Supporting Documents section.

1.4 Who the Guide Is For

Now that you've undertaken the "policy challenge," board members (who are responsible for agency governance) as well as senior staff (who are responsible for agency management) will be the ones charged with drafting and/or reviewing your agency's policies and procedures. Once your committee starts work, keep in mind **what the people affected by your policies really want to know**. Be able to provide answers to these essential questions:

- Why do we need policies? (purpose)
- What will this do for the organization? (effects)
- Will I get training/time/money/support to do what's required? (resources)
- What if I don't understand or I get stuck? (assistance)
- Can I express *my* concerns and problems? (feedback process)
- What if policies and procedures don't work? (process to change/correct)
- Will I be blamed/liable if something goes wrong? (explain/assign responsibility)

(Adapted from Writing Effective Policies and Procedures, *by Nancy Campbell, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1998.)*

If your group is overwhelmed with the task of policy development, try to scale down your plan and focus on the "bare minimum" elements first. You can fine-tune the details later. Policy-making is a dynamic rather than a static activity. Though it may seem a daunting task, **remember that this is a guide rather than a prescription for how to proceed**. These two volumes can help you set your own outline, but it is up to you to tackle one policy issue at a time, in a way that is right for your organization.

1.5 Service Quality Management Approach

This two-part project began in response to the needs of community-based literacy agencies as well as the directives issued by their primary funder, formerly the Ministry of Education and Training, now the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The 1998 LBS Guidelines outlined an approach for managing fully accountable literacy services with a list of requirements which included the expectation that all funded literacy programs are expected to have comprehensive policies and procedures.

Community Literacy of Ontario seeks to respond to concerns for quality assurance and professional management in our literacy sector. Even if all risks and problems cannot be eliminated, we believe that the development of policies and procedures can go a long way to support and enhance a quality literacy delivery system.

In the spring of 1998, Community Literacy of Ontario sent a survey to the community-based literacy agencies across the province to determine key priorities for policy development. The topics that topped the list in that survey are now covered more fully in this Guide.

If you are funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), you are advised to review their compliance requirements as outlined in the LBS Guidelines, and to seek clarification as necessary from Ministry staff as you develop your policies and procedures.

1.6 Defining Policies and Procedures

Essentially, policies are the guidelines, intentions and plans for **WHAT** an organization proposes to do, while procedures are an outline of steps for **HOW** these wishes and intentions are to be carried out.

For example, a **policy** statement might indicate a general intention such as:

Sufficient resources will be allocated for board development, to ensure that board members are properly trained and supported to perform their tasks as outlined in the position description.

The procedures would then detail how this policy is to be carried out. In this example, the procedures might specify that:

1. An up-to-date board manual will be provided to all incoming board members
2. An orientation workshop will be offered to all board members within two months of becoming directors of the board
3. There will be an annual retreat at which board members will focus on evaluation and planning activities.
4. Board members will participate in a minimum of two training opportunities per year.
5. Board members will evaluate each board meeting as a part of ongoing evaluation of all board activities.

The procedures may also indicate when and how these activities will occur and who is responsible for making them happen.

This Guide in general focuses on providing policies as a starting point from which the agency is encouraged to develop its own procedures.

1.7 Highlights and Considerations

This Guide contains a segment of useful material, called the *Education Dossier on Screening*, developed by the National Education Campaign on Screening. It is is a set of 20 master sheets suitable for copying and distributing to staff, volunteers and learners in your agency. To order additional copies or to obtain other excellent materials produced by them, contact Volunteer Canada (see the Supporting Documents in Section Ten of this document).

The sample policies contained in this Guide are not intended to be lifted wholesale for use as your guiding principles. Rather they are included to illustrate what may be useful in your organization. Every organization will have different needs and purposes to express through policy statements. It will be up to each board to determine which policies are required for the organization's unique way of operating. **Not all policies and procedures presented here will be warranted, or applicable, or of benefit to your agency**. Use this as a menu of available options to kickstart your board's discussions, and from which you may customize and adapt for your organization.

Policies by their very nature imply choices, defining one action as appropriate while another is not. Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) does not necessarily prescribe or endorse the policies contained within this document. However, we believe in **the importance of the process** of developing policies and procedures. Some sample statements provided are real policies, while most are composite expressions of ideas. Where there are legal implications, this Guide is no substitute for legal counsel.

1.8 How to Access Volume One and Volume Two

If you wish to order additional copies of this Guide or Volume One, please contact Community Literacy of Ontario (see title page at front of this Guide). We also encourage you to check out the CLO web site, where highlights from both Volumes are being posted. The address is **www.nald.ca/clo.**

SECTION TWO - POLICIES FOR PURSUING ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

This section looks at policies for two ways of expanding your funding sources: fundraising and fee-for-service. Many of the ideas may seem sensible and obvious when you read them but may turn out to be more contentious when they are discussed. There are no clear answers or ready-made policy solutions; each agency must make its own choices. Planning is essential as you navigate the "hit-and-miss" waters of fundraising success.

Although by no means a definitive guide to fund raising practices, this information can help you develop a sound policy base for your fund raising activities. Highlights contained here reinforce common themes found in current literature. A detailed reference list is provided in the appendices at the end of this section so you can continue to research if necessary.

Fundraising is often referred to as development or fund development.

See also Section 3, Policies on Volunteer Recruitment, for information on communicating the agency's message to various target audiences.

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Operational Policies: Financial Management, page 147
Organizational Policies: Beliefs and Values, page 35.

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

2.1 Fundraising Readiness

Wouldn't it be nice to convene a subcommittee, jot down a few ideas and policy guidelines, and then sit back and watch the money start rolling into your organization? Alas, fundraising is perhaps one of the most labour-intensive activities your agency will engage in. In short, it is a huge commitment which may require a reorientation in everything you do. The first question to answer is "are we really ready to fundraise?"

The reasons for fundraising are not hard to come up with. Great fundraising ideas are also easy to find. It is easy to be fooled about the enormity of the task when fundraising is one of the most written about and well-researched topics in the non-profit sector. The difficulty is in planning and then carrying through on your plan. Adequate time and human resources are essential. It also takes money to make money.

In order to make a decision about whether and how you want to seek alternative funding sources, ask yourself some basic questions.

Who does fundraising?

Fundraising is not a staff responsibility. It requires the direct, personal involvement of board members. Yet most board members feel it isn't their job either. There are two issues of concern here. One is that board members believe they are there to support the valuable service that the agency delivers to the community. They are often not made aware, in the job description, that fundraising is a significant expectation. In fact, a board is legally responsible for the financial health of the organization, which includes both "obtaining and managing the money required to run the programs and services" (TVO/United Way, *Board Basics*, 1995).

The other problem is that many board members see fundraising as a distasteful chore which they do not enjoy and are not inclined to get involved with. Either because board members do not have the expertise or they do not feel comfortable asking for money, they often view fundraising negatively.

Experts agree that the volunteers you recruit to the task are critical to fundraising efforts. If fundraising is to be a priority, you may need more team players than just those on the board to get involved in your efforts. One possibility is to recruit a specific council or committee outside the board but accountable to it. This would be composed of people with experience and interest in fundraising, marketing, public relations, and corporate solicitation.. Another option is to designate a number of seats on the board as fundraising positions. This is perhaps a more feasible option than starting a separate committee, particularly in smaller towns and organizations when you already have a hard time finding enough volunteers.

A board does not typically designate or hire out the total responsibility of fundraising to someone else. While they may hire experts to help guide and manage, they must be prepared to participate actively in the process. For existing members this may represent a shift away from a policy role to a much more hands-on working role. It may also be a significant shift in planning and emphasis. There are certainly both interpersonal issues and organizational issues which must be anticipated and managed. If the board is not behind fundraising, prospective volunteers and donors are likely to question the board's true commitment to and leadership for any fundraising efforts.

Be clear also about the extent to which board members are expected to contribute. Time is one thing, but many organizations insist that the agency can't ask for money unless all members have given personally. Decide what your agency expects as board commitment. Be sure that the work of your fundraising plan can be distributed fairly among many people and is not the responsibility of a few.

Resentful or Unsure about Fundraising?
Be sure that:

- the board members all fully understand that fundraising is a major priority for your agency;
- special recruiting efforts are made to bring in board members and volunteers who are interested and/or experienced in the various aspects of fundraising;
- the board is supported with appropriate training and support for fundraising tasks;
- a positive and enthusiastic attitude toward fundraising is encouraged.

Help your board come to terms with fundraising by providing orientation and setting clear expectations. Both staff and volunteer board members may benefit from this. It is the role of staff to help clarify the board's role and provide training and support. Outside experts or trainers can be called in to help your agency see the big picture and then focus on what to accomplish. One or two enthusiastic new members with some expertise or a fresh perspective may help change attitudes about the nasty "f-word." The main thing is to agree on leadership and responsibility for coordinating the tasks.

Could board members at your agency say that they leave the organization in better shape than they found it?

What is the money for?

In order to make plans, you need to have measurable goals which go beyond raising money. It is important to anticipate agency goals and needs so that fundraising starts before the funds are actually needed, not in last-minute desperation. Typically, donors and partners do not want to fundraise for administration, salaries and shortfalls. They want to make a difference to service delivery so that their impact can be felt by clients who need it most. Their contributions should be directed to specific programming costs or tangible capital items.

Does your proposed fundraising activity

- improve the quantity or quality of literacy training for the learners?
- demonstrate leadership and innovation?
- demonstrate sound management and fiscal responsibility?
- have an evaluation component to demonstrate success?
- fit with your mission and values?

A serious look at existing finances is called for. While you should be honest about the need to fund adequate administrative support, try to find initiatives which will appeal to a donor. Donors often wonder "what's in it for me?" that donors are interested in. Determine the true cost breakdown of all the services you provide. Analyse and try to align your needs and the donors' wants.

Even if you decide to hire a professional fundraise, develop your goals and action plans on your own. A rule of thumb is that you should know how much you want to raise during the next one, two and five years. You also must be clear on what you are raising money for.

For fundraising purposes, try to break your program costs into smaller parts, each of which could be funded as separate and distinct components. For example, you may decide that your goal is to develop a new family literacy program. This service will be funded and delivered separately from the one-to-one program that you offer. As the costs of an entire program may be fairly large, consider breaking them down so that partners might sponsor the specific costs of child care, special instruction, books and materials, or space rental, etc. Or you may want to expand service delivery to clients not typically funded under the LBS Guidelines. In this case, you might want to break down the average cost of service per person. Your fundraising approach might be to ask donors for the specific dollar amount required to help support one person to attend a one-to-one program or small group program for a year.

Make your case. A Case Statement is a brief summary of what you are proposing to raise funds for. It is used to explain the need and purpose to prospective funders. It is also useful in keeping the agency focussed on a specific objective. See the guide on how to write up an appealing case statement to present to funders in Appendix #2.6.4 at the end of this Section.

How do we start?

Since there are many reasons and many ways to seek money, you have to make strategic decisions about what to do and when. **Having a fundraising plan is critical to your success**. Initially, literacy agencies may find that a fundraising is a responsibility that must be phased in gradually. Low-risk ventures which are efficient and cost-effective should be tackled before attempting high-risk strategies. Ultimately you will want to establish ongoing, diverse funding sources. Above all, fundraising must be integrated and consistent with the goals and mission of the organization.

Beware of allowing the business of fundraising to take over and become the central focus of your agency. Legally, this has implications for the purpose(s) stated in the founding documents of the agency, which, in turn, affects the personal liability of directors. Fundraising should be secondary to, but supportive of, the mission of your agency.Beware of allowing the business of fundraising to take over and become the central focus of your agency. Legally, this has implications for the purpose(s) stated in the founding documents of the agency, which, in turn, affects the personal liability of directors. Fundraising should be secondary to, but supportive of, the mission of your agency.

Every board should have a development [fundraising] committee specifically dedicated to policy guidance for fundraising*. Many non-profits took root in the'80s when human service needs were at the heart of their founding and maintenance. But now we're in a period of greater accountability for both finances and programs. A development [fundraising] committee would ensure that at least some members are concerned about fund raising and fundraising performance.* (Norma Vale, Front and Centre, May 1995)

Research is the key. You need to familiarize yourself with the market, potential donors and opportunities available. Once you have outlined your purposes, your plan and your people, the fundraising team can proceed with further questions.

What is a partnership?

Partnerships are a type of strategic alliance where one or more organizations work together to gain mutual benefits. Organizations do not have to be equal partners, especially if there is a major partner with more of a leadership role. Partnerships need not always have a fundraising goal either, but the partnership model certainly lends itself to fundraising purposes. One example would be a joint venture among several community service agencies to undertake a large activity such as a Scrabble tournament. Careful and considered negotiations are called for, so that all parties understand the division of tasks and responsibilities. The alliance should bring all partners to the planning table at the earliest possible stage so that all the groups work together to develop a vision and commitment to the activity.

Another type of partnership is a sponsor relationship. Increasingly companies are increasingly looking for "causes" with which to ally themselves. Literacy is an ideal cause which can be tied to many social issues. In finding a corporate partner, literacy agencies must be sure that there is a "fit," or consistency with the mission and purpose of the agency. Consider the bookstore that might donate a percentage of all its sales on International Literacy Day to the local community-based literacy agency. Would a percentage of doughnut sales or bingo revenues be just as welcome?

What is the cost of fundraising?

As shrinking dollars putting a squeeze on staff resources, you need to take a serious look at what tasks are given to volunteers. You need to analyse carefully whether fundraising is going to be an effective use of time and resources. Often it is costly in the initial stages, as it takes money to make money. Be sure also to factor in the value of the time that will be required, both from volunteers and from paid staff. Later this will be useful in finding out how effective fundraising has been, on a per unit basis. The costs of fundraising should be discussed openly and should appear in the budget.

Communication is a critical part of a successful fundraising campaign, but marketing and outreach efforts must build an image long before the first request for money. Your credibility and reputation can pave the way and soften the market for giving. In addition, communications can have broader goals than fundraising.

Organizations need to keep people informed to build a relationship with donors. Talk about strengths, successes and accomplishments, vision, and the impact you have had on individuals and the community. Use the impact statements you gain from your ongoing evaluation efforts to demonstrate that you are qualified to meet literacy needs. But be honest about difficulties, needs and challenges, too. After all, the media thrives on more than the good news and/or requests which non-profits typically offer. New angles are required to make the media sit up and take notice.

As with recruitment efforts, you must be prepared to ASK. As distasteful as some people may find it, there is no avoiding asking. Even a hired professional fundraiser will not do the asking for you. Make sure that you are asking for contributions for a program rather than administration and "overhead." Suggest a level of contribution if you don't want to ask for a specific amount of money. Always follow up with a thank-you, and continue to cultivate donors by providing proof that their money is producing the results you indicated during solicitation.

People give to people, not causes. Face to face is still the best solicitation method.

Who can we target for funding?

Overall, individual donors contribute more than corporate sponsors, so it is important not to overlook this group. Tax considerations are seldom the basic motivation for giving. Donors just want to be clear about where their money is going. Demonstrate that they are making a difference.

Planned giving encourages donors to include a donation or bequest to your agency in their will. Although this may not be a big billboard campaign, it might pay for the fundraising committee to spend time identifying this potential market and presenting an appeal to that group. Consider outreach to lawyers, for example, so that they are familiar with your agency as they work with their clients in drawing up wills.

What are the good money-makers?

Some of the best money-makers may not be appropriate for your agency. If the plan is not a good fit, then don't get involved. The board has to be in agreement. If you are planning to enter a partnership or seek a sponsor, research their practices too. It is important that your agency be comfortable with the project and the partners you decide to work with.

Consider whether these different types of fundraising would be appropriate in your organization:

- mass media advertising campaign
- direct mail
- hiring a professional fundraiser
- telemarketing
- joint efforts and partnerships with other agencies
- corporate or institutional support
- gambling (Nevada tickets, casino night)
- collaboration ($1 from each school kit purchased or a percentage of each raffle ticket sold)
- celebrity guests
- dinners, concerts, dances, benefits
- games (especially those relevant to literacy such as Scrabble, spelling bees or bingo)
- raffles, contests
- writing contests
- read-a-thons
- book sales
- bake sales, car washes, yard sales
- sales of special promotional products (cookbooks, pencils, t-shirts)
- tag day at local mall
- penny drive
- coin drop boxes
- subleasing your additional space
- services/sidelines at other community events (selling hot chocolate, face painting, gift wrapping, coat check etc)
- fees charged for services
- you name it!

How do we know if fundraising was effective?

After putting out time, effort and money, your agency wants to know if their fundraising efforts were worthwhile. Even in the planning stages you need to build in certain measures or targets for fundraising success. You will want to evaluate both whether you made money and whether there were any other benefits.

Fundraising Evaluation: a checklist

- Did we make money?
- Did we make what we expected we would raise?
- How much staff and volunteer time were required? Was this more or less than anticipated?
- Did we generate worthwhile public relations and awareness?
- Were there other benefits and accomplishments?
- Did new supporters come forward?
- Did we improve relations with existing donors?
- Did we stay true to our mission and purposes?
- What worked well? Should we do this again?
- If so, what improvements can we make?
- Comments and reflections from the funders/donors?

Fundraising Ethics and Accountability

Every organization needs to determine its own values and practices and to set out in policy what it will do and what it won't do. If you have taken the time to develop or adopt high standards, be sure to communicate them to your potential funders and donors.

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy has recently produced the *Ethical Fundraising and Accountability Code* (see Appendix #2.6.1 at the end of this Section) in conjunction with charity leaders across the country. Charities that adopt it commit to fundraising practices that respect donors' rights to truthful information and privacy. They also commit to manage responsibly the funds that donors entrust to them, and to report their financial affairs accurately and completely. In order to be recognized by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy as having adopted this Code, a charity's governing board must pass the following motion as a formal resolution.

Name of your charity hereby adopts the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Guide as its policy. In so doing, members of the governing board commit to being responsible custodians of donated funds, to exercise due care concerning the governance of fundraising and financial reporting, and to ensure to the best of their ability that the organization adheres to the provisions of the Code. It is hereby confirmed that each member of the governing board has received a copy of the Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code and that a copy will also be provided to each person who is subsequently elected to the governing board.

Charities that adopt the Code are encouraged to notify the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

2.2 Fee-for-Service

If the boards of community literacy agencies are considering fundraising, they should also look at the potential to charge a fee for the services they provide.

What can we offer?

Consider the expertise of the staff, volunteers and learners within your literacy organization. Depending on the agency, you might be able to charge for:

- academic testing
- full assessments
- instruction (in the workplace, for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board clients, etc.)
- evaluation (ongoing, final)
- progress reports (formal, informal)
- administrative tasks
- materials
- clear language writing and assessments
- workshops
- parent and tots or family reading groups
- career counselling.

Whatever your agency offers, be sure to promote your excellent services and programs. Don't take for granted that everyone understands what your agency does. Consider a promotional summary of your services.

Promoting Our Literacy Services
We offer:

- literacy instruction: reading, writing, numeracy (learning activities may include some computer skills)
- an individualized curriculum
- learner-centred programs
- flexibility regarding hours, physical needs, other special needs
- progress reports that include evaluation and recommendations
- full initial assessments
- monitoring/reporting of attendance
- experience in learning disabilities, other specialties
- lower student:teacher ratio
- good value for the dollar
- dynamic, skilled teachers
- experience and resources developed over __ years in business
- results!

(Adapted from the Fee-for-Service *workshop, prepared by Vicki Trottier, Literacy Council of South Temiskaming.)*

Who can we charge?

Typically, literacy agencies provide free instruction to individual learners as they are funded by provincial LBS funding. However, those people outside the LBS eligibility criteria could be charged. Agencies may also offer special courses, workshops or services for a target client group. This might include delivering a service, for a fee, to the clients referred by social service agencies, employers, service clubs, or towns and municipalities. This requires a solid foundation of negotiation, understanding and dialogue between the literacy agency and the referring group.

You will need an invoicing and administration system that allows you to track payments that come from more than one source. Once you have different streams of fee-payers and non fee-payers in your agency, management and administration must be appropriately assigned to ensure compliance with the expectations of the funding bodies. How will the programs for different client groups be clearly distinguished? Will standards be applied differently? Is your service delivery consistent with your mission and founding documents? Is eligibility clearly outlined?

Depending on what you offer, you may charge a fee-for-service to individuals or funding bodies willing to pay on behalf of their clients. A community profile may help you determine where the literacy needs are in your community.

How do we set our rate structure?

Perhaps one of the most troublesome elements in a fee-for-service approach is determining what to charge. Traditionally, literacy workers have not been oriented to think of the business aspects of their work so such decisions are particularly difficult. Should rates be established by the hour or by the week? What would be a profitable fee that does not preclude fair access, yet compensates for all the expenses involved? Certainly a board that undertakes either fundraising or fee-for-service will have to examine the costs of doing business, perhaps more closely than a government funder ever has.

What is the minimum number of students needed to offer a program? Will group discounts be offered? Are there to be differential fees charged on services where volunteers assist in delivery of the services? Whatever the final decisions on a rate structure, your organization will need to develop contracts and letters of agreement which spell out the terms. As with any fundraising, care must be taken to ensure that the business activities do not jeopardize the non-profit status of the agency. Remember that fee-for-service activities must be financially self-supporting. This includes the costs of administering the program. Separate records and accounting procedures are needed so there is no confusion with MTCU's LBS funding. Until the literacy field can establish a common rate structure, each agency must work through these questions to develop an appropriate rate structure.

What else do we need to consider?

Before any promotional plan is launched be sure your agency has the time and human resources available. You should not promise what you cannot deliver. Be clear and specific in all communications.

You should also consider upfront, an evaluation system which seeks feedback from fee-payers. How will you measure client satisfaction? How should statistics be kept and reported to funders, fee-payers and others?

Personnel issues are another big area for discussion. Will there be clear guidelines on whether volunteers and paid staff are expected to provide fee-generating services? What standards will apply to those providing fee-generating services? Will the LBS program guidelines still be applied? Will an outcomes-based approach still be used? How will the agency set the appropriate policies and procedures for hiring the contract staff needed for providing the services which generate revenue? Will salary rates be comparable to those of current staff? You will definitely need policies about staff and volunteers who benefit by making "extra" money. Review your conflict of interest guidelines.

When workshops or materials are being developed, consider a policy to outline ownership rights. Be clear whether work is for the agency or remains the property of the creator, particularly if competition might arise. Fee-generating sidelines (like clear writing workshops and assessments) could become a source of competition between current and former staff and volunteers. Sometimes those who were trained with agency resources may find it worthwhile to leave and generate a business for themselves. Others, due to their expertise, may be invited to do work for another organization on secondment. All these scenarios have implications for staffing at your agency and the training you provide for staff and volunteers. Who will be given access to computers, lists, training and other "insider" information? Who should bear the costs of training that may later be turned to an employment advantage? Would an agreement help to ensure that staff and volunteers do not leave with their skills and use them to compete with the agency's services?

Even if you believe that self-monitoring would be preferable for your agency, you should have some general guidelines to outline the direction that your new ventures will take. As fee-for-service activities may be a new approach for your agency, be prepared to review often and refine the policies and procedures as you go.

2.3 Your Turn

Fundraising

Who and What

- ❑ Our board job descriptions clearly state that fundraising is a board member's responsibility.
- ❑ We make sure that activities are appropriate to the mission and purpose of our agency.
- ❑ We develop a purpose or "Case Statement" prior to each fundraising event.

How

- ❑ We always conduct a cost-benefit analysis prior to starting a fund raising activity.
- ❑ We set realistic time lines to adequately prepare for fundraising activities.
- ❑ We are realistic in estimating the human resources needed for our fund raising activities.
- ❑ We have sound financial management policies.
- ❑ We use the Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code as developed by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- ❑ We review regulatory obligations regularly and attempt to stay abreast of new legislation and

practices relating to fund raising.

Publicity and Donor Relations

- ❑ We have developed a list of potential donors
- ❑ We respect the rights and wishes of donors who request privacy.
- ❑ We keep careful track of our solicitation efforts so as not tap out our donors.
- ❑ We clearly inform donors and sponsors exactly what they're getting and how their money is put to use.
- ❑ We work hard to build and maintain a strong relationship with our donors and sponsors.
- ❑ We issue a card of thanks for all donations and contributions.
- ❑ We use information from various agency evaluation measures to inform our fundraising and communication efforts.
- ❑ We have a communication policy which applies to fundraising promotional messages.
- ❑ We regularly evaluate the success of our fundraising activities.

Fee-for-Service

- ❑ We have an up-to-date and accurate breakdown of what it costs to provide our services.
- ❑ We have developed a fee schedule which we review annually.
- ❑ We have a designated staff person responsible for coordinating fee-for-services promotion, contracts and staffing.
- ❑ We have a clearly defined personnel structure for contract staff who work on fee-generating projects.
- ❑ We have appropriate personnel policies to support and protect fee-generating activities.
- ❑ We have developed a plan for promoting our fee-for-service activities to prospective clients.
- ❑ We regularly evaluate our fee-generating services to determine client satisfaction.

2.4 Tips and Resources

Community planning. In smaller towns, and even larger ones, remember not to exhaust your community with too many requests from different agencies or even too many requests from a single agency. There are probably other non-profit agencies in your community who would be willing to get together and share fundraising information. The groups involved could also compare notes on a rate structure for fee-for-service activities. This collaborative model could be as basic as exchanging dates for events or as grand as a "multi-agency approach to joint fundraising" rather than competing for scarce resources.

Planning is also essential to make sure that you monitor and limit your financial requests. For example, you wouldn't want to ask the catering company who donated food for a special event to also buy a ticket to attend the special event. Remember, donors are a renewable resource that require conservation!

Ready or not? Take a fundraising audit to make sure you are really ready to undertake fundraising. The Fundraising Planning Checklist in Ken Wyman's *Planning Successful*

Fundraising Programs (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 1991) is a good place to start. It's also available from the Alpha Plus Centre.

Have your Wish List handy. Know exactly what your agency needs so that you'll be ready to move on partnerships or other opportunities that arise. Revise your "top 10" frequently. Include the big ticket items like computers and new program funding, as well as the less expensive articles like books and furniture.

Sponsor a learner. Once you break down the cost of offering services to learners, you can charge a fee-for-service or use the figures in your fundraising. Imagine a "sponsorship" program where an individual or corporation could sponsor the cost of one, or more, learners for one year in your program: "$6000 will support one learner in literacy training for one year." Service would still be free to the learner. You could ensure that regular letters of progress and appreciation are sent from the learner to the sponsor, while still maintaining anonymity. This creates a direct and personal connection to literacy for any donor.

Thinking outside the box. Fee-for-service doesn't always have to relate to our traditional funded services. Why not consider a catering agency, cleaning service, Christmas wrapping or promotional service (to put up posters and notices everywhere.) You might be surprised at some of the successful entrepreneurial ventures that Ontario's community literacy agencies are involved in. The learners, staff and volunteers work together to raise funds and provide on-the-job and self-management training. Be seasonal. Be creative.

Establish a planning cycle. for your fundraising activities. Decide what tasks are to be done and then set out the tasks on a month-by-month calendar, allowing plenty of time for board approval. Although it is a year-round process, you may need to block out holidays and other down-time in order to be realistic.

2.5 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented.

Sample Policy Statements

- This agency will not engage in any fundraising or promotional activities that show learners in a negative light.*

- Membership in this agency will be offered to all learners, tutors, volunteers, staff and other interested individuals and organizations. There will be no membership fee.*

- Learners are important partners in our fundraising decisions. They will be involved as decision-making members of the fundraising committee. They are not required or expected to make financial donations.

- Learners are permitted to undertake their own fundraising efforts for projects and activities. They are encouraged to set their own terms of reference and will be supported by a designated staff or volunteer resource person to ensure that activities are consistent with the mission and communication plan of this agency.

- Board approval is required for all fundraising initiatives. Staff, volunteers or learners must present details of any fundraising ideas to the board before any fundraising activity is started.

- Before this agency agrees to participate in any fundraising scheme, a cost/benefit analysis will be conducted to ensure that the effort will be worthwhile.

- This agency will try to maintain a high community profile and raise awareness throughout the year, not only to raise funds but also to publicize and promote its services.*

- This agency will spend a maximum of 25% of its annual gross income on direct fundraising activities and promotions.*

Sample Policy Statements (cont'd)

- This agency will put 10% of fund raising revenue toward new fundraising activities.

- This agency will keep detailed records of all fundraising activities. This will be used to demonstrate accountability and as a guide/plan for future work. The document will be a living document which can evolve as practices change.

- This agency will not require its board members to make financial contributions to the organization. Board members will be encouraged, however, to participate in at least one fund raising or promotional event each year.*

- Every board member is expected to have personal fundraising goals agreed on with the campaign chairperson. A confidential meeting of both parties will determine how much each individual should give or raise.

- It is the goal of this board to raise 25% of the total gross operating budget.

- Our agency will issue official income tax receipts only for legitimate donations.*

- All fundraising activities involving gambling and/or the sale of alcohol must first be approved at the board level.*

- This agency will not get involved with fundraising activities which involve gambling. This includes events, co-sponsorships, foundations, or any connection to funds which flow from the proceeds of gambling.
- Our agency will publicly acknowledge all gifts, be they monetary or services in-kind, unless

specifically requested not to do so.*

- Our agency will ensure that its staff and, in turn, its board members are up-to-date on the latest fundraising techniques and regulations. The organization will encourage all staff and volunteers to participate in professional development opportunities related to fundraising.*

- All communication to the public through promotional and fundraising material must be approved as per the agency's communication policy.

- All messages issuing from this agency must be approved by the Executive Director and one board member who is designated as the Communications Liaison.

* *Actual policy statements taken from the Literacy Council of South Temiskaming* Fundraising Policy Manual*, 1995.*

APPENDICES FOR SECTION TWO

Appendix #2.6.1

ETHICAL FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY CODE

(Reprinted with kind permission from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy)

A. Donors' Rights

1. All donors (individuals, corporations, and foundations) are entitled to receive an official receipt for income tax purposes for the amount of the donation. Donors of non-monetary eligible gifts (or gifts-in-kind) are entitled to receive an official receipt that reflects the fair market value of the gift. (Note: "Eligible gifts" are defined in Revenue Canada Interpretation Bulletin IT-110R2 or its successor. Some common gifts, such as donations of volunteer time, services, food, inventory from a business, etc. are not eligible to receive official tax receipts.) The charity's governing board may establish a minimum amount for the automatic issuance of receipts, in which case smaller donations will be receipted only upon request.
2. All fundraising solicitations by or on behalf of the charity will disclose the charity's name and the purpose for which funds are requested. Printed solicitations (however transmitted) will also include its address or other contact information.
3. Donors and prospective donors are entitled to the following, promptly upon request:
    - the charity's most recent annual report and financial statements as approved by the governing board;
    - the charity's registration number (BN) as assigned by Revenue Canada;
    - any information contained in the public portion of the charity's most recent Charity Information Return (form T3010) as submitted to Revenue Canada;
    - a list of the names of the members of the charity's governing board;
    - and a copy of this *Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability Code*.
4. Donors and prospective donors are entitled to know, upon request, whether an individual soliciting funds on behalf of the charity is a volunteer, an employee, or a hired solicitor.
5. Donors will be encouraged to seek independent advice if the charity has any reason to believe that a proposed gift might significantly affect the donor's financial position, taxable income, or relationship with other family members.
6. Donors' requests to remain anonymous will be respected
7. The privacy of donors will be respected. Any donor records that are maintained by the charity will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. Donors have the right to see their own donor record, and to challenge its accuracy.
8. If the charity exchanges, rents, or otherwise shares its fundraising list with other organizations, a donor's request to be excluded from the list will be honoured.
9. Donors and prospective donors will be treated with respect. Every effort will be made to honour their requests to:
    - limit the frequency of solicitations;
    - not be solicited by telephone or other technology;
    - receive printed material concerning the charity.
10. The charity will respond promptly to a complaint by a donor or prospective donor about any matter that is addressed in this *Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability*

Code. A designated staff member or volunteer will attempt to satisfy the complainant's concerns in the first instance. A complainant who remains dissatisfied will be informed that he/she may appeal in writing to the charity's governing board or its designate, and will be advised in writing of the disposition of the appeal. A complainant who is still dissatisfied will be informed that he/she may notify the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in writing.

B. Fundraising Practices

1. Fundraising solicitations on behalf of the charity will:
   - be truthful;
   - accurately describe the charity's activities and the intended use of donated funds;
   - and respect the dignity and privacy of those who benefit from the charity's activities.
2. Volunteers, employees and hired solicitors who solicit or receive funds on behalf of the charity shall:
   - adhere to the provisions of this *Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability Code*;
   - act with fairness, integrity, and in accordance with all applicable laws;
   - adhere to the provisions of applicable professional codes of ethics, standards of practice, etc.
   - cease solicitation of a prospective donor who identifies the solicitation as harassment or undue pressure;
   - disclose immediately to the charity any actual or apparent conflict of interest;
   - and not accept donations for purposes that are inconsistent with the charity's objects or mission.
3. Paid fundraisers, whether staff or consultants, will be compensated by a salary, retainer or fee, and will not be paid finders' fees, commissions or other payments based on either the number of gifts received or the value of funds raised. Compensation policies for fundraisers, including performance-based compensation practices (such as salary increases or bonuses) will be consistent with the charity's policies and practices that apply to non-fundraising personnel.
4. The charity will not sell its donor list. If applicable, any rental, exchange or other sharing of the charity's donor list will exclude the names of donors who have so requested (as provided in section A8, above). If a list of the charity's donors is exchanged, rented or otherwise shared with another organization, such sharing will be for a specified period of time and a specified purpose.
5. The charity's governing board will be informed at least annually of the number, type and disposition of complaints received from donors or prospective donors about matters that are addressed in this *Ethical Fundraising & Financial Accountability Code*.

C. Financial Accountability

1. The charity's financial affairs will be conducted in a responsible manner, consistent with the ethical obligations of stewardship and the legal requirements of provincial and federal regulators.
2. All donations will be used to support the charity's objects, as registered with Revenue Canada.
3. All restricted or designated donations will be used for the purposes for which they are given. If necessary due to program or organizational changes, alternative uses will be discussed where possible with the donor or the donor's legal designate. If no agreement can be reached with the donor or his/her legal designate about alternative uses for a restricted or designated donation, the charity will return the unexpended portion of the donation. If the donor is deceased or legally incompetent and the charity is unable to contact a legal designate, the donation will be used in a manner that is as consistent as possible with the donor's original intent.
4. Annual financial reports will:
    - be factual and accurate in all material respects;
    - disclose:
        - the total amount of fundraising revenues (receipted and non-receipted)[1];
        - the total amount of fundraising expenses (including salaries and overhead costs)[2];
        - the total amount of donations that are receipted for income tax purposes (excluding bequests, endowed donations that cannot be expended for at least ten years, and gifts from other charities)[3];
        - the total amount of expenditures on charitable activities (including gifts to other charities)[4];
        - identify government grants and contributions separately from other donations; and
        - be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and standards established by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, in all material respects.
5. No more will be spent on administration and fundraising than is require to ensure effective management and resource development. In any event, the charity will meet or exceed Revenue Canada's requirement for expenditures on charitable activities. (In general, section 149.1 of the Income Tax Act requires all charities to spend at least 80 percent of their receipted donations (excluding bequests,

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[1] *Total of amounts from lines 100, 102 and 113 of T3010 (Revenue Canada's Registered Charity Information Return, 1998)*
[2] *Amount from line 123 of T3010 (1998)*
[3] *Amount from line 906 of T3010 (1998)*
[4] *Total of amounts from lines 120 and 121 of T3010 (1998)*

endowed donations that cannot be expended for at least 10 years, and gifts from other charities) on charitable activities; in addition, charitable foundations are required every year to expend 4.5 percent of the value of their assets in support of charitable programs.)

6. The cost-effectiveness of the charity's fundraising program will be reviewed regularly by the governing board.

Appendix #2.6.2

18 COMMON FUNDRAISING MISTAKES... AND HOW TO AVOID THEM.

(Reprinted with kind permission of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy)

In today's fundraising marketplace, more organizations are asking for more money more often from increasingly sophisticated donors. It's not easy. But it isn't impossible, if you take the right approach and learn from your mistakes -- or better yet, avoid mistakes altogether. What are some that you should watch out for? We asked consultants across Canada to identify the fundraising errors they encounter most often. Here's what they said.

1. **Insufficient planning**

   Or, in some cases, no planning at all. Instead, there tends to be a crisis mentality, says Ebert Hobbs (Navion Financial Development Systems, Toronto). "People wait until they have a problem, then they look for someone to help them solve the problem rather than someone to help them implement a strategy." Most people treat their cars better than some organizations treat their fundraising programs, says Hobbs. Instead of periodic reviews of their fundraising needs, programs and capabilities, they cruise along thinking, "if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it," he says. Then, suddenly, "It gets broke. And it takes longer to repair than if you had kept it greased and oiled."

   Allan Holender (Holender & Associates, Vancouver)offers a remedy: "Move fundraising to the top of the agenda" by having your board recruit a development council composed of people expert in marketing and public relations, and interested in corporate solicitation and fundraising. This council's role is to "develop and put into motion an action plan to take the organization out of its present situation and into the future."

2. **Lack of clarity about what the money is for**

   Surprising as it sounds, says Glen Boy (Boy Campaign Consultants, Kitchener, ON), "Organizations will say they need $3 million, but when we ask them what for, they can't answer." They haven't defined their case.

   That just won't cut it in today's environment, says Ebert Hobbs. "The donor wants to know exactly what you're going to do with the money." You have to be specific. Don't just say, "We're going to do something in cardiac care." Tell them exactly what you're going to do, what machines you're going to buy, what research you're going to fund, who's going to undertake that research.

3. **An unrealistic view of time**

   Penelope Burk (Burk & Associates, Burlington, ON) sees this as the "number one problem, hands down." Organizations tend to work to their own needs deadlines. "They start too late, they don't take into account that the guy on the other side of the table has to go through a process as well, and then they go nuts when they can't get decisions right away."

   Fundraising takes time. William Sargent (Cathexis Associates, Burlington, ON) feels as if he can't say this often enough. "To develop a fundraising strategy and plan, recruit a fundraising committee, and implement the plan takes time. And you have to have a three- to five-year plan, not a day-to-day or week-to-week plan. It's part of the overall strategic planning and management of the organization."

4. **The wrong board leadership**

   Often, says Hilda Wilson (Hilda Wilson Group, Toronto) "nominating committees don't recruit the right board members for fundraising." Then, when fundraising comes up on the agenda, they all say, "Don't look at me. I don't ask for money." If fundraising is a major part of what an organization does, its board must recruit on that basis.

   By setting up a fund development council or fundraising committee composed of people recruited specifically with the financial future of the organization in mind, a board can develop a pool of future board members who are enthusiastic fundraisers.

5. **The wrong volunteer leadership**

   "Without strong fundraising volunteers who don't just talk the game but walk the game, you just can't make it," says Norm Haines (Haines Elliott Marketing Services, Calgary). Marnie Spears (Ketchum Canada, Toronto) agrees. She often runs into situations where an organization has moved into a campaign without asking key questions: Who are our prospects? Where are we most likely to get the money for this campaign? And, therefore, who has the right leverage to open those doors? If you don't ask the right questions, you won't get the right answers and you won't recruit the right volunteers. Or, you'll settle for second-level volunteers instead of top-flight ones.

   Can a situation like this be saved? Yes, says Spears, by recruiting additional volunteers. "You can have an honorary chair who may be more active than originally anticipated. Or you might want to have a couple of vice-chairs if you haven't recruited the right chair."

6. **The wrong fundraising method**

   Some organizations, says Ebert Hobbs, spin their wheels and wear out their volunteers doing unproductive fundraising programs. Often they try to copy seemingly successful ideas -- events or lotteries, for example -- without studying the specifics to see why the program worked well for one organization and whether the same conditions for success exist in their own organization. You have to know yourself, your donors and your volunteers to make good decisions about the best fundraising strategy for you.

   Related to this is overlooking less obvious, often longer term methods, such as planned giving. "I'm still amazed at the lack of understanding or the reluctance of boards to pursue planned giving," says Allan Holender. "They see it as too far down the road, yet the investment of dollars now will reap huge rewards for them."

7. **Unrealistic expectations**

   Barbara Roberts-Silver (BJR Consulting Services, Beaconsfield, QC) runs into this all the time with special events. A group decides to do, say, a golf tournament. They've never done one before, but they're convinced they can raise pots of money, and what's more, get $20,000 each from a dozen or so corporate sponsors. But often, she says, they haven't asked the most basic questions -- How much will it cost to run the event? How many people have to attend just to break even? How much would you have to charge? How many people do you need to sell tickets? What relationship do you have to those prospective corporate sponsors? And so on. You need a plan, a budget, and a critical path.

8. **Seeing corporations as saviours**

   It's common for people to think that the first and best place to go for money is the corporate sector, says Joan Blight (Joan Blight & Associates, Toronto). "There's very little understanding that of all donations made, corporations contribute only slightly more than one percent." Charities should instead "start with friends of the organization, cultivate people who are already close to you and help them bring in other people."

9. **Poor negotiation skills when dealing with corporations**

   "It's a real killer," Penelope Burk says, and it happens especially with sponsorships. Organizations go in to ask for $50,000 and too readily settle for $5,- or $10,000. In individual fundraising, it's better to come away with something than with nothing, but the same isn't always true for corporate fundraising or sponsorships. Corporations usually want something in return - recognition, profile, exclusivity. If you trade that away to one company for a low price, it will be hard, if not impossible, to get more from another company.

Burk offers some advice. Be clear, upfront, what it costs to run your program or project. If you know what you need to make your program a success, she says, you'll recognize, if you're offered half or ten percent, "it's not a deal." And think of your colleagues. "It helps the whole sector when one person negotiates a good deal," Burk says. "It makes it more likely that the company will be mindful of negotiating a good deal with the next guy."

10. **Thinking too small**

A charity needs $50,000 as soon as possible to replace lost funding or to keep a program going. A few months later, it needs $35,000 to do something else. Often, says William Sargent, it will tackle the problem piecemeal, in small bites, instead of sitting down and saying, 'Over the next three years we're going to need $675,000 to accomplish X, Y and Z.' If they did that, Sargent says, they'd get out of the bake sale-bingo-raffle approach to fundraising and instead do some strategic planning for fundraising and recruit some high-powered volunteers to run a serious campaign.

11. **Not understanding donors**

"Philanthropy needs to be donor-driven," says Ketchum's Marnie Spears. "A common mistake is to go immediately to solicitation" without taking the time to understand donors, their motivations, what philanthropy means to them and what they want out of it. You have to do some solid research on donors, "not just in the back room, but across the table from them, in their living room or office."

12. **Treating all donors the same**

Paul Mack (Paul J. Mack & Associates, Burlington, ON) works with a lot of churches. "Congregations want to treat everyone the same," he says. It's difficult to persuade them to segment their donors and to ask for different amounts of money from different people. He often convinces them by what he calls "bearing witness." He takes the parish priest with him on a few fundraising visits, who can then attest to the wisdom of donor segmentation by saying something like, "We raised $35,000 in seven visits, and there are 993 more parishioners to see."

Once you've successfully asked for different amounts of money, you have to carry this special care of donors forward. "You have to have in place programs that are appropriate to the level of interest and contribution a person is making," says Ebert Hobbs at Navion. "You can't send the same letter to someone who has been giving you $500 a year for ten years and someone who's brand new."

13. **Not knowing who your donors are**

Some organizations don't keep adequate donor records. They might be raising $100,000 a year, says Glen Boy, but they don't really know where it's coming from, why people gave, or what component of the program they gave to.

Betty Speyer (Artsmarketing Services, Toronto) says it's the most fundamental mistake she come across. "People don't invest the time and money to really know their database." She's had clients claim to have 4,000 names on file. But, on closer inspection, it turns out that less than half have ever given, and less than half of those have given in the past eighteen months. "Some charities spend money on direct mail and phoning, but they don't spend money doing database analysis and donor profiling." Your database should be a key resource, not a warehouse for stale, useless information.

A related mistake, says Steve Thomas (Stephen Thomas & Associates, Toronto), is buying a computerized fundraising program and thinking it's going to solve all of your problems. "That's like thinking a shovel is going to build a garden," he says. You have to have the people in place who understand the system and can make sure the right data goes in and the right analysis comes out.

14. **Not investing in new donors and donor research**

A really strong direct mail program will keep 80 percent of its donors from year to year, says Fraser Green (FLA Group, Ottawa). That means it loses 20 percent. Yet many organizations with direct mail programs are reluctant to invest in prospecting. Why? Because they want money right now, and they're reluctant to invest in something that may not break even in year one.

You have to look at the life-time value of donors, Green says. "If you know your donors give an average of 1.3 gifts a year of $35 and their life expectancy with you is four years, that's more than $200. If I told you I had a truckload of $200-donors outside at $14 a piece, how many would you buy?" Still, it's a struggle to get some organizations to see this.

It's just as hard to get them to invest in donor research, says Steve Thomas. "We try to encourage clients to spend 10 percent of their money to find new ways to get donors -- like door-to-door canvas, inserts, or donor-get-a-donor programs." He also favours focus groups to discover themes that appeal to donors, followed up by phone or mail surveys. This can help charities better understand how to strike a chord with donors. The problem is the same: a reluctance of organizations and their boards to invest in something that may not have an immediate payback.

15. **Taking the "he dumped me" approach to lapsed donors**

"If you have people on file who haven't given to you in two years, you tend to think of them as stale," Fraser Green says. "But if you were to go back and prospect these lapsed donors, you'd probably have 3-5 times better success than you would prospecting for new donors. They're warmer leads." Organizations overlook this, he says, because they tend to think that the donor made a deliberate decision to stop their support. That's often false. "In direct marketing, you're trying to interrupt someone and get their attention for a few seconds. A lot of the time, you don't succeed."

16. **Not stewarding current donors**

"Some organizations treat people much better as prospects than as donors," Marnie Spears says. Donors don't just want your thanks, they want information, feedback, involvement. They want to know that the building was built or the program initiated, and what the results have been." Some large organizations, she says, have recognized this, and have put in place directors of stewardship programs.

Fraser Green raises a related point -- seeing the "back end" -- inputting the data, issuing the tax receipt, sending the thank-you letter -- as a chore rather than an opportunity. "If you open a batch of incoming mail and find a cheque for $500, should that get processed the same way the $22 gets processed?" he says. At a certain level, you should consider phone calls or hand-written thank-you notes from the executive director. "Or consider using the thank-you letter and the receipt as an opportunity for introducing or marketing another way of giving," he says. "For example, if you just sent me $30, why don't I send you back a thank-you letter and introduce you to the idea of giving $5 or $10 a month and offer that you can call for more information."

17. **Insufficient or no attention to marketing**

You have to build the profile of your organization and seek out your target markets, Penelope Burk says. "You have to hammer home the name and purpose of the organization to the community as a whole, and then do segmented and targeted marketing, which is aimed at getting to the people who are most likely to support you before you ask them for money." If more organizations did this, she says, and if they hired professional marketers just like they hire professional fundraisers, they would end up spending much less on fundraising.

18. **Expecting the fundraising consultant to do it all**

Vince Bradley (Canadian City Bureau, Calgary) hears this all the time. Boards think that they just have to hire a consultant and the money will roll in. Wrong, says Bradley. Consultants work in partnership with charities. Fundamentally, he says, philanthropy, especially capital campaigns and major gift fundraising, depends on volunteers -- board members and others who are willing to both give and ask for money on behalf of the organization. "It isn't consultants or even staff who win or lose campaigns," Bradley says. "It's volunteers."

Appendix #2.6.3

FUND RAISING AS A PART OF THE ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

(Reprinted with kind permission of the Literacy Council of South Temiskaming from the Financial Health Section of their *1998 Strategic Plan*)

Goal: To ensure diversified sources of funding

Objectives:

- to actively seek out at least three different sources of funding each year
- to investigate and apply for foundation grants
- to investigate and apply for funding from various government ministries
- to actively fundraise according to the approved fundraising plan

Goal: To secure long-term funding

Objectives:

- to research potential sources of funding
- to lobby identified service clubs, corporations and foundations for long-term sponsorship
- to develop a plan to set aside a certain percentage of our fundraised/earned (non-grant) revenue for future contingencies

Goal: To develop/review fund raising plan on an annual basis

Goal: To ensure cost effective and productive fund raising

Objectives:

- to evaluate existing fund raising calendar and eliminate non-profitable events
- to assign each member of the Board of Directors responsibility for one major fundraising event
- to present all new fund raising initiatives to the fundraising committee for honest evaluation of profitability
- to review fund raising plan and outcomes annually

Goal: To ensure public awareness of our programs and services

Objectives:

- to ensure that each fund raising activity includes public awareness information
- to encourage the presence of media, dignitaries and community partners at each and every fund raising event. Media releases both prior to and following the event will be issued
- to acknowledge all event participants

Plan of Action:

- *To create a Fundraising Committee at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting.*
- *The fundraising committee will meet and develop a plan to be presented to the Board by February of each year.*

Appendix #2.6.4

OUTLINE FOR WRITING A FUNDRAISING CASE STATEMENT

1. Mission statement
2. How long has the agency been running
3. Why was the agency started?
4. What has the agency achieved?
5. Have the objectives changed over the years?
6. How successfully have program targets been met?
7. What are your present objectives?
8. How successfully are these objectives being met?
9. What are your plans for the future?
10. How will you carry out these plans?
11. How did you used to raise funds?
12. How do you raise funds now?
13. How successful is your fundraising?
14. Show how your program helps people (not just itself!) ... list examples, quotes and testimonials from various stakeholders
15. Clarify the end results - get the donor excited
16. Outline your plans in forms of projects, not operating costs
17. Use emotion - demonstrate the effect (expected outcomes) your program will have on the community.
    a. if service were reduced or eliminated
    b. if service was expanded.

Appendix #2.6.5

THE FUNDRAISING PLANNING CHECKLIST

Task Yes		No	Needs work
We have a written mission statement, a short, clear exciting explanation of why it is important the organization succeeds.			
Our financial goals mesh with our project goals.			
We have researched national trends in fundraising.			
We have researched local trends in fundraising.			
We have researched trends among other organizations like ours.			

We have researched our fundraising history.			
We know what human resources are available to us.			
WE know what financial resources we have available to invest.			
We know our potential donors' interests.			
We have clear criteria for successful fundraising.			
We know what return we can expect on dollars invested.			
We know what return we can expect on time invested.			
We know what different types of fund raising usually cost and return.			
We are not dependent on just one funder.			
We are not dependent on just one fundraising technique.			
We make good use of volunteers in fundraising.			
The volunteers think we make good use of volunteers in fundraising.			
Staff are not expected to do most of the fundraising.			
All our board members give some money to the campaign, to the best of their ability.			
Some board members are actively involved in fundraising, beyond going to meetings.			
Board, staff, and volunteers all know what the money is for.			
The need is defined in terms of our misison, our projects, and people helped, not core costs.			
All appropriate people have a voice in shaping the plan.			
All appropriate people have enough time to think about their suggestions.			
All appropriate people have written copies of the plan.			
All appropriate people review the plan regularly.			
Progress toward objectives is evaluated regularly and adjustments are made to the plan.			
The whole plan is reviewed at least once a year and adjusted.			
Fundraising isn't always the last item on the board's agenda.			
At least some board members are recruited for their fundraising ability.			
We stick to the plan.			
We test new types of fundraising.			

We repeat successful fundraising techniques, and are not always trying new ideas.			
We upgrade our donors regularly.			
We more than replace the donors that we lose.			
We have good donor records.			
Time and money is provided for professional development to the fundraising staff and volunteers.			
We research fundraising techniques before launching a campaign, so we know the chances for success.			
We're not constantly in a funding crisis.			
We don't create crises by waiting until a grant has almost expired before finding other funding sources.			
Fundraising volunteers and staff don't feel burned out.			
We know how much money the projects/programs will need next year.			
We know roughly how much money our projects/programs will need in five years.			
We know roughly how much money our projects/programs will need in ten years.			
Other:			

(Adapted from Ken Wyman's *Planning Successful Fundraising Programs*, 1991 Canadian Centre for Philanthropy)

Appendix #2.6.6

FUNDRAISING EVALUATION

Fill out a form like this for each fundraising activity you do. Some questions may not apply to every type of fundraising. This is in addition to a summary that would show actual dollars and time invested and returned, specific recommendations, and so on.

Fundraising Project: ____

Date: ____

Evaluation by (name): ____

Criteria Yes		No	Needs work
Did it make money - net?			
Did it net enough money to meet our target nevestment? (Cost per dollar raised)			
Did it meet our target for Return on Volunteer and Staff time investment?			
Was it measurably good PR?			
Was the PR worth the time and the money?			
Did it bring in new supporters?			
Was the cost per new supporter reasonable, compared to other methods?			
Was it consistent with our principles and mission?			
Did it improve relations with important funders or retain donors?			
Did the funders say so, or is that just our subjective opinion?			
Was an evaluation done that suggested improvements for the future?			
Should the fundraising technique be used again?			
Will repeating this technique improve the net results?			
Other:			

(From Ken Wyman's *Planning Successful Fundraising Programs*, 1991 Canadian Centre for Philanthropy)

Appendix #2.6.7

USEFUL FUNDRAISING REFERENCES

There are numerous excellent resources to consider as you develop fundraising plans.

Pursue **learning and training opportunities** with agencies such as the United Way, local volunteer centres, Ys, local social planning councils and even continuing education departments. They often offer consultation, courses and workshops in fundraising, planning, financial management and other leadership development topics.

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy offers newsletters, annual conferences, an excellent website and resource library. They publish (in print and online), The Canadian Directory to Foundations and Grants. Many of their resources are available online and there is even more to access if you are a paid member/subscriber. (Fees range from $18.75 - 41.25 per month, depending on your organization's total revenue.) Its definitely worth a visit at **www.ccp.ca**
1329 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario. Telephone:

Charity Village is a great website for the non-profit sector and has a lot of useful information on fundraising. Check out www.charityvillage.com

TVOntario has produced a two-video series called **The Fund Raising Game** ($59.) It is available from TVO Viewer Services at 1-800-663-1800. Also check with TVO at 1-800-463-6886 or www.tvo.org to see if it will be airing again in the near future.

Canadian Fundraiser is a **newsletter** published 24 times per year by Hillborn Group ($97 for 6-month subscription. To subscribe or request a free trial copy, call: 416-696-8146.

The National Society for Fundraising Executives (NSFRE) is a professional association which provides useful information, training as well as referrals to fundraisers. Professional fundraisers can earn the CFRE designation (Certified Fundraising Executives) which is recognized in Canada and the United States. Check their website at www.nsfre.org for a great online resource centre on the fundraising.

CLO has recently prepared the ***Directory of Strategic Funding Opportunities*** *(1999-2000)* which was distributed to all CLO members. You can purchase a copy for $15.00 by calling 705-733-2312.

Share information with your colleagues around the province. There are many experienced and skilled fundraisers within the Ontario literacy scene. Tim Nicholls Harrison at Literacy Owen Sound has done workshops and developed many useful forms. Vicki Trottier at the Literacy Council of South Temiskaming has not only drafted some excellent policies for fund raising, but also offers training workshops in fundraising and fee for service. Pat Melling at Quinte Literacy also has a useful package to support the work of their fundraising committee... and there are more! Use **AlphaPlus** to exchange ideas, questions and to make new fundraising connections.

The **Society of Fundraising Executives** for professional fundraisers in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada, has a website with many useful links, at www.mic.ns.ca.

A **Registered Charitable Donation Number** is relatively easy to apply for and is certainly worth applying although the application may not always be successful. To receive forms and information, contact the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) at 1-800-267-2384.

Hire a professional to come and do a fundraising audit of the needs and readiness of your organization. They will provide you with in-depth analysis and strategic advice to set you off on the right foot. Or you could try the **do-it-yourself approach**. You can purchase inexpensive printed or software versions of fundraising audits which will help your organization determine your fundraising readiness. Purchase from sources such as the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. Or borrow them from libraries and resource centres which stock other non-profit management information.

Appendix #2.6.8

FUNDRAISING READINESS

Tim Nicholls Harrison from Literacy Owen Sound has developed a Fundraising Quotient to help plan for fundraising events. Take the "test" to find out if you're ready.

	YES	NO	NOTES
1. Is the fundraiser planned for 2 or more months from now?	10	-5	
2. Are there similar events in the community.	5	10	
3. Are there conflicting events at the same time as your fundraiser?	-10	5	
4. Does the fundraiser suit your organization?	5	-5	
5. Are there natural connectors to your fundraiser? (time of year, etc.)	5	0	
6. Are the key elements of the fundraiser available at the time needed?	5	-10	
7. Have you examined the possible risks associated with the fundraiser?	5	-5	
8. Does the fundraiser require you to spend a large amount of money?	-5	0	
9. Does the fundraiser require you to have more than 40% capacity to break even?	-10	0	
10. Do you know the ratio of staff:volunteer time?	5	0	
11. Does the fundraiser seem to fit the 80/20 rule?	5	0	
12. Have you made a list of all the materials and prizes needed?		5	0
13. Have you tried to get your list donated?	5	0	
14. Have you tried to get your list discounted?	5	0	

15. Do you have a publicity and promotion plan?	5	-5
16. Have you developed an implementation plan for your fundraiser?	10	0
17. Have you assigned people for each of the tasks in the plan?	5	-5
18. Have you started a thank you list?	10	-5
TOTAL		

SECTION THREE - POLICIES FOR VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

There are no two ways around it - running a volunteer program is a labour-intensive activity. The prospect of recruitment alone may be daunting enough, but it doesn't end there. In fact, recruitment can hardly be examined in isolation as it is at the very heart of community-based literacy delivery. Recruitment, orientation, supervision, recognition and evaluation within a volunteer program are so interrelated that it is difficult to delineate where one ends and the next starts.

This section considers some of the policy aspects of volunteer management specifically related to seeking and finding volunteers.

Recruitment: to seek for the purposes of engaging, hiring or enlisting people into an organization. In other words, it is the activity of ***trying to find the right volunteer for the right job at the right time****. (Marilyn Mackenzie,* Dealing with Difficult Volunteers*, 1990)*

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Administrative Policies: Policies that Apply to Volunteers, page 78
Operational Policies: Human Resources, page 107.

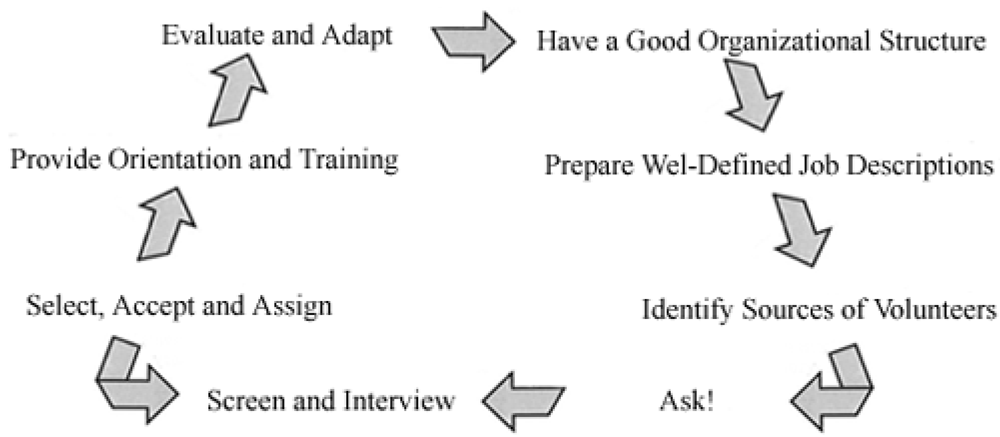
This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek

qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

3.1 Recruitment

The recruitment process starts long before signs, brochures and public service announcements are ever sent out and continues long after the volunteers have been found. The same basic process can be applied to all types of volunteers, with a few adaptations depending on the position. It is important to aim for equitable treatment of all who give their time and talents, whether as board members, tutors, clerical support, or teaching assistants. The following process can be used as a basis for developing recruitment policies for your agency.

The Volunteer Recruitment Process



3.2 Good Organizational Structure

Success seeking the right kinds of volunteers for your agency starts with a sound organizational structure. With a strong sense of purpose and a compelling mission statement, you can fully assess the viability of a volunteer program. Is your organization committed enough to proceed with further recruitment efforts, or is some fine tuning required first, to cultivate a better climate for volunteer involvement? To assess your readiness, consider the following checklist:

- Are the organization's goals and plans understandable to others?
- What can volunteers contribute to your mission and purpose?
- Can their efforts be evaluated?
- Does the agency have a positive attitude toward volunteers?
- Does your structure require volunteers in the following areas and can it support them?
    - Policy/Resource/Governance (for board or committees)
    - Program/Service (for tutoring, classroom help, delivering service)
    - Administrative (for clerical/office support)
- Are there adequate systems for supervision, orientation and support of volunteers?
- Are there policies to support volunteer efforts?

- Do you have trained supervisors?
- Have you assessed the time and resources needed to fully support and coordinate your volunteers?
- Have you allocated an adequate budget to the volunteer program (including recruitment and recognition)?
- Who is responsible for recruiting volunteers? Staff? Board? Both?
- Who is responsible for recruiting board members? Nominating Committee? Executive?
- Have you considered what could go wrong and how to avoid it? (Further aspects of risk management are covered in Section Eight.)
- Have you included volunteers under the insurance coverage?
- Are there policies in place to guide all of the above?

Next, analyse why volunteers would work for you and what your agency could offer them. The first step toward ensuring a mutually beneficial experience for the volunteer and the agency is to ensure a fair exchange of value for value.

If the world's best recruiters are satisfied volunteers, who better to consult than your current volunteers? Ask them:

- How does the organization create a positive environment for volunteers?
- Is the volunteer work meaningful and rewarding?
- What current systems work well for volunteers? What could be improved?
- Does the agency foster an accepting attitude toward volunteers? What are some suggestions and new ways to create a welcoming environment for volunteers?
- Are volunteer suggestions welcomed, acknowledged or acted upon?

Your organization's attitude toward volunteers will be reflected in well-thought-out policies and procedures which foster and support satisfied volunteers.\

3.3 Well-defined Job Descriptions

Based on the capacity of your organization to accommodate volunteers, you will need to assess your volunteer needs. Consider what tasks need to be done and whether the work is appropriate for volunteers. The best way to make this a systematic process to is have detailed job descriptions for all volunteer positions. A template for developing a standard job description is provided in the Resources at the end of this section. Note that it includes full disclosure of the expectations, hours, working environment, reporting structure and training provided - essentially, everything a prospective volunteer might want to know before making a decision.

"Well-defined jobs are the basis of all recruitment attempts. If you don't know what you are looking for, you are not likely to find it. If you do find it, you probably won't recognize it." *(McCurley,* 101 Tips for Volunteer Recruitment*, 1988)*

Keep in mind both your traditional or current volunteer positions and also new jobs you might want to develop in the future. Perhaps there are previously unconsidered possibilities for work at your agency which you could be brainstorm with your board. Some might be short-term, one-time tasks, while others might be ongoing over a period of time. The main thing is to consider creatively the "holes" in your organization's expertise and determine who you will need to undertake those tasks.

Do you need someone to:

- develop a web site?
- manage a resource library?
- contribute financial expertise to the board?
- work with students to improve their reading, writing and/or numeracy skills?
- do monthly follow-up calls to all volunteer tutors?
- help as mentors to orient new volunteers?
- move furniture and paint the office?
- update your mailing lists?
- write press releases and liaise with the local media on a regular basis?

The more specifics you can offer in breaking down the elements of the job and defining the tasks, the less intimidating it will be to prospective volunteers. Both the agency and the volunteer will appreciate the clarity. If necessary, modify elements of the job such as the hours, duties, location or even the long-term expectations to make the position more attractive. The concept of a "universal" volunteer to fulfill all duties no longer applies, especially as we move away from the era of long-term volunteers to short-term (episodic) or required-term (obligatory service) volunteers.

Having current job descriptions in itself implies that the agency is functioning effectively, which adds to the recruiting appeal. Your policies should spell out your commitment to having up-to-date job descriptions, how often they will be reviewed, and who will be responsible for reviewing or writing them up.

3.4 Sources of Volunteers

With solid job descriptions in hand, you will be better able to target and find the people with the qualifications you need.

- A college student studying library science might be perfect for cataloguing your resource library on the computer.
- A board member's unemployed teen might create a web site for you.
- A book club might yield tutors who want to share their love of reading.
- Recently retired local politicians or school board trustees might be just the "process" people you need to develop your board.
- College students studying personnel management may be the ideal people to help develop your Personnel Manual.

Our literacy organizations need to be strategic in seeking the "right" kind of volunteers for specific positions. One general public service announcement plea for all positions will not go far enough. Rather than "attracting" volunteers, you are "seeking" them, so be sure you are looking in the right places.

Be clear, also, on whom you don't want. Perhaps certain people will not be suitable for certain jobs. Maybe college/university students who cannot make a full-year commitment are not ideal for tutoring. Perhaps charismatic, high-profile local leaders would be useful in leading your fundraising campaign, but not if they are associated with too dominant a religious or political message. Indeed, you may also need to seek beyond the traditional sources of board members to balance the skills and talents you require for the organization. If you have a solid group of dominant leaders on your board, you may need to switch your focus to seek a few more conciliatory consensus-builders. Board composition is further described in the Resources at the end of this Section. In any case, some type of screening criterion will be essential in maintaining a respected, efficient and safe agency.

If you are having difficulty recruiting volunteers, consider a planning (brainstorming) session or a special committee of the board that can devote time and energy to examining fresh approaches for recruiting.

Doing a little research may uncover useful information even if it seems time-consuming. You might learn a lot if you could develop a profile of current successful volunteers. Continue with the recruitment strategies that have been most appealing to your best volunteers while modifying the practices that have been less successful.

Sometimes the problem with recruitment may be the tight circle of volunteers who seem to have a stranglehold on how things are done. Perhaps new approaches to recruitment are not attempted, or maybe prospective volunteers worry they will not "fit" with the current organization. Policies for recruitment can help ensure that new blood and fresh ideas are welcome.

There are many other policy aspects to consider. What do your policies say about the people you will seek and those you will avoid? Who decides who will be eligible to volunteer?

One third of Canadians who do not volunteer said they would volunteer if asked. *(Statistics Canada)*

3.5 Ask

The tone and wording of your appeal are your primary recruitment tools. How you communicate to prospective volunteers should be a key element of your communication strategy. Particularly in a literacy organization, the language you use can be so important to your success. For example, consider the difference between requesting volunteers to "complete the application form" and to asking them to "fill out the interest sheet."

It is much easier for a prospective volunteer to pass up a "we need anyone" message than to turn down a targeted "we need you and here's why..." message.

The most successful method to get someone to do something is to ask them. This is important to remember if you combine your general marketing outreach with the pitch for new volunteers and learners. This can be done successfully if the messages are clear and distinct. However, to really draw someone in, there is nothing as effective as a targeted message that is authentic, specific and personal. A one-on-one request is ideal. Even if your request is turned down, a feeling of respect for a thoughtful and intelligent agency may result in future goodwill.

Be careful to achieve balance between formalizing the recruitment process and appearing desperate for volunteers. The worst recruitment notice is something like "Help, we're desperate! Come and volunteer." This sense of urgency does not always attract the type of volunteer the organization wants or needs.
(Gallagher, Safe Steps*, 1998)*

When asking someone to volunteer, the organization should be ready to respond with answers to inquiries. As part of the recruitment process, provide a brief information package, with the job description, to all prospective candidates. Perhaps you can hold regular orientation sessions or set up one-on-one introductory meetings to give the agency a more personal face. This will ensure fair treatment to all incoming volunteers.

Recruitment needs to be tied into the larger communication strategy. Depending on the population or audience you are attempting to reach, you will have to create appropriate messages and materials. Try to understand what obstacles might prevent your messages from reaching the audience and how you might overcome such barriers. For example, perhaps an announcement to recruit tutors on the cable television channel is a less effective way of reaching those reading enthusiasts who watch less TV.

Your organization may need to consider policies on wording, formatting and visual style of all print documents, as well as guidelines for messages in the media (including TV, radio, Internet). Policies should set out how public messages are approved. Whether communicating with prospective volunteers, learners, donors, funders, other agencies, the media or the general public, your policies and procedures can ensure that your communications are consistent, professional and accurate.

3.6 Screen and Interview

A consistent process for screening and interviewing volunteers can save both time and energy. Please note that Screening and Interviewing are covered in greater detail in Section Nine.

The format, timing and location for volunteer intake need to take into account the convenience of the prospective volunteers while not becoming unwieldy for the organization's staff. There may even be a role for volunteers as agency ambassadors to greet and provide introductory information to the prospective volunteers.

This may be the first personal contact that a person has had with the organization. Consider first impressions. An honest description of the agency, the position and the screening process are essential. Focus on the specifics of what the prospective volunteers can expect and answer their questions at the intake interview. Trained interviewers can explain the necessary screening process before a volunteer is accepted. A consistent interview format with specific questions will ensure that details are not forgotten and everyone is treated fairly. However, make sure that the questions asked (on forms or in person) really determine whether the volunteer will have the ability and interest to do the job.

Eligibility, and the screening and/or the election procedures (if applicable) must be made clear up front so as not to cause offence, misunderstanding or embarrassment later.

Some agencies also use larger orientation sessions or group training to inform their prospective volunteers about the agency and their duties and functions. During this phase, volunteers may still opt to leave if they realize that the work is not for them. Prospective volunteers should be informed about any waiting periods that can realistically be expected before:

- they are interviewed
- they are given training
- they are actually placed in their volunteer position.

Your policies can outline clear criteria for the selection of volunteers as well as a system for explaining to candidates how the process will work.

3.7 Select, Accept and Assign

Communicate clearly with volunteers every step of the way so they will know what to expect. Your policies can specify that all those interviewed will be contacted within a specific period of time. Once the appropriate checks have been successfully conducted (see also Section Nine), it is time to welcome the new volunteer to the organization. Signing a contract or agreement will get the relationship off to a good start.

At this stage, there should also be some contingency plan for rejecting a candidate or reassigning them to a more appropriate job. The responsibility for contacting and then assigning the volunteer should be clearly outlined. Is this a task for volunteers or for staff? How long can the selection process be expected to take? In the case of tutors, they may be accepted and even trained but not matched with a student until a suitable match is found. Keeping in touch during this waiting period or even finding temporary assignments for new volunteers will ensure that they do not lose interest.

Your recruiting effort should not falter for lack of planning or supporting policies. A prospective volunteer should not be lost now simply because of confusion and bad communication. This is likely to create negative feelings about the agency's management style.

3.8 Orientation and Training

Sometimes the final step before being fully accepted as a volunteer is to attend training. In fact, training may be seen as a part of the screening process that gives the Coordinator and the volunteer a chance to get better acquainted. Some literacy agencies may not insist that volunteers attend the training before they actually begin their duties although these agencies may require that volunteers attend training soon as possible after they start volunteering. The important thing is to let prospective volunteers know if, when and how training is provided with your agency. They also need to be informed about the nature of the training and what will be expected of them.

Training may include a tour of and familiarization with the facilities as well as basic training for the job. Training may even require the volunteer to complete certain sample assignments. New volunteers should be provided with all the relevant guides, policy manuals and/or handbooks promptly. In their early days with the organization, the main thing they need to know is where they can turn for help and support. (See an Outline for a Volunteer Handbook, page 105, Volume One.)

Adequate training and support are the surest way of creating a positive experience for volunteers. Not only will they succeed in their tasks, but a successful volunteer experience will also encourage them to continue volunteering. Consider carefully the time and energy you spend on orientation, training and development for your volunteers. Evaluate training to ensure that it is appropriate and effective.

A plan to orient and train the volunteers is certainly important but so is the training and orientation required for the staff who will also work with volunteers. Your policies and procedures can emphasize the training obligations of the agency to both paid and unpaid personnel.

Further information on ongoing support is included in Section Four, Policies for the Recognition of Volunteers.

Transferrable skills. Please note that much of the information on recruiting volunteers can also be applied to the recruitment of potential learners/students. Although the approaches may differ, the systems that you set in place can be adopted and adapted for bringing in the learners who can use your services.

3.9 Specifics of Board Recruitment

Perhaps one of the most important types of recruitment is finding board members. Particularly in small community-based programs, these people will be the brains and energy and often the "doers" behind a successful organization.

Board recruitment may be handled by a Nominating Committee. The committee reviews the by-laws which set out the composition and election of a board. This committee also develops the procedures for ensuring that this nominations process is clearly communicated and followed. The committee tries to find excellent board members to fill the skills and expertise gaps on the board. This should be considered an ongoing function rather than a rush job in the last two weeks.

Board recruitment: A year-round responsibility.
Recruiting good board members is crucial to your organizational success, so keep an ongoing file called "People Who Would Make Great Board Members." Each time you meet or hear of someone, add his or her name to the list.

A Nominating Committee can also be responsible for monitoring board needs, developing selection criteria, maintaining records of board members, evaluating board effectiveness and making sure that orientation, training and development activities are available. It is up to this committee to review and make recommendations on any by-law amendments or policies and procedures associated with board recruitment. There is certainly enough work to establish this as a permanent committee rather than an ad hoc one set up just prior to the annual meeting. Your agency's work is too important to accept just any "warm bodies" whose arms have been twisted to join the board.

Your standing Nominating Committee should quickly invite new board members to contribute fresh ideas on further successful ways to recruit others. The Nominating Committee is one committee where board experience is not a prerequisite. Use new perspectives to avoid the pitfalls of doing things a certain way just because it has always been done that way. Board recruitment techniques need not be so different from general volunteer recruitment, but asking individuals to stand for board nomination will almost certainly require the personal touch.

In the voting process, some worthy candidates may not be elected or selected. They may be considered for other positions within the agency. The Nominating Committee may play a role in redirecting talents to other tasks. Be sure to advise prospective candidates about the process, such as whether they must go through an election process or board interviews. You must also be honest about the time, energy and expectations associated with the position. The serious obligations and responsibilities must not be misrepresented, although reassurance can be offered through thoughtful orientation, training and the support that you can provide. (See an Outline for a Board Orientation Manual, page 104, Volume One.)

Sometimes, it's hard to find board members. Circumstances, misperceptions or historical fact may make your agency less appealing to volunteers and/or board members. Whenever possible, communicate openly about board activities so that people will have a better understanding of what the board does and plans to do. Reducing the mystique may go a long way to capturing the interest of future board members. It is important to be honest in addressing public attitudes and concerns. A longer term communication strategy, to improve general awareness of the work of your agency, may be needed before focussing on recruitment efforts.

Staff members and individual board members who are not on the Nominating Committee can be invited to suggest or nominate prospective volunteers. If you do not have enough applicants to warrant an election, you may still decide to interview all prospective board members. One or two members of the Nominating Committee could be assigned to work as an interview team.

Special consideration should be given to developing unique policies and procedures for board recruitment. (See an outline of Duties of the Board Nominating Committee in Resources at the end of this Section.)

3.10 Your Turn

Our Organization

- ❑ Our community has a good understanding of who we are and what we do.
- ❑ We have a profile of volunteers who volunteer with us now and have volunteered in the past.
- ❑ We have a profile of the type of volunteer tasks that need to be done.
- ❑ Our agency has a good reputation and positive image within the community.
- ❑ We have assessed and reduced the level of risk associated with each volunteer position.
- ❑ The organization has discrimination and affirmative action policies which apply to the recruitment of volunteers.

Job Descriptions

- ❑ We have a job description for each volunteer position.
- ❑ We know the volunteer benefits of all positions (what we can give back).

Sources of Volunteers

- ❑ We are well connected to a broad network of people and agencies in the community.
- ❑ We review our sources of potential volunteers regularly.
- ❑ We use appropriate tools and methods to reach those we want to attract.
- ❑ We try to demonstrate our willingness to be inclusive by attracting a broad cross-section of volunteers which reflects the diversity of our community.
- ❑ We review our recruitment plan regularly to ensure that we are indeed finding the volunteers we need.

Communicating

- ❑ Our advertising and outreach is targeted at those who would be interested in and qualified for the positions which are available.
- ❑ We have a Communication Strategy.We readily supply up-to-date and accurate information about our agency to all prospective volunteers.
- ❑ We use non-discriminatory language in our recruitment messages and ads.
- ❑ We follow up with all volunteers who contact us.

Interviewing and Screening

- ❑ We have a consistent volunteer interview process.
- ❑ We have a list of prepared questions to ask each prospective volunteer in the interview.
- ❑ We have a system for evaluating the prospective volunteers which is consistently applied.

Accepting Volunteers

- ❑ We have a plan for dealing with unsuitable candidates.
- ❑ We have contracts for new volunteers.
- ❑ We have a process for welcoming new volunteers.

Orientation and Training

- ❑ We have a plan for orienting and training volunteers.
- ❑ We have personnel policies in place for both paid staff and volunteers.
- ❑ Our volunteer training includes a component of anti-racism and anti-oppression awareness.

Board Recruitment

- ❑ We have a complete board orientation kit/manual which answers most questions new board members have.
- ❑ We have a Board Nominating Committee which reviews the organization's by-laws and policies with respect to board recruitment.
- ❑ Our Nominating Committee meets throughout the year to assess board needs and to search for new board members if necessary.
- ❑ We hold a board orientation session annually.

3.11 Tips and Resources

Convene a committee to study closely who your volunteers are and who they could be. This planning group can look at all aspects of the volunteer program within your organization. Let the committee draft a process based on the experience of your agency, as well as that of other social services who work in your community or even other literacy agencies across the province. Compare notes. Compare data. Then decide what will work for you. Commit to establishing a year-round calendar for recruitment, which might include a schedule for the following activities:

- a review of suggestions by outgoing volunteers
- a survey of the current volunteers
- short term and long term agency plans
- an evaluation of current recruitment practices
- timetables for inviting or encouraging nominations
- a review of selection criteria, interview procedures
- a review of orientation and training needs and opportunities.

Add this to your shelf. You can find simple and concise information on board recruitment, including checklists, forms and assessment tools for board development. You can order *Board Building: Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for-Profit Organizations* for a mere $5 from Alberta's Muttart Foundation. Tel: (403) 425-9616.

Brainstorm the benefits of volunteering in your agency. Start by asking those who already volunteer. Go through this process for both the board members and the tutors. Ask them:

- what attracted you to volunteer with this agency?
- what do you see as the rewards and benefits of volunteering with this agency?
- why do you continue volunteering?
- what are your suggestions for future approaches for recruiting new volunteers?

You can do this exercise through individual surveys, which allow time to reflect. You can also use this as a group exercise that generates discussion. Record the ideas. Include both the tangible and the intangible rewards of volunteering. Show the prospective volunteers what you can offer them.

Returns for Volunteering

- reimbursement of expenses
- discounts
- identification cards
- coupons or gift certificates
- name tags
- plaques or awards
- gift items
- letters of commendation to the volunteer's employer, family or religious organization
- record of job skills
- insurance coverage
- child care
- transportation
- annual dinner or luncheon
- parking
- relationship with the clients/learners
- training and learning opportunities
- academic credit
- being part of greater literacy effort
- involvement in worthy cause
- a sense of belonging.

If you have nothing to list under what you can offer volunteers, then seek corporate and community partners to help offer perks.

This might also be the time to seek outside help. Having trouble selling the board on new ways of doing things? Need some recruitment inspiration? Invite someone from the local United Way to speak about current recruitment practices. If your program is in a larger centre, try contacting the Volunteer Centre. If your program is in a rural area, consider contacting the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Talk to other successful organizations who use volunteers and find out what works for them.

Keep your fingers on the pulse. Survey your volunteers regularly for their feedback, not just on the role they perform but for ideas that might help the organization as a whole. Ask them for their candid "parking lot" comments: what would they say about the organization or the position to their best friends? Listen then pay attention.

3.12 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. The statements are presented under several sub-headings, which follow the general sequence of information in the foregoing text.

Sample Policy Statements

Volunteer Recruitment

See also Policies that Apply to Volunteers, page 82, Volume One.

- Mandatory service placements (eg., Workfare, co-op, community service) may be considered for any volunteer position within this agency, provided that the applicant undergoes the agency's selection process.

- Mandatory service placements will not be eligible to volunteer in a one-to-one tutoring capacity, although they may tutor in a supervised or small group setting.

- Volunteers who are 19 or younger are required to show written consent from their parent or guardian prior to volunteering in this agency.

- Volunteer recruitment will be given agency support, resources and attention, comparable to efforts for recruiting staff or finding financial resources.

- A Volunteer Profile will be developed each year to help guide recruiting efforts. To the fullest extent possible volunteer recruitment efforts will aim to reflect the community.

- All prospective volunteers will be given an information package which outlines the agency's expectations, job descriptions, selection process and background. This will be provided as soon as possible after the first inquiry.

- All volunteers will be expected to sign a contract indicating that they have been given a clear outline of the expectations.

Selection and Placement of Volunteers

- All prospective volunteers have a right to be interviewed by the Coordinator of Volunteers.

- The person responsible for the supervision of volunteers will take part in the interviews of prospective volunteers.

- Selection criteria and interview questions used in this agency are fully compliant with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

- The Coordinator of Volunteers is responsible for establishing the selection criteria for volunteer tutors and for conducting reference checks and has final authority to select and assign the volunteer candidates. Specially trained volunteers may be permitted to assist in contacting the volunteer, and conducting interviews and initial orientation.

- Volunteers may be required to submit documented proof of their ability, qualifications, and experience, a physician's medical certificate, and relevant memberships.

- Volunteers waiting to be trained or assigned to duties may be permitted to assist with tasks in the office or to help experienced instructors in a small group setting.

- Volunteers will be fully and honestly informed of the expectations and responsibilities of their volunteer position as well as any risk or liability which the position might entail.*

- No volunteer will be placed in a position for which he is not fully qualified or for which the organization cannot provide adequate training.*

- Volunteers may turn down a specific placement within the organization if they are not comfortable with the position. Volunteers have the right to request changes in the expectations of their position.

- No one will be accepted into our agency until all screening is complete.

- Conditional offers of acceptance, prior to completion of all screening, may be allowed only with the written permission of the Executive Director.

- All volunteer placements begin on a "trial" basis for a period of ___ days. At the end of the probationary period, an interview between the volunteer and the Coordinator of Volunteers will evaluate the extent to which the objectives of both the organization and the volunteer are being satisfied.

- Any volunteer who, after acceptance and assignment by the agency, enters a course of treatment or medication which might adversely impact upon the performance of her volunteer duties should consult with the Coordinator of Volunteers (or in the case of board members, the Chair of the Board).

Training and Development

- No volunteer may be placed in a position with this agency until she has completed the required training and orientation.

- Initial tutor training is scheduled four times per year. Prospective volunteers may have wait until they have completed their training to be assigned. Volunteer tutors may assist in small groups prior to completion of their training but they will not be assigned to a one-to-one tutoring situation until their initial orientation and training has been completed.

- This agency recognizes the importance of training, development and support in keeping competent and satisfied volunteers as board members, tutors, fundraisers and administrative support. A committee will be established to study training needs and develop training strategies, plans and supporting policies. The committee may study or consider, but is not limited to, the following:

    - a process for hiring and selecting appropriate trainers
    - a process for evaluating the training methods
    - topics to be covered in the orientation
    - recommendations for how and when to offer training
    - recommendations for content, information and modules to be covered
    - creation of opportunities for ongoing training, appropriate to the needs of the position
    - alternatives to group training sessions (eg., online courses)
    - development of a peer coaching or "buddy system" for new volunteers
    - the value of volunteer support meetings, if desired (during or after actual training)
    - the budget line for staff and volunteer training, and make recommendations
    - requirements for attending regular "refresher" sessions
    - reimbursement for supplemental training which is not officially required (volunteers and staff)
    - policies on volunteer management training and professional development of paid staff

- This agency offers the Laubach system of tutor training which is provincially and nationally recognized.

- This agency conducts in-house tutor training of ____ hours/days in duration. These sessions for volunteer intake are done three times per year in September, January and March. The Coordinator of Volunteers is responsible for this training.

- All volunteers seeking to tutor with our agency are expected to participate in tutor training conducted by the regional literacy network. The Coordinator of Volunteers will advise potential volunteers of upcoming training dates. An Agency Orientation session, which introduces volunteers to our organization, will be provided to potential volunteers to complement the network's training sessions.

- No tutoring will begin until the volunteer has successfully completed all the initial volunteer orientation and training sessions.

- All volunteers, regardless of experience elsewhere, will be required to participate in the volunteer training for this agency.

- This agency believes in supporting volunteers with additional training and educational opportunities, as is possible with in the operational scope and budget. Volunteers will be asked to participate in the planning and design of any continuing education.

- All volunteers will be asked to sign a form indicating that they have read and understood policies and other documents before they commence their job duties.

Board Recruitment
See also Policies that Apply to Board Members, page 73, Volume One.

- Board members will serve a two-year term for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

- Board members are expected to take at least one year off the board after serving their maximum term, to allow for new members to develop leadership capacity.

- Only current board members and invited guests are permitted to attend board meetings.

- Any interested person is permitted to attend board meetings, although only board members will be permitted to vote on motions. Guests may be permitted to speak and make presentations to the board if they have been granted time on the agenda by the chair(s).

- This agency has a permanent Nominating Committee with responsibilities as defined in the by-laws and the terms of reference for the committee.

- Since this agency believes in the importance of a strong governance board, it is our policy to have a standing Board Development Committee, to oversee the recruitment, orientation, training, evaluation and recognition of board members, and related activities.

- The nomination and election process for board members is set out in the by-laws.

- Our board will have a minimum of 8 directors and a maximum of 12.

- Board members will be drawn from the following representative areas:
  2 with fundraising experience/background
  1 from local small business
  1 with a legal background
  3 from social service/volunteer agency backgrounds
  2 volunteers from within the program
  1 representative from the local media
  2 members at large
  1 learner representative.

- The Nominating Committee is given the authority to determine the needs and skills required of the board for the upcoming term of office. Based on guidelines determined annually by the board, the Nominating Committee will seek board members who have specific skills or represent special interests.

- Each member of the board is expected to sit on at least one committee.

- Since this agency deals with a special needs client group, we seek to fill two or more board positions from the families, guardians and/or referring agencies who will best speak on behalf of the clients.

- The board will attempt to have at least one learner as a director.

- A board member in good standing will:

    - attend a minimum of nine meetings per year
    - serve on one or more committees
    - support and participate in fundraising activities.

Removal and Resignation
See also sample Resolution Processes, page 120, Volume One.

- When any volunteer or board member wishes to resign, this agency asks for notice in writing to be forwarded to the Executive Director.

- A board member who has consistently failed to meet expectations despite the resolution process can be removed by a special meeting of the board. All board members will receive advance notification and a majority vote is required to remove the director in question.

- In the event that a board member dies, resigns or is removed from office, the remaining board may choose to

    i. appoint an individual to fill the remainder of the term (till the next AGM) OR
    ii. allow the sector or group represented by the departing board member to nominate or appoint someone OR
    iii. leave the position unfilled until the next AGM.

Communication Policies
See also Other Administrative Policies, page 73, Volume One or Policies for Pursuing Alternative Funding in Section Two of this document.

(* denotes statements taken from Linda Graff's **By Definition**, second edition, 1997)

APPENDICES FOR SECTION THREE

Appendix #3.13.1

LIST OF BOARD CHARACTERISTICS

(Adapted from: *101 Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard, 1988)

Check the characteristics and experience you think would be desirable to have represented on your board of directors.

Management/Administration

- ❑ Finance/Accounting
- ❑ Law
- ❑ Personnel
- ❑ Hiring Executive Director
- ❑ Strategic Planning
- ❑ Needs Assessment
- ❑ Membership Services
- ❑ Public Relations
- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Entrepreneurial Activity
- ❑ Computerization
- ❑ Managing Geographically Separate Offices
- ❑ Fund Raising
- ❑ Special Events Management
- ❑ Other: ___________________

Community Representation

- ❑ Geographic Spread
- ❑ Seniors
- ❑ Youth
- ❑ High Profile Leader/Spokesperson
- ❑ Minorities
- ❑ Business/Labour
- ❑ Religious community
- ❑ Teachers/Educational System
- ❑ Collaborating Organizations
- ❑ Media
- ❑ Males
- ❑ Females
- ❑ Other: ___________________

Board Process

- ❑ Leadership
- ❑ Future Leadership Potential
- ❑ Vision and ideas
- ❑ Public Speaking
- ❑ Community Saavy/Contacts
- ❑ Belief in Cause
- ❑ Good Motivator
- ❑ Good Follower
- ❑ Other: __________________

Program Expertise

- ❑ Client of the program (past or current)
- ❑ Volunteer with the program (past of current)
- ❑ Business partnerships
- ❑ Training and Conferences
- ❑ Starting new Projects
- ❑ Proposal Writing
- ❑ Other: __________________

Appendix #3.13.2

DUTIES OF THE BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Board Nominating Committee exists:

- to maintain records of board and board committee members, including information on skills, interests, experience, board-related orientation and training, and terms of service.
- to work with the Board Chair.
- to identify future board needs.
- to analyse the strengths and weaknesses within the current board.
- to identify necessary selection criteria for recruiting new board members.
- to gather and to generate names of prospective board members.
- to research and screen prospective board members.
- to recommend, to the board, a list of possible board members.
- to work with the Board Chair to make sure that proper nomination and election procedures are followed.
- to review bylaws, policies, and procedures on recruitment, selection, assessment, and training of board members, and to make recommendations for change to the board on an annual basis.
- to make sure that orientation, training and other development opportunities are available to the board and to individual board members.

- to make sure that the effectiveness of both the board and individual board members is assessed on a regular basis.

(Page 19, *Board Building: Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for Profit Organizations*, Muttart Foundation, 1997.)

Appendix #3.13.3

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

Each position in your organization, whether paid or volunteer, should have a written job description. People who are in the same position can share the same job description. Here are some useful categories to help develop or revise your job descriptions.

- Job Title
- Location
- Objective/Purpose of the Position
- Job Summary
- Supervisor
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Qualifications/Experience/Characteristics Required
- Benefits/Rewards Offered
- Training Offered
- References Required
- Time Commitment (hours) required
- Term (Length of Service)
- Probationary Period (if applicable)
- Working Conditions
- Reporting Relationship
- How Evaluation will be done, by whom
- Review date (when it will next be reviewed)
- Approval Date (when last approved)
- Signatures

Remember board approval is required to make job descriptions official.

SECTION FOUR - POLICIES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS

"Good recruitment can attract people but only good volunteer management keeps them. Recruitment actually continues throughout the life of the volunteer, since 'retention' is simply the process of re-recruiting the volunteer every time they show up." *(McCurley,* 101 Tips for Volunteer Recruitment*, 1988.)*

Keep your volunteers motivated by having solid organizational policies in place. The pins and plaques alone won't do it. Consider what motivates your volunteers and ensure that this is reflected in the specific policies of recognition as well as in the more general management of the agency.

This section considers some of the policy aspects of volunteer management specifically related to retaining and recognizing satisfied volunteers. The following broad definition for the word "recognition" opens up discussion for the many related policy aspects.

Recognition: to acknowledge, to express gratitude or obligation for, to take notice of
(Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary)

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Administrative Policies: Policies that Apply to Volunteers, page 78.

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

4.1 Recognition and Retention

From the start, your agency inspires confidence by demonstrating the volunteer-friendly face of your organization. You show a true recognition of volunteers in the thoughtful ways you

- target outreach
- provide clear background information
- have friendly and accessible staff to talk to
- welcome and respond to calls and inquiries
- offer useful orientation and training to familiarize volunteers.

Demonstrating to volunteers the kind of support they can expect goes a long way to alleviating any anxiety about the work he is taking on. Show them you have anticipated all their needs and concerns and have made provisions to meet them.

In order to retain good volunteers you need to recognize the factors that contribute to volunteer dissatisfaction. The following list provides a framework to look at your agency's capacity for retaining and recognizing volunteers.

The most common reasons for volunteers losing interest are:	**The most common reasons for volunteers remaining committed** are:
➢ discrepancies between expectations and reality ➢ no feeling of making a difference ➢ too routine, no variety ➢ lack of support ➢ little prestige ➢ no chance for personal growth ➢ no chance to meet personal needs ➢ too little chance to demonstrate initiative or creativity ➢ tension among co-workers.	➢ they feel appreciated ➢ they can see they make a difference ➢ there is a chance for advancement ➢ they feel capable of handling the tasks offered ➢ they receive private and public recognition ➢ there is opportunity for growth ➢ their personal needs are met ➢ they are involved in the decision-making process ➢ there is a sense of belonging and being part of a team.

(from the Metro Toronto Volunteer Centre, 1999.)

4.2 Volunteer Needs

The factors which contribute to volunteers losing interest are also opportunities to provide recognition of the needs, motivations and contributions of volunteers. The common reasons for volunteers losing interest (see above) offers a useful framework to develop a list of volunteer needs.

Expectations versus reality
When reality does not measure up to expectations, disappointment and disillusionment are the

result. Your best tool for recognizing and supporting volunteers is to be as specific as possible in all communications. Not only does it show your agency as professional and thorough but it also ensures that all parties are clear about what to expect. Volunteers will appreciate the reassurance of support right from the beginning when you show you have anticipated their questions and concerns.

The need to make a difference

Many volunteers give their time and talent in the genuine hope of making a difference. Your policies can address this volunteer need by providing guidelines for the collection of information that demonstrates the effect of volunteer contributions. Volunteers need to know they are needed.

The statistics and information you collect on the results achieved by the volunteer program not only demonstrate agency effectiveness in volunteer management, but can be used also as proof that volunteers are making a difference. Show your funders, your prospective volunteers, your agency's staff and board and most importantly the current volunteers themselves that you have measured how volunteers CAN and DO contribute to the agency's mission. (See also Section Five, Evaluation.)

Impressive Statistics

Volunteers in Anglophone community literacy agencies in Ontario contribute an estimated annual total of $11,170,574 in combined out-of-pocket expenditures and volunteer time to the Ontario training system.
(Informa Research, The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario*, 1998)*

It is extremely time-consuming, even with the best people, systems, surveys and forms, to keep your finger on the pulse of the volunteers in your program. Although direct communication with volunteers can never be replaced, you can increase this type of qualitative and personal feedback by building your performance indicators or feedback mechanisms into the tasks of the positions.

Tell your volunteers (and staff for that matter) what you will be measuring as your agency's "success indicators," so that everyone knows the organizational goals they are striving to achieve. Celebrate when they are achieved. Quantitative record-keeping and statistics not only demonstrate accountability but build a sense of collective purpose. Respect the time volunteers offer by creating easy and logical reporting methods. When data collection is straightforward, people are more apt to participate in collecting information. The more statistical information that can be collected, the better your opportunities for reinforcing pride in success.

Just as you use learning outcomes for learners, start with goals and outcomes for each tutor or board member to achieve. This will form the basis of a volunteer's "plan." The indicators provide something to strive for and to measure one's efforts against. Another benefit of each volunteer having her own personal target, is that no one needs to wait until the agency statistics are collated. When volunteers have their own goals, they can know when they have succeeded and have made a difference. All the fanfare in the world cannot match that direct satisfaction.

Why not try this for your volunteers?
In 1997, Community Literacy of Ontario published a study called *The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario*. It identified an average hourly rate of $17.34 as the basis for the economic analysis of literacy volunteers. Work with this figure to determine the economic impact of volunteers in your own agency. The resulting statistics will impress volunteers, learners, the media and the public.

The need for interesting and stimulating tasks
Frequent monitoring will help you stay tuned to whether your volunteer tasks are still necessary or whether the position has changed in any way. Volunteers want to know that they are performing honest work which meets real needs. They don't want to do trivial or monotonous "make work" tasks which have not been carefully thought out. Few volunteers are content to do tedious, menial tasks. A sense of obligation will not be enough to retain the volunteer if the work is not stimulating and challenging. Regularly ask volunteers whether the position is still interesting for them.

Watch for boredom and frustration among volunteers (not to mention staff and learners). If progress seems slow for a volunteer, decide whether he should be reassigned or be given more support. Perhaps the position needs to be redesigned to be more attractive and interesting.

The need for support
No one job should be so difficult or unreasonable that the volunteer is overwhelmed. Marilyn Mackenzie (*Dealing With Difficult Volunteers*, 1990) encourages us to think of the role of volunteer manager as one of coach rather than supervisor. What support can be offered to the volunteers? First and foremost, volunteers need to know who they can access for assistance or questions. Their supervisor must also be easy to contact and diligent in following up on volunteer concerns.

Part of volunteer support may include offering constructive criticism to help volunteers perform their job with confidence. It may also include support and information on larger issues such as board coverage for liability protection. A well-thought-out manual or handbook can answer the most common questions and anxieties. All volunteers should also be informed of local and provincial literacy resources available to them, and the AlphaPlus Centre, as well as all local libraries. Other agencies in your community may also be an excellent resource for your volunteers.

Your policies can specify where volunteers can turn for support and, who in the agency is responsible for answering questions and how quickly the volunteer's concerns will be addressed. Conflict, and disciplinary procedures should be made known in case they are later required.

The need for pride and prestige
Tie your volunteers into the big picture. Keep them informed about developments in literacy beyond the community level. Make sure they hear about news stories. If possible get local leaders and VIPs to attend any events that you host to add profile to the cause. You must make clear that the volunteer's work is appreciated in the world at large. Find out if there are individuals for whom this type of recognition is highly important and ask them if they would like

letters to be sent to their employers (potential or current) or faith community. These volunteers want proof that their work is legitimate. Board members in particular may feel that tutors get all the credit for being out there and doing the work while they work behind the scenes.

Lorraine Street's often reprinted article entitled "*Pins or Policies*" (on the Volunteer Canada web site, originally published in the *Journal of Volunteer Management*, Volume II, 1993) highlights the need for "board, paid staff, and clients or consumers to participate, if not take the lead in thinking about, planning for and organizing volunteer recognition events or materials."

Ms Street maintains that expressing gratitude has less to do with the volunteer or even the volunteer manager than it does with the larger community. Volunteers deserve more than respect and appreciation from a single source such as the Coordinator of Volunteers. Therefore, it is necessary that the agency allocate the necessary resources of time, money, and human energy to create ways to pay tribute to the efforts of volunteers who support, and indeed make possible, the work of the agency.

If your agency is a reputable and respected organization in the community, appreciation gestures will be that much more meaningful to the volunteer. If there is a news/photo opportunity, be sure to invite volunteers to "get in the picture."

The need for personal growth

You cannot hope to recognize the efforts of your volunteers if you do not fully understand what they are doing for your agency. Particularly in literacy agencies, where volunteers may be partnered with a learner to tutor in relative isolation, it is difficult to measure the effect of their help and the level of their satisfaction. Even before you seek out volunteers, you need to determine whether the work of volunteers can be evaluated. Can you evaluate the process, the results and the impact of what they are doing? Success in work performance is one thing; the volunteer's own level of satisfaction might be something else. Ask them if they feel their contribution is meaningful, but don't forget that their needs may evolve over time: Continue asking regularly. Encourage reflection on both the tangible and intangible qualities in the volunteering experience.

Personal growth may be intangible but the volunteer's experience can be enhanced if the agency offers ongoing training and development and personal encouragement. Helping the volunteer make the right match, and giving the right training or assignment, will stretch and enrich your volunteers. It is also good for the mission of your agency. Know what the volunteer wants to do for your organization. Try to see the volunteer's goals rather than superimposing the agency's goals. For example, the accountant who joins the board may not want to be the Treasurer. Instead she may have other personal growth goals in mind when joining your organization.

Volunteer tutors in literacy stay with volunteering for an average of 3.71 years, perhaps because there is both an immediate and a long-term payoff for their efforts. In the short term there can be a direct and immediate gratification. They can see the difference they are making. The long term is also rewarding as it allows the volunteer personal growth and development.

The need for consideration of personal needs
Over time both volunteer and agency needs will change. Regular assessment will help ensure that mutual expectations are still manageable. Perhaps the job no longer fits the volunteer's schedule, or access to child care or transportation may have changed. Interest may decline if other responsibilities in the volunteer's life shift, or if out-of-pocket expenses or time demands become too great.

Has the volunteer's safety or comfort become jeopardized in any way? Is the job description still appropriate and accurate? Through regular monitoring you may be able to find simple solutions if concerns are caught early. Be responsive if change is called for.

Finally, you may invest a lot of time and energy in creating a dynamic and responsive volunteer management program but at some point you may have to face the fact that people are only able to commit to short-term volunteering relationships. Rather than trying to find the elusive volunteer to fit a perhaps outdated job description, adjust your jobs for the needs of potential volunteers.

If it becomes necessary to part company with a volunteer, wish the person well and leave the door open to future volunteering when it becomes more convenient. Keep him on a mailing list. Offer an exit interview. Don't consider the effort invested a waste.

The opportunity for initiative and creativity
Check your policies to ensure that there is a way to welcome and credit volunteer suggestions. Systems are needed to bring forward ideas and suggestions about both the volunteer's position and the agency overall. Each job should allow for some flexibility and initiative. New ideas should also be acknowledged and even rewarded.

Naturally, one-to-one volunteer tutors may find it easier to exercise resourcefulness and creativity in their teaching strategies. Board volunteers require a different kind of creativity, which needs to be encouraged even in the more formal structure of a board. New ideas should be received with enthusiasm.

The need for a cooperative and agreeable environment
Foster mutual respect among staff, board members, tutors and learners. Clear roles and responsibilities can prevent much conflict. Be sure there are contingency plans in policy to resolve problems, conflict and other tensions, whether interpersonal or agency-related.

When conflict and tension rise to a level which blocks effective board functioning, it may be time to bring in outside help to work through the issues. Training may be required to overcome cultural or interpersonal misunderstandings. Principles of fairness and justice must be practised at all times. A good policy manual will help prevent special privileges from going to a select few.

Recognition is not about elaborate schemes to reward volunteer effort. In fact most volunteers would shun that kind of limelight. It is everyday experiences, such as how you communicate to and about them, that make volunteers feel most appreciated. It is the way you involve them without burdening their already busy lives. It is the way you offer them opportunities to expand their own horizons while appreciating their input or the work they already do. These gestures not only help retain and recognize satisfied volunteers, but also build a stronger agency overall.

4.3 Your Turn

Agency - Volunteer Relations

- [ ] We ensure that all volunteers, including board members, tutors and other volunteers, are recognized.
- [ ] Recognition efforts are genuine and are offered because of an individual's efforts rather than being automatic or empty gestures.
- [ ] We give thanks/show appreciation for specific actions, not just broader involvement.
- [ ] We use recognition strategies which are meaningful and appropriate to the individual.
- [ ] We use variety and imagination in our recognition efforts.
- [ ] We communicate with pride and sincerity about the efforts of our volunteers.
- [ ] We communicate in clear and specific ways so that volunteers know what to expect.

Volunteer Needs

- [ ] We value and respect the busy lives of our volunteers by not asking for more than they are willing to give.
- [ ] We do not underestimate the expected time commitment of our volunteers.
- [ ] We are honest in highlighting additional expenses that may arise while tutoring and try to reimburse volunteers for transportation and miscellaneous expenses.
- [ ] We recognize the additional time which tutors give to lesson preparation.
- [ ] We provide volunteer support through staff and/or committee efforts.
- [ ] We have regular opportunities for volunteers and their supervisors to meet.

Training and Support

- [ ] Volunteers receive enough training and support to do their "job" well.
- [ ] We offer ongoing development opportunities.
- [ ] Volunteers are eligible to apply for training support to undertake courses relevant to their volunteer assignment.
- [ ] We invest money in the upgrading of our volunteers.
- [ ] We have worthwhile board development activities to support the work of our board members.

Measuring and Tracking the Volunteer Contribution

- [ ] We collect and share statistical information on the impact of volunteers at our agency.
- [ ] We keep track of all recognition given to volunteers (including cards sent, special events, etc.) so that we can minimize duplication.

- ❑ We value both the qualitative and quantitative contributions of volunteering.

Volunteer Feedback

- ❑ Volunteers in our agency are provided with specific feedback on their own efforts and the overall achievements of the agency as a whole.
- ❑ We ask our volunteers for suggestions and input for improving the operations of our agency and credit them for their good ideas.
- ❑ We have surveyed our volunteers to determine what forms of recognition and appreciation they consider most appropriate.

4.4 Tips and Resources

Involve volunteers if and when they want to be involved. Give them a chance to attend agency training or relevant conferences. Let them be involved in the long-range planning for your agency. Make the dialogue meaningful, not just tokenism.

Provide clearly written and updated job descriptions for all volunteer jobs. If a volunteer is unhappy with their current position, give her the opportunity to review all the other positions to consider other ways to contribute within the organization.

Inspiring incentives. Recognition may take the form of:

- trips to conferences, meetings, training sessions
- gift certificates for a meal at their favourite restaurant
- computer training and access
- bookstore gift certificates
- training privileges or discounts from local colleges or school boards
- attending conferences
- side benefits (eg.,. a book lovers reading club for "volunteers")
- a volunteer awards program
- gift certificates (as donated by local businesses)
- special mention in the publications of your agency or other affiliated organizations
- a greeting card sent when a volunteer gets married, ill, or celebrates an anniversary.

Be sure to get local sponsors and donors to help with providing perks!

Consider creating a volunteer recognition team to develop new ways to recognize and appreciate your volunteers. This committee should be careful to ensure that neither paid staff or board volunteers are overlooked when the appreciation is given out. Be aware that people all too often forget that board members are volunteers as well. Encourage the view that all are part of a team with different but complementary roles. This group may also wish to find inexpensive or donated awards and rewards for volunteer recognition.

A well-chosen word. Pride in and genuine respect for your volunteers are evident in the statements you make. Why say "we are a volunteer-run agency" when you could make an impact by saying "with a budget of less than ____ and the commitment of ____ hours of volunteer energy, our agency was able to help ____ numbers of adults learn to...."

The Annual Report is an ideal place to profile your volunteer program using actual statistics on the accomplishments of your volunteers. In addition to the Board Report, dedicate a section of every annual report to the Volunteer Tutor Program.

Qualitative and Quantitative measures to recognize volunteers in your program.

Quantitative Measures of Success	Qualitative Measure of Success
➢ number of volunteers active ➢ number of volunteer hours contributed ➢ type of volunteer positions ➢ number of volunteers involved in training (specific number of sessions and type of training) ➢ percent increase or decrease in volunteer hours or number of volunteers ➢ number of members who attend meetings (board attendance at meetings) ➢ new board members recruited ➢ number of active committees ➢ participation of board members on committees ➢ number and type of services to the community ➢ number of learners who attained their goals - number of volunteers who helped them make it	➢ survey responses from learners ➢ quotes and thanks from learners ➢ survey responses from people outside the agency (independent hired evaluators or experts from other agencies, who can measure and compare effectiveness or efficiency) ➢ specific accomplishments noted and commended by the volunteer manager ➢ "feel good" ideas such as: ➢ adding your volunteers' comments to CLO's web site under "Volunteer Voices", or putting newspaper articles (about the people and programs) into framed pictures for the wall, or ➢ having a Volunteer Picture Board featuring photographs of each volunteer

Don't forget to recognize the efforts of your Coordinator of Volunteers. She is essential in guiding and harnessing all that volunteer energy. December 5, 1999 was the first annual International Volunteer Program Manager Appreciation Day. Check the following web site for information on this special new day as well as other ideas on volunteer recognition: **www.nonprofitspace.org/vpm-day/**.

Bright idea! Present your local MP with a mock cheque for the value of volunteer time given in a one year period. Invite as many high profile dignitaries as possible and make it a media event.

4.5 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you may adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. The statements are presented under several sub-headings, which follow the general sequence of information in the foregoing text.

Sample Policy Statements

- In an effort to operate an effective and responsive volunteer management program, this agency will regularly seek feedback from volunteers.
  Procedures include:
  - exit interviews
  - written surveys done yearly/quarterly
  - thorough interviews conducted every other year
  - random sampling of volunteer satisfaction.

- Volunteer suggestions are welcomed and credited.

- Position descriptions will be direct and unambiguous in outlining expectations for all paid and unpaid positions.

- Volunteer positions are created to be challenging and interesting. No volunteer will be expected to do unpleasant, monotonous or tedious tasks.

- No single volunteer will be burdened with a difficult or overwhelming task.

- This agency will keep up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data on the value and benefits of volunteer efforts.

- An annual volunteer recognition event will be conducted to highlight and reward the contribution of volunteers to the agency. Volunteers will be consulted and involved in order to develop an appropriate format for the event.

- High-profile community and political leaders will be invited to events, whenever possible to demonstrate recognition and appreciation of volunteer efforts.
- Volunteers are to be included whenever media opportunities arise.

- Volunteer work is subject to periodic evaluation as described for paid staff in the agency's Personnel Policies.

- Volunteers are encouraged to grow and develop their skills while serving with the agency. They will be assisted in identifying related training opportunities and/or being promoted to volunteer jobs in which they assume additional responsibilities.

- Our agency has its own volunteer award(s) program with specific guidelines that outline.
    - what volunteer efforts are to be honoured
    - who is eligible
    - the selection criteria
    - the selection process.

- This agency will collect relevant data on the volunteer program, which will be used to modify and improve our operations and services as well as to recognize the efforts of our volunteers.

- All volunteers will be provided with a list of contacts and resources they can access for assistance, questions or emergencies.

- All volunteers will be given a Handbook to keep for the duration of their position at the agency. They will be asked to sign that they have read and understood the contents of the Handbook.

- All volunteer concerns will be followed up promptly and diligently by the Coordinator of Volunteers.

- Volunteers in this agency are subject to the Conflict Resolution Process and the Complaints Procedures for issues or concerns that arise.
  (See Progressive Disciplinary Process, page 121, Volume One, for a sample.)

APPENDICES FOR SECTION FOUR

Appendix #4.6.1

VOLUNTEER ASSESSMENT OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

(Reprinted from *Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs*, by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard, 1997)

1. How long have you been volunteering with us?

2. To what extent do you think that volunteers are well accepted by the staff at our agency?

   - ❑ Well accepted
   - ❑ Generally well accepted, but some exceptions
   - ❑ Not well accepted
   - ❑ Generally not well accepted, but some exceptions

3. To what extent do you think volunteers are involved in decisions that will affect their volunteer work?

   - ❑ Well involved
   - ❑ Sometimes involved
   - ❑ Not well involved

4. To what extent do you think volunteers are accepted and welcomed by clients?

   - ❑ Well accepted
   - ❑ Mixed reception
   - ❑ Not well accepted

5. To what extent do you think volunteers feel comfortable with the assignments they are given?

   - ❑ Comfortable
   - ❑ Not very comfortable
   - ❑ Don't know

6. Do you feel that volunteers receive sufficient orientation about our agency before they begin work?

   - ❑ Yes
   - ❑ No
   - ❑ Don't know

7. Do you feel that volunteers receive enough training to carry out their assignments?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

8. In your experience, does your volunteer job match the job description you were given?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Used to match job description but doesn't now
- ❑ Not given job decription

9. Do you find your volunteer work to be interesting, challenging, and rewarding?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ Somewhat
- ❑ No

10. Do you think that volunteers are provided with sufficient feedback by those they work with?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ Somewhat
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

11. Do you think volunteers have sufficient opportunity to advance in responsibility in this agency?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Don't know

12. Can you think of any new areas or new jobs in which volunteers might be of help to our agency?

13. Can you suggest any ways that we might use to recruit new volunteers?

14. What's the best experience you've had while volunteering for us?

15. What's the worst experience?

16. If you could make three changes in our volunteer program what would they be?

17. Overall, how would you rate our volunteer program? (1 = terrible, 10 = great)

- ❑ 1
- ❑ 2
- ❑ 3
- ❑ 4
- ❑ 5
- ❑ 6
- ❑ 7
- ❑ 8
- ❑ 9
- ❑ 10

18. Use the space below to make any other comments regarding our utilization of volunteers, or any additions you would like to make to your answers above.

Optional:

Name: _________________________ Telephone: ________________________

Appendix #4.6.2

EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

(Reprinted from *Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs*, by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard, 1997)

We are always striving to improve the performance of our volunteer involvement system. As one of our volunteers, we would appreciate your help in identifying areas in which we might do better. Please be as complete and honest as you can in answering the following questions - all of the information collected will be kept strictly confidential but it will be utilized to ensure that others who volunteer will receive the best possible treatment.

1. Approximately how long did you volunteer with us?

2. In general, what type of volunteer work did you do with us?

3. Why are you leaving?
   (Please check all that apply)

   - ❑ Job acomplished
   - ❑ Moving to new location
   - ❑ Need a change
   - ❑ Didn't like job I was given
   - ❑ Didn't feel welcome
   - ❑ Didn't feel utilized
   - ❑ Other time commitments
   - ❑ Other:

4. What did you like best about volunteering with us?

5. What suggestions would you make for changes or improvements in our volunteer effort?

6. Overall, how would you rate your experience in volunteering with us?

   Terrible Average Great
   ❑ 1 ❑ 2 ❑ 3 ❑ 4 ❑ 5

Thanks for your help in completing this form and during your volunteering with us. We appreciate the help you've given us in trying to better assist our clients and our community.

Appendix #4.6.3

ASSESSING VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EFFORTS

(Reprinted from *Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs*, by Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard, 1997)

1. Formal Recognition now used with volunteers and staff (banquets, pins, plaques, certificates, etc.)

   ____

   ____

2. Informal Recognition now used: (Name tags, birthday cards, notes of praise, friendly hello, etc.)

   ____

   ____

3. Ways we get feedback from volunteers/staff on recognition efforts:

   ____

   ____

4. Recognition efforts once done that might be appropriate again:

   ____

   ____

5. Recognition efforts we have done for years that may need to rest for a while:

   ____

   ____

6. Ways to solicit creative new recognition ideas from workers:

   ____

   ____

7. Ways to insure that a variety of recognition options are used so that differently-motivated people will find some efforts appealing. (Motivations such as: Affiliation, Achievement, Power.)

____

____

8. What ideas can be added to the mix of recognition that can be fun? Meaningful? Long-lasting?

____

____

9. Other Suggestions:

____

____

SECTION FIVE - POLICIES FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

With the current emphasis on accountability, it is not surprising that evaluation figures prominently in the 1998 LBS Guidelines. While much of our attention in community-based literacy has focused on evaluating and measuring progress in learners, the time has come to evaluate agency performance and program results. In literacy, we have tended to focus on a process approach rather than an outcomes (results) approach. Now, to be consistent with our approach to learners, we should look at our programs with an outcomes-based perspective.

This section focuses on program evaluation, which can be described as follows:
The practice of evaluation involves the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting.

(Michael Q. Patton, as quoted in *Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make*, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1997)

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Human Resources Policies (Personnel Manual), page 116
Administrative Policies that Apply to Volunteers, page 82
Administrative Policies that Apply to Board Members, page 76

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

5.1 Evaluating Our Attitudes

Evaluation is a major element in good volunteer program management. Directors, coordinators and staff are aware of the importance of evaluation in maintaining and improving effective programs. However, we often feel we don't have the expertise, time or resources to conduct as thorough an evaluation process as we think we should.

Just thinking about the word [evaluation] conjures up images of complicated formulas, extensive and expensive survey procedures and development of elaborate questionnaires. But evaluation doesn't have to be scary. All it takes is organization and some familiarization with the evaluation process. (*Minnesota Department of Human Services*, Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make, 1997)

Why Bother with Evaluation?

What gets measured gets done.
If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure.
If you can't see success, you can't reward it.
If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.
If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.
If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.
If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.
(Osborne and Gaebler, *Reinventing Government,* 1992)

Consider some of your own reasons and purposes for doing evaluation. These may include any of the following:

- to improve our services to learners
- to measure the impact and effectiveness of our program in the community
- to find out what is really happening
- to reduce uncertainties about where funding, volunteers, or students are coming from
- to recognize and reward initiative, success and good work
- to make plans and decisions about what to continue, discontinue or modify
- to allocate resources and services appropriately
- to demonstrate accountability to funders and the community
- to support the case for additional funding or other resources.

Because evaluation has sometimes sought or created useless data, some people have a negative view of evaluation. They might argue that we only do evaluation because we have to do it for government funders or boards of directors, or because someone is experimenting with yet another new evaluation technique. Evaluation can provide greater insight, understanding and control in making decisions if we

- ask the right questions
- study what really needs to be studied (rather than just information that is easy to collect), and

- don't try to measure everything that can possibly be measured.

Meaningful evaluation findings can then help us to provide better literacy services.

5.2 Gathering Information

Although program evaluation can be formative (measuring **ongoing** processes while they are implemented) or summative (measuring results and outcomes at the **end**), or both, evaluation must also be seen as a planning activity which is integral to goal setting at the very **beginning**.

Depending on the purpose for doing evaluation, you can gather information in two forms.

Quantitative Measures of Success	**Qualitative Measure of Success**
➢ number of hours volunteered ➢ number of learners registered ➢ amount of training recieved by paid staff and volunteers ➢ number of hours that a learner spends attending lessons ➢ number of sites where agency programs ➢ number of dollars spent and/or saved as a result of volunteer efforts number of learners who met their goals ➢ amount of funds raised from non-governmental sources ➢ amount of in-kind donations recieved.	➢ satisfaction ➢ community relations ➢ loyalty to the organization ➢ morale of staff, learners and/or volunteers ➢ self-esteem ➢ leadership ➢ progress in learning.

Some of the data you collect will be from primary or first-hand sources and specifically gathered for your evaluation purposes. Other data will come from secondary sources, such as regularly maintained reports and records or even sources outside the agency. Don't forget to include volunteers and learners in evaluating the agency and the program. They can comment on the support they have received from the organization and may many other observations. Both formal and informal methods of gathering information are valid and even crucial to informed evaluation.

Remember that "achieving worthwhile and visible results" is a powerful motivation for doing paid or unpaid work. So, involve everyone in evaluation.

Information Gathering Techniques	
Surveys	➢ contacting by mail, fax or telephone or e-mail
Before and after designs	➢ using questionnaires or interviews to obtain feedback before and after an event or participation in a program
Data reporting	➢ reviewing, summarizing, comparing statistical information
Case study	➢ describing the experience of individuals or small groups (using existing records, interviews and/or observations)
Consultants	➢ using outside observers to study and describe key elements in the program
Content or process analysis	➢ outlining the step-by-step flow of activities to review and describe program content and efforts

(Minnesota Department of Human Services, *Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make*, 1997)

It is important to remember when using any evaluation strategy that not everything that can be measured needs to be measured. Start with an area which has potential for demonstrating a direct impact, such as learner services or board decisions and activities. Build from there. You need not spend a lot of time collecting the information. In fact there are some techniques which create more efficient evaluation without the loss of quality such as:

Sampling

Data gathering can be done during selected sampling periods in the yearly cycle rather than every day. For example, measure in June the number of students who completed the year. Or select a random sample of people to interview or survey from among your volunteers rather than attempting to get a response from every one.

Periodic collection

You can also gather certain information in 2-3-4 or 5 year cycles instead of annually. Some information may not actually be required as often as you think. You can also stagger your research strategies. For example, follow a cycle of using telephone interviews in one year and then using mailed questionnaires in alternating years.

5.3 Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation

Now that community literacy agencies are expected to evaluate learner progress using an "outcomes" approach, how do we also apply these principles to evaluating our programs? As we have found out through outcomes-based learning, one cannot measure an outcome if it has not been clearly stated. In community-based literacy we have traditionally followed a process approach, although we are now being asked to implement an outcomes approach.

Process Approach	**Outcomes Approach**
• looks at service and delivery processes • focuses on how to deliver service • reports on inputs and activities • defines objectives such as: "to **serve** X number of adults"	• looks at impact and results • focuses on measurable goals • reports on outcomes and results attained • defines objectives such as: "X number of people will **accomplish** Y"

A well-planned volunteer program leads to a well-developed outcomes evaluation plan. In the process, you must clearly express

➤ what you want to accomplish
➤ why you want to accomplish it
➤ what benefits will result
➤ how you will measure and report your final results.

Rather than starting with questions like "Who or what should we evaluate?" and "How can we get the information," the key questions to ask are:

a. What is the purpose of the evaluation?
b. What will be done with the information?

The first step is learning how to develop your desired program outcomes. Clearly, this also requires the development of a baseline measure against which your results can be compared. Follow these steps:

1. Determine the target	Student satisfaction with our program.
2. Determine the outcome	Objective: Students in our program will have a positive relationship with their teacher/tutor and be satisfied that they are making progress towards their own goals. Measure: Assess student levels of satisfaction at three, six, nine months, through a questionnaire administered by telephone survey to a random sample representing 50% of the total students registered with our agency. Performance Standard (or indicator): 85% respondents will report a high to very high satisfaction level with the training they are receiving.
3. Ask the right questions	Ask about adequate time for tasks, meaningful lessons, positive relationship with the tutor, sense of accomplishment, achievement of actual goals as planned, etc.
4. Use the information to improve the program	Use the information to Compare results over time; discuss them at board meetings. improve the program Make recommendations and set an action plan.

The following example might also help clarify and explain the outcomes approach to evaluation.

Process Approach Versus Outcomes Approach

Process Approach
(Describes agency activity)

Objective: to serve 200 unemployed people

1. Develop a list of potential participants and mail program announcements to everyone on the list.
2. Hold an information meeting for those interested and identify participants.
3. Prepare workshop content.
4. Define potential job placement sites.
5. Conduct all courses.
6. Place workshop graduates in a job training position.
7. Provide follow-up support to people on their jobs.

Outcomes Approach
(Describes participant interaction with programs on the way to successful results)

Result: 6 unemployed people will get and hold a job for six months

	Number needed
1. Learn about program	200
2. Decide to enroll	40
3. Attend first session	30
4. Retain information/skills from 1st program	20
5. Attend all remaining sessions	15
6. Retain information/skills from all sessions	9
7. Start at job site	8
8. Perform satisfactorily on job	7
9. Stay at job for at least six months	6

(Adapted from Minnesota Department of Human Services, *Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make*, 1997.)

There are several ways to measure effectiveness. **Inputs** are the easiest to measure and include measurements like staff hours, space for tutoring, or expenditures for materials. **Output**s include figures such as the number of referrals made, the number of tutors recruited, the number of students matched with tutors, the hours of computer usage and the number of contact hours. **Outcomes** measurements concentrate on benefits or changes to the community, which may be much harder to gauge. They include evidence of increased levels of literacy in the community and increased self-esteem.

Some of the major fears surrounding outcomes-based evaluation focus on the difficulty of anticipating or establishing an outcome and the anxiety about having negative findings. It is important to be realistic when setting outcomes. Evaluation should not necessarily be focused on whether an outcome has been performed successfully. You might need to analyse whether the objective was the right one in the first place. If the tasks are out of step with what really needs to be done, then they are not appropriate. No matter how well they are performed, the objective may be inappropriate if the job or need has changed. Perhaps the agency's mission should be reassessed. Even unexpected or negative findings can be extremely useful. As long as we can remain open, responsive and willing to change in the face of our findings, there is no need to take the information as a personal failure. Managing our programs can only improve with the knowledge gained in evaluation.

Finally, remember that the results of any evaluation efforts must be acted upon. Consider your plans for analysing the data, presenting it, distributing it and making recommendations for action.

A review of the *LBS Core Quality Standards* is the ideal framework from which to start evaluation efforts. You may also need to take into account the indicators and information that other funders, donors and/or stakeholders will expect to see.

5.4 Board Evaluation

Specific evaluation strategies may be required for boards of directors. The most comprehensive approach will involve both individual self-evaluation as well as evaluation of the collective activities. Your agency's board may choose to do either open or confidential peer review. Whatever the tool, members need to determine what they want to evaluate in their operations, such as:

- efficient meetings which finish on time
- agendas provided in advance
- minutes received on time
- decisions carried out
- board-staff relations
- the number of motions or tasks accomplished
- the number of successful proposals written
- the success of current programs and projects
- any other board activities.

In fact, almost every one of the board's responsibilities, as listed on page 62 of Volume One, has an evaluation component.

To look at the performance of individual board members, perhaps the easiest method is to ask all board members to complete a brief self-review/questionnaire at the end of each meeting so that their reflections can be recorded before they are forgotten. These responses may or may not be shared, depending on the group's preference. The responses could be discussed or the surveys could be anonymously forwarded to the Executive for analysis and action.

Some board chairs hold a separate meeting with each board member once a year in order to discuss the member's goals for the year and gain feedback on board activities to date. To examine overall board functioning, many boards use an annual "retreat" to review the activities of the board itself. At this meeting they do not conduct the business of the agency but evaluate overall operations. Remember that both goals and outcomes need to be set for both the individual board members and for the board as a whole. Part of the board's function may also be to evaluate aspects of the program and service delivery.

Evaluation is especially time-consuming in the initial stages but should become more natural once it becomes incorporated into the regular activities of the agency. At times, an outside consultant may be asked to come in to observe or advise. Set an evaluation plan for what you need to assess and when. Some evaluation tools are included in the Resources section at the end of this chapter.

5.5 Staff Evaluation

Staff evaluation is usually outlined in the personnel policies. All staff should be evaluated annually. While the Executive Director usually conducts staff reviews, policies can guide how the evaluation process will take place and how often evaluations are to be done. New staff should be reviewed at the end of a probation period more often to catch problems early. You must decide who will conduct the evaluation of the Executive Director. If it is to be a board personnel committee, are they experienced, are they willing, or do they require training?

Keep it specific. Evaluation should focus on job activities, not personalities.

5.6 Volunteer Evaluation

If you don't know why you are trying to evaluate volunteer performance, then don't bother. Determine whether you really want to evaluate your volunteers' performance or just maintain open communication to receive feedback from them. Consider what you plan to do with the information collected. You may decide that some kinds of volunteers, such as tutors, should be subject to some type of evaluation whereas other categories of volunteers, such as those helping in the office, should not. Keep in mind, however, that evaluation or review is an ideal time to recognize the efforts of your volunteers.

Volunteer evaluation may be less threatening than it sounds if you build it in to regular activities. It should not be a time-consuming activity separate from other tasks. "Reflection" might be a better word than evaluation in this situation. Consider it an "action-reflection" cycle where there is some review or analysis in the form of checklists, interviews, or forms scheduled either at a set intervals (monthly phone calls from the volunteer coordinator) or after certain activities are completed (every tenth lesson). Remember that you can only hold volunteers accountable if you have provided specific goals and detailed job descriptions.

The policies for discipline and termination that apply to staff may not be fully applicable to volunteers. There may be consequences for volunteer conduct but fewer standards for the effective performance of assigned tasks. Until consistent standards establish a set of expectations for literacy volunteers, it will be up to each individual agency to determine performance standards and the consequences for not meeting them.

One of the best reasons to conduct volunteer evaluation is to recognize and reward the work volunteers perform.

5.7 Your Turn

- ❑ The *LBS Core Quality Standards* form the basis of our evaluation tasks.
- ❑ Our evaluations measure both the results and the process.
- ❑ Our evaluation tools are based on specific planned outcomes.
- ❑ We can identify the purpose and what we plan to do with the information in all evaluation processes.
- ❑ We encourage input from all those involved in evaluation to develop appropriate measurement tools and processes.
- ❑ We try to improve the accuracy and believability of our evaluation answers, by asking the same thing in two or more ways.
- ❑ We have confidence in our evaluation measures and believe them to be accurate.
- ❑ We communicate our evaluation findings in several formats and include a summary, conclusions and recommendations.
- ❑ We act on the results of our findings.

Not all types of evaluation may be a priority for your agency.

❑ We have	❑ We need	a documented program evaluation process.
❑ We have	❑ We need	a documented process to evaluate board and committee operations.
❑ We have	❑ We need	a documented process to evaluate the operation of the agency.
❑ We have	❑ We need	a documented fundraising evaluation process.
❑ We have	❑ We need	guidelines for evaluating training and special events.
❑ We have	❑ We need	guidelines for evaluating communications, promotions and marketing outreach.
❑ We have	❑ We need	guidelines for reviewing/measuring the performance of tutors and other volunteers.
❑ We have	❑ We need	guidelines for evaluating staff performance.
❑ We have	❑ We need	guidelines for evaluating the performance of individual board members.

5.8 Tips and Resources

It starts with the big picture. Try some visualization and/or brainstorming exercises among your key stakeholders to vision the future for your program. Identify the main goals for accomplishing your mission and remember that program evaluation can be built into your processes right from the planning stages. Use these questions to guide discussions:

- Who is the recipient of your agency's service?
- What is the goal or purpose of your services?
- What indicators will tell you if you have accomplished the goal?
- How will you obtain information about the indicators? (Information-gathering methods)
- What will tell you that you have reached your goals? (What are the outcomes?)

Finally, decide which evaluation activities need to be developed now and which in the future. Great inspiration can be found in "A Good Practice Guide for Governance," page 80 within *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector* (Final Report, 1999.)

Money talks. Show the contribution of your volunteers by counting the hours they spend volunteering, then assigning a monetary value to their services. This recognizes to their efforts while delivering a powerful impact statement about your program to funders and the public. See the Report on *The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario* published by Community Literacy of Ontario in 1998, which includes the tools and measures how used to evaluate the contributions of volunteers.

Plan Your Annual Retreat

<u>Process One:</u> 1. Review the mission. 2. Review current resources. 3. What did we achieve in the past 12 months? 4. What didn't we get done? 5. What do we want to do next year? 6. Who will be responsible for what? 7. How will we measure or evaluate the success of our plans?	<u>Process Two:</u> 1. Have each board member share two or three of the most important things they would like the agency to accomplish in the year ahead. 2. Next, have the group list the resources and strengths of the agency. The group will begin to get a common grasp of where the organization stands now and where it can go. 3. This should quickly lead to the heart of the session, which is to decide what is possible for the agency to accomplish in the coming year and what is most important. Move through the following: o What do we want to do? o What are we required to do by our community and funders? o What resources do we have? o What can we actually do? o What outcomes/objectives will we set? o Who will do it? When? How? o How will we know if and when we've done what we set out to do? (Indicators)

(Adapted from *Retreat Planning Guidelines for Community Literacy of Ontario*)

Find out if some other agency in town has already done the type of information gathering that you are considering. Perhaps you can adapt and modify something that has been tried elsewhere. Set up a small project to study evaluation approaches and strategies among other local non-profit organizations. This might even work as a job, or co-op placement student. Have them collect sample forms, reports, etc.

Create impact statements. Go beyond describing how much time was spent, where funds or energy were spent or how many people participated. Emphasize the difference your efforts made. Finish sentences like:
"If the volunteers hadn't been there...."
"If our project/program had not been funded...."

5.9 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. The statements are presented under several sub-headings, which follow the general sequence of information in the foregoing text.

Sample Policy Statements

Program Evaluation

- The delivery of our programs will be independently assessed each year by a skilled professional consultant.

- All results and findings on the performance of the agency, board and program will be documented in the annual report, which will include recommendations for appropriate follow-up actions.

- An agency review committee will be established each year to review indicators of the agency's performance. This group will be made up of board members, staff, volunteers and learners.

- All evaluation findings will be analysed, distributed, and discussed in order to develop recommendations for action.

Board Evaluation

- The delivery of our programs will be independently assessed each year by a skilled professional consultant.

- All results and findings on the performance of the agency, board and program will be documented in the annual report, which will include recommendations for appropriate follow-up actions.

- An agency review committee will be established each year to review indicators of the agency's performance. This group will be made up of board members, staff, volunteers and learners.

- All evaluation findings will be analysed, distributed, and discussed in order to develop recommendations for action.

- We do overall board performance reviews each year.

- Once per year, the members of the board undertake a confidential peer review.

- Board members will do peer reviews with one another to measure individual director performance.

- Board effectiveness is measured annually at a Planning and Review session. All board members are asked to complete the written Board Performance Assessment.

- Board members responsible for agency and staff evaluation will be given appropriate training.

- Ongoing evaluation of board performance is a priority for this agency, therefore time will be allocated at the end of each meeting for reflection on board operations, actions and decisions.

- Board members are expected to do a Board Member Self -Assessment on their own personal performance at least once per year.

Staff Evaluation

Note: Staff evaluation is usually covered under the Performance Review policies in the Personnel Policies Manual. (See page 121 in Volume One.)

Volunteer Evaluation

- Evaluation procedures should be non-threatening, constructive, supportive, flexible and empowering. They should motivate the volunteer to aim for the highest standards and pinpoint where the organization can help the volunteer to achieve his/her goals. The performance review should offer the opportunity for volunteers to give input and to negotiate change.*

- The Coordinator of Volunteers will schedule regular meetings with each volunteer tutor to share constructive feedback, resources and strategies. At this time, the Coordinator of Volunteers will assess the work of the tutor as outlined in the position description. The evaluation will be informal and verbal unless there are specific issues which either party would like to document.

- This agency reserves the right to monitor and evaluate the work of volunteer tutors.*
  Procedures might include the following:

  - The Coordinator of Volunteers will attend a lesson/meeting to observe the tutor and learner and offer constructive feedback. This will be scheduled at least twice per year.
  - An experienced tutor will attend a lesson/meeting to offer feedback to the tutor.
  - The Coordinator of Volunteers will regularly review the tutor's written lesson/meeting reports.
  - The Coordinator of Volunteers will survey learners by telephone from time to time to get feedback on each tutor's performance.
  - Using the self-assessment forms provided, tutors will regularly evaluate their own work and progress.
  - The Coordinator of Volunteers will telephone each tutor monthly to discuss his/her work and progress.

- Follow-up or consequences of evaluation will be clearly explained to volunteers, especially if and where disciplinary action or termination could result from poor performance. Wherever possible, support will be provided to correct or improve performance shortcomings.

(Statements marked * were developed by Linda Graff, By Definition, 1997.)

APPENDICES FOR SECTION FIVE

Appendix #5.10.1

VOLUNTEER TUTOR EVALUATION

Following are some areas to consider for performance evaluation. The volunteer tutor and Volunteer Coordinator could meet to discuss them and share their views. This may guide future activities of the agency and of the volunteers.
Work Performance (excellent, needs improvement, poor)
Suggestions for Volunteer Improvement
Suggestions for Agency Improvement
Resources Required
Training or Education Suggested
Job Description reviewed? still applicable? changes suggested/required? clarification needed?
Future Planning/New Directions Volunteer's personal goals/interests Agency's emerging issues/plans
Volunteer Satisfaction Do you receive adequate recognition? Do you plan to continue volunteering in this capacity? For how long?

Do you feel that you get the feedback and support required to do your tutoring? What are the most challenging aspects of your tutoring work? Do you have access to adequate resources? Is the relationship with yur student comfortable? What, if anything, would help you better fulfill your job description? Is the time commitment manageable? Are meeting location(s) appropriate? Do you like the volunteer work you are doing? Comments
Learner Satisfaction (Optional survey) Learner seems to be satisfied with progress Learner is comfortable with the tutor Meeting location(s) are considered appropriate Time commitment is manageable Learner considers the lessons helpful and appropriate Learner feels "involved" Comments
Volunteer Coordinator's Observations Volunteer is comfortable performing duties as outlined Volunteer is resourceful in handling new issues and challenges Volunteer seems competent, is not struggling Volunteer is flexible and sensitive in adapting lessons for learner Comments

Appendix #5.10.2

STAFF APPRAISAL FORM

General Information

Name ___________________________________ Date ___________________

Position Title ____

Date of Employment _________________ Date of Previous Appraisal __________

Chair of Committee ____

Key Responsibilities of the Position
Briefly describe the key responsibilities of the position and the corresponding rating.

Responsibilities	Rating	Comments
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Knowledge, Skills and Qualitites

Professional Skills and Knowledge Rating ______

Understands duties/responsibilities, application of skills and techniques required to satisfactorily perform the job. (Sets realistic goals, takes initiative, has ability to make decisions.)

Interpersonal Relationships and Communication Rating

with board of directors, other staff, outside agencies and the general public. Written communication clear, organized and concise. Articulate in verbal communication.

Organization, Efficiency and Productivity Rating ______

Ability to organize work effectively, keep good records and meets expectations set by organization.

Areas of strength

Areas requiring improvement

Barriers to improved performance

Measures to bring about improvement

Future goals and objectives
List major goals/objectives for the coming year and projected target dates for completion

<u>Goal</u> <u>Completion date:</u>

1.
2.
3.

Training/Development Needs
List training/development needs for present employment and future interests.

1.
2.
3.

Recommendations

Additional employer comments

Employees comments

Committee Signatures	________________________________	Date ______________
	________________________________	Date ______________
Employee's Signature	________________________________	Date ______________

Rating Scale

Above Satisfactory
Performance consistently exceeds the normal requirements of the position and results in work of demonstrated high quality.

Satisfactory
Performance is at a completely acceptable level and meets the normal requirements of the position.

Below Satisfactory
Performance is below a fully competent level and requires definite improvement in order to meet the normal requirements of the position.

Unacceptable
Performance is significantly below the normal requirements of the position to the extent that retention of the employee is questionable. Immediate improvement is required.

(Reprinted with permission of the Literacy Council of South Temiskaming)

Appendix #5.10.3

BOARD PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

Personal Inventory

1. Do you prepare yourself for board meetings by reading minutes, reports, contracts, and materials sent to you, in advance?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

2. Do you attend board meeting regularly (at least 3 out of 4)?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

3. Do you participate in discussions?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Do you listen attentively while others talk?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

5. Do you know your organization's articles of incorporation?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

6. Do you occasionally read articles, periodicals, or books related to literacy and/or board development?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

7. Do you ever attend conferences, seminars, workshops or classes on relevant literacy and/or board governance matters?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

8. Are you familiar with the various contracts, agreements and investments that your organization has made?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

9. Are you familiar with the special conditions in your funding agreements?

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

10. Are you familiar with the contract between your agency and your Executive Director?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

Board Inventory

1. Is there an agenda for the board meetings?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

2. Are meeting notices sent out?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

3. Are meetings conducted in an orderly and business-like manner?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Are new board members presented with a file of pertinent documents (such as articles of incorporation, bylaws, contractual agreements)?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

5. Is there an updated file of board policies, resolutions and amendments?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

6. Are minutes taken, reviewed and filed, and provided to key staff?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

7. Do all board meetings provide time for reports from staff and committees?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

8. Do some board meetings provide the opportunity for regular reports from members or community residents, scheduled early in the meeting? Are some meetings, at least, held at hours convenient for working people to attend?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

9. Are board members afforded the opportunity to discuss management concerns without the presence of staff?

    - ❑ Yes ❑ No

10. Do board members know their legal responsibilities and liabilities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Do board members understand the limitations of their individual authority and avoid acting unilaterally when dealing with staff?

    - ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Is training provided for new board members?

    - ☐ Yes ☐ No

Adapted from: *Roles and Responsibilities of Boards of Directors of Aboriginal Economic Development Organizations*, Kisaki Development Corporation, 1991)

Appendix #5.7.4

PROGRAM EVALUATION: OUTCOME WORK SHEET

Who is the recipient of the service?

What is the goal or purpose of the service?

What indicators will tell us if we have accomplished the goal?

How will we obtain information about the indicators?
(Method for gathering information)

What will tell us if we have reached our goal?
(Level of outcome desired; i.e. percent of clients attaining their goal, etc.)

(Reprinted from *Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make*, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1997, with permission)

SECTION SIX - POLICIES FOR PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY

There are three types of **Operational Policies that outline how the agency's principal activities are carried out** within the scope of available resources. Financial and Human resources were covered in Volume One. The third area is Program and Service Delivery, which covers aspects the ways your programs and services work. These policies designate responsibility and so make accountability possible. Above all, they help you to stay true to your mission and purpose.

Program guidelines are specified for literacy agencies by their primary funder, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). For this reason, it may seem unnecessary to set out in writing the details of how service is actually delivered. But taking the time to spell out policies on how the program operates can enhance consistency, accountability and common understanding.

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Operational Policies: Financial Management, page 145
Operational Policies: Human Resources, page 107

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

6.1 Policies for Program and Service Delivery

Operational policies for program and service delivery are those that outline the limits and guidelines for delivering a service: literacy programming. They form the framework for how our services are offered and delivered. While some of these practices may be dictated by the terms of our funders, it is important to outline them in writing. Many of our practices may also be unwritten. However, to ensure continued consistency and accountability, they need to be collected and communicated. This also helps us to show our potential volunteers, our funders and our community clearly what we do and how we do it.

Consider the flow of the service you offer, from the beginning through

- intake
- assessment
- goal setting
- matching of learners with tutors
- training plan development
- lesson planning
- evaluation of progress.

Your operational policies can define how each step is handled, what happens and where, who is involved and why.

It is beyond the scope of this Guide to comment fully on the program elements prescribed by MTCU, but it is important to remember that your teaching and learning strategies do have a place in your written policies and procedures. Even putting the required guidelines into your own manuals, along with your own systems, makes them yours. It not only clarifies what you do but creates a sense of ownership.

> We cannot assume that everyone understands how our services work simply because it seems obvious to us or has become familiar practice in our agencies.

You need not formalize, justify or change a system that works well. Your operational policies may be as simple as a written chart or graphic outline which shows how things work. This ensures that processes and practices are not inappropriate or unclear. It also ensures that the same practices are applied to all. These policies should be simple and easy to understand, so that a newcomer, whether client, volunteer or staff member, can understand how things work and who does what.

Some areas of policy development may need to be backed by legal advice. Special expertise may be required on such issues as work sites or locations where the volunteer tutor and learner will meet. Although one-to-one tutoring depends on a quiet, comfortable, private location, this also creates potential risks to the safety of volunteers and learners. Making tutors and learners aware of the possible risks of meeting in private, unsupervised locations may not go far enough in preventing harm. See also Section Eight, Managing Liability and Risk, later in this Guide.

6.2 Your Turn

- ❑ We have clearly laid out our system for delivery of our literacy programs.
- ❑ We have defined who will be eligible for the services we provide.
- ❑ We have outlined what constitutes safe working environments for learners and tutors.
- ❑ We have clearly outlined our definitions and expectations of measurable progress.
- ❑ Our promotional materials clearly explain what we offer and how we provide service.
- ❑ We target our outreach efforts to those best served by our methods of delivery.
- ❑ We have appropriate insurance coverage for the activities we carry out.
- ❑ We conduct regular assessments of our risks and we implement systems to manage them.
- ❑ We are committed to ensuring excellence in our service delivery through our annual Program Evaluation.

6.3 Tips and Resources

Collaboration is the name of the game. Log on to AlphaPlus, especially to the Community Literacy discussion group. Discuss current initiatives and "how-to" issues related to programming with your colleagues across the province. Find out how different teaching approaches are being implemented elsewhere. Borrow forms and share strategies.

Order **the recent publication** from Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO) document, *Guide for Student-Tutor Coordinators* (Spring 1999), which deals with many of the important issues in literacy programming such as:

- screening, recruiting, orienting and training volunteer tutors
- screening students
- initial assessment of students
- development and use of training plans
- facilitating the student-tutor match
- methods and processes for evaluation
- record-keeping, contact hours
- resources, and more.

Consider preparing **an easy-to-read diagram** of literacy services offered in your agency. Use illustrations in a flow chart to show who does what, and what can be expected at each stage. Track the steps of a "learner's journey" through intake, assessment, goal setting, matching learners and tutors, training plan development, lesson planning, evaluation and progress. Seeing a schematic view may help you consider the implications for your written policies.

6.4 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. Some of the related administrative matters have been dealt with earlier in this Guide. You will find some overlap and cross-referencing.

Sample Policy Statements

Literacy Training

- This agency offers both one-to-one and small group literacy training. (Include your agency's definitions.)

- There is no limit to the time that learners may stay in the literacy program, provided they continue to make measurable progress.

- The following criteria will determine if our agency is able to offer service to potential learners.

  1. The candidate must be assessed.
  2. The candidate must take part in developing a training plan.
  3. The candidate must meet MTCU criteria (if applicable to your agency).
  4. The candidate must be prepared to commit to a minimum of ____ hours of learning per week.
  5. The candidate must be able to work independently.
  6. The candidate must be interested in the training options offered by this agency (small group, large groups, one-to-one, etc.).

- It is the policy of this agency to ask that the tutor and learner commit to a one-year match. The first two months will be considered a trial or probationary period. The Volunteer Coordinator will continue to monitor the match regularly to ensure it is satisfactory for both parties. Terms of the tutor-learner match may be extended to a maximum of three years.

- Matching learners with tutors will take into account personal compatibility. This does not mean that discriminatory practices will be tolerated. (See also Organizational Policies for Diversity/Multiculturalism/Anti-racism, page 38, Volume One.)

- It is the belief of this agency that a student's learning can be maximized through working with a variety of tutors and instructional techniques. No student-tutor match will be allowed to continue longer than one year, although both parties may continue their involvement with the agency.

- At this agency, based on a workload of _____ reported contact hours per student per week, we believe that one Volunteer Coordinator can only effectively supervise ____ student- tutor matches.

- The optimal number of student-tutors pairs that can be supported by a single Volunteer Coordinator is _____.

- Both tutors and learners have the right to ask that a match be terminated at any time. The Volunteer Coordinator will attempt to mediate any problems, and then, if necessary, may reassign both parties to new matches.

- "Special case" volunteers performing mandatory service will not be assigned to one-to-one tutoring but may be placed as helpers in some of our small groups.

- Volunteers should inform the Coordinator of Volunteers of any upcoming lengthy absences which could be filled by another volunteer. Volunteers may be asked for input in finding a suitable replacement, but should not undertake this without the assistance of the Coordinator of Volunteers.

Records Management

- Volunteers will be provided with all the relevant case material required to adequately serve the learning needs of their students. They will have access to the information they need to perform satisfactorily their assignment as outlined in the job description.

- Written student consent is required for non-designated staff persons to access the student's file (progress records, personal information, attendance, training plans, etc.).

Supervision

- A volunteer may supervise other volunteers, provided that he has been given appropriate training and that he is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

- Tutoring activities for this agency are not to take place in any unsupervised locations such as private residences. The Coordinator of Volunteers will assist all student-tutor matches to find a mutually agreeable safe space that supports a positive learning environment.

- Each volunteer assumes responsibility for her own comfort and safety by agreeing to tutor in any meeting location. The Coordinator of Volunteers has a responsibility to investigate any options for suitable meeting locations and advise the tutor of these.

Other policies your agency may want to develop

- Measuring student progress
- Intake and initial assessment (including prior learning recognition)
- Accommodations for learning disabilities
- Lesson planning
- Goal setting
- Creating and using training plans
- Ongoing assessment
- Exit assessment
- Annual training program cycle
- Attendance

SECTION SEVEN - RULES FOR AGENCY CONDUCT

Along with Organizational Policies, Administrative Policies and Operational Policies, many groups often include a fourth category, Rules, which covers the everyday conduct and practices within the agency.

A rule is a type of policy that specifies expectations and guides action. This section may seem to cover a number of miscellaneous details, yet these are important for the smooth operating of your agency and the satisfaction of all participants. Your agency should consider its own unique "rules of doing business."

Topics in this Section

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

7.1 Everyday Life in Your Organization

Rules are very specific expectations about how people will conduct themselves in the daily life of the organization. Pertinent rules respect people's time and energy. When they are spelled out in writing, they are more likely to be consistently applied. Rules contribute to the smooth functioning of the agency and can help to create a positive atmosphere.

Examine the comfort, safety and well-being of all paid and unpaid staff within your organization. Rules can be recommended and proposed by staff as well as others involved and affected. They can and will evolve over time. This is the place for those seemingly small and miscellaneous but thoughtful directives that can make a big difference in the atmosphere and functioning of the agency.

7.2 Your Turn

- ❑ We work to provide an environment that is safe, welcoming and appropriate to learning.
- ❑ We have a written code of conduct that outlines appropriate behaviour within our agency.
- ❑ We have a system to encourage ideas and improvements that help our agency operate more smoothly.
- ❑ Safety and emergency procedures are in writing and are reviewed annually.
- ❑ We adhere to consistent, posted office hours.
- ❑ Directions to our office(s) and site(s) are clear, understandable and well-marked signs are posted.

7.3 Tips and Resources

Find out what makes the day go more smoothly and what bothers people. Is it:

- the smoking in the building?
- the lack of parking?
- the fact that meetings never start on time?
- the resources which can never be found in the resource library because lax lending rules allow materials to be borrowed for indefinite periods of time?
- the lack of access to the computer because some people hog it?
- the rude jokes, insulting comments or other inappropriate gestures made by some people?

Develop systems of formal or informal communication so that people can have their say. Maybe a "Suggestion Box" would help you gather ideas. Consider whether a rule or a policy would help make a change for the better.

7.4 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented.

Sample Policy Statements

Agency Property

- Free parking is provided for those visiting agency premises. Parking lot ____ is available for our use. Parking outside of this location will not be reimbursed.

- All paid employees will have keys to the office. One board member will also be designated to hold keys to the office. Any lost keys must be reported to the Executive Director immediately. Copying the keys or giving them to another person is forbidden.

- Confidential office files and petty cash will be locked up every night. The Executive Director and one other designated staff person will have keys for office files.

- One computer in the office will be available for use by students and volunteers. Information on how to access AlphaPlus will be posted. Users can reserve one-hour blocks of computer time by signing the booking sheet.

- Books and resources in the agency resource library may be borrowed for a maximum of one month. All books must be signed out.

- Smoking is not permitted during meetings, classes or in the office, however, breaks will be provided for people to use the designated smoking area.

- These premises are smoke-free.

- Refreshments for meetings and classes cannot be paid for by the agency.

- A duty schedule will be posted for cleaning the kitchen area and purchasing coffee supplies as needed. Everyone must pay 25 cents per cup of coffee/tea to cover the cost of supplies.

- Making or receiving long-distance telephone calls on the agency's telephone lines is not permitted.

- Computer equipment shall not be taken by staff for home use.

- Computer use is permitted during designated "open access" time. All learners, volunteers or staff who wish to use the computers may reserve time (to a maximum of one hour at a time) by signing up in the "reserve book." All internet users will be asked to sign the Agreement of Internet Usage form.

- People authorized to use the agency computers are permitted to use the Internet for educational purposes after a brief orientation to the Internet. This will highlight the uses and misuses of Internet access. Computer privileges will be removed if people are found to be utilizing the Internet inappropriately.

- This agency reserves the right to track anyone's internet use and habits and to immediately terminate those who violate the Agreement of Internet Usage.

(See further samples of Internet usage policies in the Appendices at the end of this Section)

Behaviour

- All people who walk through our doors have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Threatening, intimidating, harassing, insulting, belittling, or assaulting behaviour will not be tolerated at any time. A plain-language Code of Conduct for behaviour within our agency will be posted.

- Although there is no dress code, we expect all staff, volunteers and learners to dress with due regard to personal appearance and hygiene.

Office Hours

- All staff who will more than 15 minutes for work are expected to call the office.

- If it is necessary to close the office due to hazardous weather, all staff will be notified by telephone. Volunteers and learners who are scheduled to show up will also be notified.

- Office hours are from _____ to _____. Those holding classes and meetings after hours must make arrangements with the Executive Director to receive keys and lock-up instructions.

- This office is open all year except for a closing between Christmas and New Years Day.

- Special summer office hours will go into effect from ____ to ____.

Social Activities

- Any gifts purchased for staff or volunteers must be authorized by the Board's Finance Committee. Any such purchases which exceed $50 must be paid for by interested individuals rather than the agency. Contributions to social activities shall be on a voluntary basis and not considered an obligation.

- The costs of parties, refreshments and functions for staff, learners and volunteers must not come out of agency funds.

- This agency will not cover the costs of alcohol at any social or business function.

- Alcohol is strictly forbidden at social functions within the agency's offices or sites. However, alcohol may be permitted at agency events which are held on licensed premises.

Suggestions

- This organization seeks input from all learners, staff, volunteers and supporters. Suggestions forwarded with your name or anonymously will be reviewed and recorded by the Executive Director for inclusion in the monthly report to the Board. Written items can be addressed to specific staff members or put in the "Suggestion Box." Verbal suggestions can be directed to a staff member. People will be given credit for their ideas.

APPENDICES FOR SECTION SEVEN

7.5.1 Internet Usage Policies

Appendix #7.5.1

INTERNET USAGE POLICIES

From the Ottawa Public Library

Acceptable Use Policy
The Ottawa Public Library's electronic information resources, such as the Internet and CD-ROM products, are meant to be used in a responsible and ethical manner consistent with the educational, informational and recreational purposes for which they are provided. Responsible and ethical use includes:

1. Not using the Internet for unauthorized, illegal or unethical purposes.
2. Not attempting to modify or gain access to files, passwords or data belonging to others; not seeking unauthorized access to any computer system or damaging or altering software components or any network data base.
3. Not sending, receiving or displaying text or graphics which are illegal, or may reasonably be construed as obscene or offensive.

From the Ottawa Carleton District School Board

Internet Access - Terms and Conditions of Use (taken from the website at www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca where you can view the full policy)

- Access to the Internet is a privilege, not a right.
- Accounts must be used in support of education and be consistent with the school's code of behaviour.
- Unauthorized use of copyrighted material is prohibited.
- Transmission of any material in violation of any provincial or federal law is prohibited. this included, but is not limited to: racist, pornographic and malicious material. E-mail constitutes a legal document. existing laws for libel and/or defamation of character apply. E-mail is also subject to legal subpoena.
- Use of accounts for commercial or political interests is prohibited.
- Be polite and do not use obscene or vulgar language.
- Be cautious about revealing personal information to others as electronic mail is not guaranteed to be private.
- Do not disrupt the network or other users on the network.
- Respect copyright and ownership of material on the Internet and accredit when used. • Exit inappropriate we b pages immediately.
- Do not share your account or password with others. Do not use another person's account or attempt to log on another user.
- Report any hardware, software or security problem immediately to your supervising teacher. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Do not intentionally find or exploit security gaps or experiment on the school's network.
- Vandalism on computer networks is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, computer hardware or network system itself. Vandalism is a serious

offence and may result in disciplinary actions or charges veing laid. this includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. The use of viral files or hacking software is strictly prohibited.

- Network hardware or software must not be destroyed or modified in any way.
- Harassment is defined as persistent annoyance of another user or the interference in another user's work. Harassment is a serious offence and may result in disciplinary actions or charges being laid.
- Printing material from the internet must be cleared by the supervising teacher.
- Keep your expectations moderate. Do not download large files to your account. Your network filespace may be limited. Do not download or install games on the computer network.
- The OCDSB makes not warranties of any kind, whether expressed implied for the service provided. The OCDSB will not be responsible for any damages suffered including loss of data resulting from delays, or service interruptions. The OCDSB specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through internet services.
- Use of any information obtained via the internet is at your own risk.

From Tri-County Literacy Council

User Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Internet
(Must be read and signed by everyone using the internet)

User Name ____
Address ____
Telephone ____

The Internet is a resource tool which enhances access to information. Individuals using the Internet may find material that is inaccurate, misleading, controversial or offensive to them. Tri-County Literacy Council cannot protect users against finding such materials.

To ensure responsible and ethical use of the Internet at Tri-County Literacy Council, users must agree to abide by the *Council's User Agreement for Acceptable Use of the Internet* (referred to as the *User Agreement*.)

The User/Signer Agrees to:

- obtain permission from computer lab monitor before using the Internet
- use the Internet in a responsible and ethical manner
- use the Internet for educational and information purposes only (must be work related).

The User/Signer Agrees Not to use the Internet in an unacceptable manner. Examples of this could include but are not limited to:

- using the Internet for illegal or unethical purposes
- degrading or disrupting equipment or system performance

- rebooting or turning the computer on/off
- using any software that is not loaded on the computer by T-CLC paid staff
- knowingly using the computer in a manner that could result in transmission of computer viruses
- downloading software or files
- disregarding intellectual and property rights and laws including those for remote and local network data or information
- wasting finite resources (printing material that is not needed).

The User/Signer Understands

- T-CLC cannot monitor, control, or protect the users from material that is inaccurate, incomplete, misleading, controversial or offensive to them.
- use of the Internet service is at one's own risk
- that as a good information consumer one must question the accuracy, authority, validity and currency of any information found
- T-CLC makes not warranties with respect to Internet service or information found using the Internet and specifically, it assumes no responsibility for:
    - the content of any advice or information received by the user from any source located via the Internet
    - any cost, liability or damages caused by the way an individual chooses to use his/her Internet access
    - any consequences of service interruptions
    - any consequences of giving out personal information over the Internet (e.g. telephone numbers, credit card information)
- failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this User Agreement and/or anyone misusing or damaging the computer, or using the Internet for illegal purposes may be dismissed and/or prosecuted. In addition, they will be financially liable for any damages to the equipment.

Your signature on this User Agreement signifies your understanding of and willingness to comply with T-CLC's Internet Policy and the terms and conditions outlined in this User Agreement. T-CLC retains all signed copies of the User Agreement.

Signature ___________________________________ Date ____________________

SECTION EIGHT - POLICIES FOR MANAGING LIABILITY AND RISK

This section highlights some of the serious legal liabilities and risks that can face community literacy agencies. Because volunteer management is a relatively new field, consistent principles and standards have yet to be adopted.

Although many non-profit agencies have perhaps long been mindful of the risks and hazards of their work, most problems have been handled informally. The current climate in the volunteer sector and society at large make it desirable to formalize practices for managing liability and risk. These should be documented in writing. As you sort through your responsibilities and risks, you can start by developing policies. Share your experiences and concerns with colleagues in literacy but also reach out to those in the broader non-profit sector who are grappling with similar issues.

This section is presented as information only. Seek legal advice as necessary.

See also Section 9, Policies for Screening.

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members, page 61
Policies that Apply to Board Members, page 70
Policies on Policies, page 57
Other Administrative Policies, page 92

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

8.1 Protecting Individuals and Your Agency

The information presented here is not intended to scare people away from literacy volunteering by listing everything that may go wrong in your agency.

MTCU (*LBS Program Guidelines*, 1999) requires us to have "a system for assessing and contributing to the safety of learners, staff, volunteers and others involved in the LBS Program while at program sites." However, community-based literacy agencies struggle like the rest of the voluntary sector with outdated and inappropriate legislation. Several recent reports, such as the Broadbent Panel on Accountability and Governance, have suggested changes in the legislation, the voluntary sector and society at large to ensure safe, meaningful and responsible volunteer management practices. Progress in federal and provincial laws may soon change the uncertainties in liability and risk management for non-profit organizations. You are encouraged to stay current.

Unlike business corporations, there is no specific section of the Corporations Act which applies directly to non-profit agencies (even incorporated non-profit agencies.) Thus we fall back on "common law."

Red Tape Alert. In the spring of 1999 the Ontario government updated and streamlined a number of corporate maintenance requirements for not-to-for-profit corporations in Ontario. The simplification and updating were part of the government's red tape reduction initiatives.

All organizations and individuals are expected to provide a standard of care. This means reasonable care must be taken to avoid risks

- which are likely to occur
- which are easily eliminated
- which have caused previous injury
- which are well-known
- which can be dealt with using common practices.

Although we are fearful to impose too much bureaucracy in a volunteer agency, both individuals and agencies must be aware of their legal responsibilities in order to fulfill their obligations. Knowledge and understanding are the best defence. Clear communication helps everyone understand the reasons for taking precautions. The development of both general and specific policies and procedures is just one thing we can do to reduce the gaps and risks in volunteer agencies.

Basic Legal Concepts for Voluntary Organizations

Liability:	• condition of being actually or potentially subject to an obligation; • condition of being responsible for a potential or actual loss, penalty, evil, expense or burden which creates a duty to perform an act immediately or in the future; • all character of debts and obligations;
Negligence:	• the omission to do something which a reasonable person, guided by those ordinary considerations which would ordinarily regulate human affairs would do; • doing of something which a reasonable and prudent person would not do; • the failure to use such care as a reasonably prudent and careful person would use under similar circumstances.
Intentional:	• knowingly, with criminal intent; • purposefully, not accidentally; • the intent to do that which the law prohibits. **NOTE:** You can be liable for both intentional and negligent acts.
Duty:	• legal or moral obligation; • the obligation to conform to a legal standard of reasonable conduct in light of apparent risk; • standard of conduct for protection of others against unreasonable risks.
Risk:	• hazard, danger, peril, exposure to loss, injury, disadvantage or destruction, and comprises all elements of danger; • in insurance law, the danger or hazard of a loss of the property insured.
Fiduciary Duty:	• the highest standard of duty implied by law (e.g., trustee, guardian); • duty to act primarily for another's benefit involving good faith, trust, special confidence and candour; • subordinating one's personal interests to that of the other person;

	• breach of fiduciary responsibility makes one liable for any damage caused by the breach.

(Definitions from: *Black's Law Dictionary*, Sixth Edition, 1990)

8.2 The Liability of Volunteers

There is a duty for volunteers to uphold a standard of care toward those clients who respect or trust them. This obliges everyone (agencies, staff, board members, volunteers, learners) to take care not to injure or harm anyone who might reasonably be foreseen as affected by the action.

What standard of conduct can legally be expected from volunteers? A volunteer's actions "are measured against those of a reasonable person with similar ability and experience." (Public Legal Education Society, Volunteers and the Law, People's Law School, B.C., 1992) Volunteers with special skills or training will be held to a higher standard of care. A tutor who is also a doctor would be expected to apply her medical skills if her student suddenly became ill or injured, whereas another volunteer would have no such obligation.

Volunteers, particularly in community literacy agencies, may develop a close relationship with the people they work with. They may receive **personal or private information** which they must avoid revealing, except in special case where there is a legal reason to do so. Some learners may consider even the public disclosure of the fact that they are receiving literacy training to be a breach of confidential information. Sometimes, however, the duty to report things such as child abuse is greater than the promise of confidentiality.

Volunteers have a duty to be careful with what they say to others, especially if **giving information or advice**. They can be considered negligent if a client takes their advice and then harms himself or others, but usually only when one or more of the following conditions are present:

- the volunteer is working in the context where advice is given
- the volunteer has the appearance of being skilled
- the volunteer might foresee that the other person could rely on the advice
- the volunteer gives advice which causes loss or damage to the client.

There are two other areas where volunteers may be considered liable for another's injury or loss. **Defamation** is a false statement written or spoken in public (to one or more other persons). **Assault** is the act of threatening or acting as if one is about to strike another person. This includes verbal attacks. **Battery** is the act of actually striking someone. Obviously the extent of the volunteer's liability in these cases will depend on the degree to which they used force and the degree to which the act was provoked. Although such incidences are rare indeed, any abuse of power or authority by the volunteer is a particularly serious matter.

Volunteers **working with those who are disabled or infirm** are expected to exercise a greater duty of care. If clients are less able to protect themselves, the volunteer assumes a supervisory role even if his primary purpose is to offer literacy or numeracy tutoring. Legal suits in this realm are quite rare.

A volunteer's best defence is to fully understand and follow the policies and procedures and to stay within the limits of the job description.

Even if found to be liable for causing loss or injury to someone else, a volunteer may not always have to offer **compensation**. A volunteer may be protected from this if:

- it is determined that the injured person was partly or entirely responsible
- it is determined that the injured person knew what they were getting into
- it is determined that the voluntary organization was partly or entirely responsible
- there is an exclusion form to protect them from claims
- there is insurance coverage (either through the agency or a personal plan.)

A volunteer (or agency) may be protected from legal responsibility by an exclusion form, sometimes called a waiver (or release or consent form). Since a waiver is defined as the "voluntary, intentional relinquishment of a known right," (*Black's Law Dictionary*, Sixth Edition 1990), the signer must fully understand the form and its consequences. Also remember that formal legal advice is required to determine whether your waiver form is likely to be accepted by a court.

The clients (or learners) are asked to sign a form which states that they " . . . agree to release the voluntary organization, its officers, directors, agents, servants and volunteers from any or all causes of action . . . " But remember that **courts will not accept the form unless the form is fair and the signer understood the legal consequences of signing it.** (Public Legal Education Society, *Volunteers and the Law*, People's Law School, B.C., 1992)

A volunteer should always find out if volunteers are protected in the agency's insurance coverage. If so, what type of liability does it cover and under what circumstances? Do volunteers have to pay anything to be covered by the agency's insurance plan?

8.3 The Liability of Board Members

Board members are a very specific subsection of volunteers. While all of the legal responsibilities that apply to other volunteers also apply to board members, there are special obligations that need to be highlighted.

Board members must act in the best interests of the organization as a whole. This is called the **fiduciary duty**. They are expected to manage the agency's funds in a trustworthy manner, to act honestly, loyally, and in good faith and to put the best interests of the organization ahead of their own. Financial management is an especially serious matter as board members may be liable for unpaid wages and agency debts. Since the greatest proportion of most literacy agency budgets go to salaries, this is an important responsibility.

By setting and implementing policy the board must ensure that agency objectives are carried out responsibly. The extent of personal liability of a board member will be influenced by the legal status of the organization, such as whether it incorporated or has charitable status.

No Excuse. A board member cannot be protected from charges of negligence with excuses such as:

- carelessness
- lack of knowledge
- failure to act
- being well-intentioned
- being unpaid.

Resignation will not avoid the problem either.

Volunteer board members are expected, and indeed required, to perform the **duties of care and diligence** in their responsibilities. This involves being familiar with their own roles and functions, understanding how the agency operates and knowing about the financial health of the organization. The **duty of skill** also requires board members to act with the skill of a "reasonably prudent person." If they have special expertise or professional ability, they are required to fulfill their duties with the same standard as a "reasonably prudent" person in a similar profession. For example, an accountant on the board would be expected to examine financial statements with greater expertise than another board member who had no accounting training. The accountant would be expected to perform to a higher standard even if she was not the designated Treasurer.

The **duty of prudence** requires that board members be cautious and careful in anticipating the consequences of their decisions. Board members are expected to avoid taking risks and to act in the best interests of the agency. Risk management is the systematic analysis of hazards that could occur and the strategies to reduce or alleviate those potential problems. It is up to the Board of Directors to consider possible risks to volunteers, learners, the agency, the board, the public and even to property. The development and enforcement of policies and procedures are one way for the board to demonstrate that they have anticipated and taken precautions for, the risks of the agency's operations.

Board members must be careful to avoid conflicts of interest (apparent or actual) and to avoid any personal gain from their position. When a conflict occurs the board member must disclose it immediately. In some cases, profits made by a board member through association with the agency must be accounted for and paid back. Remember to watch for working relationships that can give rise to opportunities for short-term work. If you sit on the board of a literacy organization, such as OLC, LLO, CLO or regional networks, which sometimes hire people to do projects or short-term work, you have to declare your conflict of interest as soon as possible.

The duties of care, diligence, skill, trustworthiness, and prudence are essential since board members could be liable for the following:

- activities which go beyond the organization's purpose
- criminal activity which was approved by the board
- losses caused by a breach of duty
- repayment of the agency's debts.

Liability is not limited to these. Common sense and foresight in planning and developing policies and procedures, directors' responsibilities can be managed and their liability reduced.

Volume One contains further information on the roles, responsibilities, duties and code of conduct for board members. Please see pages 62, 102, 103.

8.4 The Liability of the Agency

Depending on its legal status (how or if it is incorporated), the agency will have different limits of liability. These are outlined in the constitution and by-laws. Like individuals, the organization is subject to the **duty of** care, whereby it must avoid injuring or harming anyone through actions which were foreseeable.

The agency can be held responsible for **the actions of its volunteers**, including board members, if the volunteer was performing tasks as requested by the agency and following proper procedures. Thus, it is the responsibility of the agency to make sure that volunteers are:

- properly selected,
- working in safe places,
- working with proper equipment/resources/support,
- adequately coordinated, trained and supervised.

The organization has a responsibility to **maintain a safe building** whether the agency owns, rents or uses it for only one event. The agency may be liable for damages or injury to both people and property.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, **discrimination** based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap, is not permitted as a basis for hiring, selection or offering services and/or products. If a charge of discrimination can be proved, the agency may be liable to compensate the complainant. Only bona fide criteria can be used in the selection of staff, volunteers or learners. You should consult the Human Rights Code to clarify the legal elements of your selection and eligibility criteria. Again, one of the agency's best defences is to develop and follow written policies and procedures.

The organization's liability for some of the above legal obligations may be reduced or limited if:

- it is found to be following the standard practices of other voluntary organizations;
- it can show that the injured person was partly or entirely responsible;
- it has an exclusion form to protect it from claims (see box above);
- it has insurance coverage;
- it is determined that the injured person knew what she was getting into.

8.5 Safe Practices

Part of managing liability is to assess and mitigate the risks to individuals and the agency. Putting your policies in the positive context of safety rather than the negative light of unpleasant consequences will better help people to understand and comply. Special effort is needed to make safety and security procedures known to all volunteers, learners and staff who come and go frequently and who meet at different times and locations as is common in literacy agencies. These procedures should be designed with the specifics of each role in mind. How does your agency communicate safety and security information on the following?

Safety Checklist

Facilities/property/site

- ☐ Fire safety
- ☐ Accidents/injuries
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Fire extinguishers
- ☐ Maintenance and cleaning
- ☐ Snow and ice removal
- ☐ Reporting damages
- ☐ Fire/police/ambulance contacts
- ☐ Emergency exits
- ☐ Kitchen safety
- ☐ General cleanliness

Work Environment

- ☐ Lighting/heating
- ☐ Working in isolation or in public places
- ☐ Keys and security
- ☐ Alarm systems
- ☐ Shared systems (in situations of co-location)

Communication

- ☐ Informing people (volunteers and/or staff members) of your whereabouts
- ☐ Access to telephone (or pager, cell phone) while on agency business
- ☐ Emergency contacts (after hours)

Personal Safety and Comfort

- ☐ Appropriate behaviour
- ☐ Knowing relevant medical information or health conditions of those with whom you work
- ☐ Disruptive and offensive behaviour
- ☐ Maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect
- ☐ Foul language
- ☐ Appropriate time and place for tutoring and/or meetings
- ☐ Violence, assault and threatening language
- ☐ Violent language
- ☐ Release of personal information

When a serious incident does occur, it is important that the facts be recorded as soon as possible while details can still be remembered. A basic Incident/Accident Report Form can be developed to ensure a consistent response. The form could contain sections to record the who, what, when, where, how and why of what happened. If these forms are to be forwarded to senior staff or the board, there must be some assurance that corrective or preventive follow-up action will be taken. Ideally, there could be a "guaranteed" response time to deal with incidents or complaints.

Some questions to ask to determine whether and how to proceed with insurance:

- Is there a clear risk present to the volunteer or to others?
- Is the risk significant in terms of potential damage?
- Is there some significant likelihood of the risk actually occurring?
- Can we better handle the risk by alleviating the condition that creates it?
- Can we better handle the risk by improved selection of qualified volunteers?
- Is the volunteer already protected by personal insurance coverage?
- What limits of coverage do we need?
- Where do we want to be covered: on-site, off premises, en route to the job?
- Could we join with other agencies in purchasing this insurance?

8.6 Insurance

People differ widely in their views on insurance for non-profit groups. Some argue that precautionary measures can adequately offset the element of risk. Some feel that the degree of protection available to non-profit groups, from insurance coverage, is not worth the cost. Community literacy agencies should consider both risk management and some form of insurance coverage.

There are many types of insurance available. You are advised to consult an insurance professional for detailed information.

Unfortunately, neither individual insurance companies, nor the industry as a whole, produce informative guides or resources with an overview of products available to non-profit agencies. Companies prefer to handle inquiries on an agency by agency basis. You will have to do your own research.

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance: This coverage provides protection for the organization from claims made against it for injury or damage to other people or property. This is the basic general insurance to consider.
Non-owned Liability Insurance for Vehicles: Voluntary organizations that use the cars of their staff and volunteers to transport people should consider this type of insurance. This does not protect the volunteers themselves, just the organization if it is sued.
Special Excess Third Party Liability Insurance: This is similar to non-owned third party liability, but it extends to the voluntary organization's officers, board members, employees and volunteers who use their own cars.
Malpractice and Professional Liability Insurance: If the voluntary organization offers advice

or counselling, it should consider this type of insurance to cover any errors, omissions, or negligence. Both the volunteer and the voluntary organization are protected.
Directors' Liability Insurance: This type of insurance protects the directors of the voluntary organization from liability for their actions if they are sued. This insurance will not cover any breach of the board member's duties when he or she is acting against the interests of the organization (eg., fraud, bad faith, dishonesty).
Insurance Protection for Injured Volunteers: Consult the appropriate Workers Compensation Authority to see if coverage would be applicable to your volunteers.

(Public Legal Education Society, *Volunteers and the Law*, People's Law School, B.C., 1992)

The above list highlights the insurance coverage most commonly required in the non-profit sector, but you don't have to understand everything about insurance before you enter the insurance marketplace. Plan with your own needs and terms in mind.

1. Establish your requirements for selecting an insurance provider. Consider any or all of the following:
    - an insurance broker who is referred by another non-profit agency
    - an insurance company with significant experience in working with non-profit agencies
    - a firm that is pleasant and informative in providing clear information in your initial inquiries over the phone
    - a broker who is willing to take time to explain things using clear language
    - a firm/broker that is reputable in the community
    - an agent who is willing to come and do a presentation and answer questions
    - an agent who is accessible and takes the time to answer your calls
    - a firm with the cheapest rates
    - a firm that supports literacy.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">An agent versus a broker?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Insurance agent:
employed by an individual insurer
knowledgable about the specific products and services of the company he or she represents</td><td>Insurance broker:
represents various companies (but be sure to find out which companies he represents and where he places most of his business)
able to "shop around" different groups of companies for you</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, it can pay to consult both brokers and agents. And remember to compare service as well as quotations and coverage.</td></tr>
</table>

2. Delegate someone to make preliminary inquiries to insurance providers. A staff person or board member, or even a small team of two or three, can do the research and report back on their findings. When calling with questions, they should have a brief outline of the organization and its insurance needs. If necessary consult with your legal counsel to help you understand who and what needs to be insured.

3. Invite one or two of the brokers to come and speak to the entire board or a designated search committee.

4. Don't be bowled over by the sales pitch. Present your needs based on your own agency profile and statistics, such as:
   - number of volunteers
   - number of board members
   - total budget
   - nature of services provided
   - number of clients served
   - number of staff
   - structure and operations
   - areas of risk
   - different insurance needs for different groups in your agency (staff, board members, learners, volunteers).

   > Check with your insurance agent/broker and your accountant to determine whether your insurance could be considered a taxable benefit for your personnel.

5. Prepare and ask your questions. Keep asking until you have answers. Get the answers in writing. You will want to understand what is covered and particularly what is NOT covered in order to make plans to reduce your exposure to risk.

   Coverage for people:
   - Who is covered? Under what circumstances? (injury, malpractice, negligence, errors, breach of duty)
   - Who is not covered? Under what circumstances?
   - What is the length of time to respond to claims?
   - What is the process for making claims?
   - "What If?" (possible or likely scenarios for your agency)
   - What would disqualify an individual or agency from insurance protection?
   - What is the extent of the protection (eg., are drivers covered?)

Coverage for property:

- What property is protected? What is not covered?
- How is replacement value arrived at?
- What is the deductible?
- What is the process for making claims?
- What is the length of time to respond to claims?
- Is there coverage for business interruption? For contractual obligations?

The Cost:

- What are the insurance options and their costs?
- What are the payment plans, if available?
- Are there standards and practices that could reduce our rates?
- Are we likely to face sudden price increases?

6. Collect and summarize the facts. Remember that insurance brokers cannot give you legal advice, so involve your legal counsel if necessary, before you make a decision about which company and coverage to go with.

7. Circulate the highlights of the insurance coverage to everyone in the agency. You need to explain the scope and limitations of the insurance coverage in clear language. You may even want to recommend options for individuals to check with their own insurer.

8. Based on the coverage you have purchased, determine implications for policy. You may need to develop new policies to reduce risks not covered by the insurance, or you may need to ensure certain practices are in place in order not to be disqualified from coverage. For example, if the organization will not be responsible for staff or volunteer vehicles, tutors may not be permitted to drive learners on any agency business unless they have written documentation of appropriate personal coverage.

Liability insurance may not cover libel, slander, dishonesty, illegal activities, failure to maintain insurance for the organization's property, or improper reimbursement. Sometimes you can purchase this additional coverage on a rider.

9. Set a date each year to review insurance needs, well in advance of the renewal date. Keep in touch with your insurance broker throughout the year. Let her know about any changes in your location or operations. Ask for updates in non-profit insurance. Invite the agent or broker to attend important functions, to support literacy or even to volunteer. Send her the Annual Report. And don't forget to share your insurance tips with colleagues through AlphaPlus discussions.

> Although currently there is no specific legal requirement for non-profit agencies selecting and purchasing insurance, MTCU requires that literacy agencies have a minimum of one million dollars comprehensive general liability insurance. Each agency must choose the right insurance for its needs.

8.7 Your Turn

Liability and Risk Management

- ❑ All staff, volunteers and learners are required to understand and sign a waiver to protect themselves and the agency from claims.
- ❑ We fully explain the waiver that learners are required to sign when they start with our agency. Our agency has legal counsel.

Confidentiality

- ❑ All staff, learners and volunteers are asked to respect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information.
- ❑ All financial records are kept in the main office where board members can inspect them at any time.
- ❑ We have clear policies on discrimination and confidentiality which are explained to all staff learners and volunteers.

Board Liability

- ❑ Board members review the financial statements on a regular basis.
- ❑ An information package is sent to the board members prior to the board meetings.
- ❑ Our agency has regular audits by reputable chartered accountants.
- ❑ Our board and committee minutes as well as monthly staff reports are circulated to board members; copies are also available for viewing at the office.
- ❑ We have orientation for board members, staff, learners and volunteers.

Safety Procedures

- ❑ We have a list of safety and emergency procedures.
- ❑ We have developed a reporting system to record any accidents or safety incidents.
- ❑ We have a written safety procedure which is distributed to all employees and volunteers.
- ❑ We have a plan for dealing with emergency situations.
- ❑ The fire safety procedures are communicated to all staff, learners and volunteers.

Insurance

We have clear guidelines on who and what is covered by our insurance policy.

8.8 Tips and Resources

Brainstorm among staff, board members and/or a mixed focus group (with learners, volunteers and staff) about the realistic potential for problems in your agency. Remember that if an occurrence is foreseeable, you might be held liable for not taking appropriate preventive action.

What a volunteer will want to know:

1. Can you provide me with a complete job description that includes a list of the responsibilities of the position I'm interested in?
2. Who is my supervisor? Who is that person's supervisor?
3. Please give me a complete list of safety procedures and people to contact.
4. Please let me know how to report any incidents or loss or injury.
5. Please explain the type of insurance carried by this agency and whether it covers me.

Take this seriously. Do your duty to protect yourself, your agency and others. See the checklist in Appendix #8.10.1 at the end of this section.

Duty of Care video. This short 15-minute video is ideal to show to staff and board members as it provides an overview of screening as a part of managing risks. It can be ordered from Volunteer Canada at 1-800-670-0401, for a cost of $15. A local volunteer centre or library may also have it available to borrow.

Legal links. The Insurance Council of Canada has a thorough listing of various legal sources on the Internet. The Council has selected some frequently-used sites in legal research, mostly Canadian. Each comes with a brief annotation about the content covered. Go to www.insurance-council.ca/Legal/English/Public/LegalLinks.htm.

Legal services at your service. The up-to-date information you are looking for may already be available for free. The Volunteer Lawyers Service offers legal services at no charge to charitable and not-for-profit community organizations. Pro Bono Students Canada is a network of law schools and community organizations that matches law students who want to do pro bono work with public interest and community service agencies. They both produce informative fact sheets on current topics.

8.9 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. The statements are presented under several subheadings, which follow the general sequence of information in the foregoing text.

Sample Policy Statements

Volunteer Management

- The volunteer is not expected to perform tasks beyond the job description unless the request comes from his immediate supervisor.

- The tutoring relationship will be terminated without delay when there has been a deliberate breach of policy which puts the learner or the volunteer at risk.

- It is the policy of this agency that no one will ever knowingly be put at risk in the performance of her duties.

- Violence, assault, discrimination, threatening or harassing behaviours are grounds for immediate dismissal.

- The Coordinator of Volunteers is expected to conduct a risk assessment for each tutoring situation.

Board Responsibilities

See also *Policies that Apply to Board Members, Section Three, Volume One*.

- Board members receive a meeting information package well in advance of all board meetings.

- Board members receive the minutes and committee and staff reports in a timely manner, as agreed upon.

- Board members receive regular financial statements, as agreed upon.

- Minutes and financial statements are kept in the main office for board members to review.

- Only people with designated signing authority can sign contracts on behalf of the board.

- Our board members have an obligation to stay informed of agency business and finances.

Safety

- All volunteers and learners will receive emergency contact information with procedures to follow in case of problems or accidents while on agency business.

- All accidents or safety problems related to agency business will be reported to the person's immediate supervisor within 24 hours of their occurrence.

- This agency is committed to ensuring that people using the office/classrooms after hours have a safe environment. Staff will not be expected to work alone after hours.

- This agency is committed to ensuring that all sites for tutorial meetings are comfortable, safe learning environments.

- Tutoring hours are to be scheduled at the centre, or at a public place (church, school, library). This agency does not permit students and tutors to meet in private homes.

- This agency will not be held responsible for incidents occurring to tutors and learners who choose to meet outside the designated tutoring locations.

- Students and tutors agree to meet in safe, mutually convenient locations.

- No files containing personal information on learners, volunteers or staff shall be removed from the premises.

- Volunteers and tutors are not to exchange telephone numbers and last names for the first few lessons until they feel comfortable about sharing that personal information.

- The first tutor-learner meetings will always take place at the office. No personal information is to be revealed until the tutor and volunteer exchange it voluntarily.

- Our organization will not tolerate any threat (actual or perceived) to the personal safety of others on its premises. Aggressive behaviour must be reported immediately to the Executive Director, who is authorized to respond as appropriate, which may include removing the person from the program or calling in the police.

Emergencies

- All volunteer or learner accidents shall be reported to the Student-Tutor Coordinator within 24 hours. All staff accidents shall be reported to the Executive Director within 24 hours. The details will be recorded on the agency's Accident Information form and forwarded to the Executive Director for appropriate action.

- All accidents involving paid employees will be reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (formerly the Workers Compensation Board) within the mandatory period allowed.

- All occurrences of allegations and/or accusations against the agency, the staff, the learners or the volunteers will be reported to the Executive Director, who will inform the board executive, in order to take immediate, appropriate and effective action.

- Any unexpected and abnormal incidents that arise will be reported to the Executive Director within 48 hours. Incidents and accidents including natural disasters, criminal activity and inappropriate behaviour will be documented and kept on record.

Health and Medical Issues

- All staff, learners and volunteers should be prepared to disclose serious health conditions or allergies for their own health and safety and that of others.

- Those contagious diseases are required to cease their duties for as long as it takes to recover.

- Smoking is not permitted during meetings or lessons in our facilities.

Insurance

- This agency will maintain appropriate insurance coverage, which will be reviewed annually.

- Personal cars driven on agency business are not covered by the agency's insurance.

- Our insurance policies are communicated to and understood by everyone in our agency. A summary of who and what is covered is distributed annually and is posted in the office.

- Our insurance coverage will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is still adequate for our needs.

- Liability and accident insurance is provided to all volunteers while on agency business. Specific information on the coverage is available from the Coordinator of Volunteers.

- Liability and accident insurance will not be provided for any volunteers even during agency business. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.

APPENDICES FOR SECTION EIGHT

Appendix # 8.10.1

CHECKLIST FOR RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT

No one can have "perfect knowledge" on everything there is to know and do. You do the best you can to take responsibilities seriously without becoming overwhelmed with the risks and liabilities. Here are some steps which can be taken to reduce your liability and exposure to risks.

Everyone associated with your agency:

- ❑ Common sense and taking time to think things through.
- ❑ Act with reasonable care and diligence

The Volunteers (may depend on their position)

- ❑ Need to insist on a clearly defined job description.
- ❑ Need to understand the importance of confidential, privileged and sensitive information (when information is protected and when it must be reported.)
- ❑ Need to ask for clarification and support when needed.
- ❑ Need to follow the agency's policies and procedures.
- ❑ Need to avoid talking, gossiping or speculating about the learners with whom they work.
- ❑ Need to take care in offering "advice" to clients or learners who often see the volunteer as a believable and authoritative source for information (should admit if they are not sure, encourage client to verify the information, etc.)
- ❑ Need training in all of the above.

The Board Members:

Regulatory

- ❑ Need to ensure that the organization is operating within its "objects" (legally stated purpose) at times.
- ❑ Need to know and understand the organization's by-laws, letters patent and articles of incorporation, by-laws and constitution.
- ❑ Need to regularly review and amend the constitution and bylaws to keep them up-to-date.
- ❑ Need to know duties and obligations under corporate law, common law and other legislation.
- ❑ Need to be sure that organization is fulfilling all aspects of its non-profit and tax exempt status.
- ❑ Needs to ensure that all the statutory requirements of being a non-profit are met.

Behaviour and actions

- ❑ Need to be familiar with the functions and actions of the board and its officers.

- ❑ Need to ask for explanation, help, and training when issues are not clear.
- ❑ Need to ask questions and keep asking until answers are provided.
- ❑ Need to avoid taking any unnecessary risks.
- ❑ Need to always act in the best interests of agency.
- ❑ Need to be loyal to the agency.
- ❑ Need to act honestly, and in good faith.

Meetings and minutes

- ❑ Need to keep all minutes and board documents in a file or binder for easy reference.
- ❑ Need to hold and attend regular meetings
- ❑ Need to thoroughly review and approve all minutes and reports.
- ❑ Need to arrange for the timing and scheduling to receive regular written staff and committee reports.
- ❑ Need to read any background information provided before meetings.
- ❑ Need to have adequate time to consider important matters.
- ❑ Need to seek qualified professional advice as needed (insist that it be provided in writing.)

Board structure and decision-making

- ❑ Need to ensure that all board members are familiar and comfortable with the board decision-making process.
- ❑ Need to understand issues before voting.
- ❑ Need to record any objections in the minutes if you disagree with a motion.
- ❑ Need to declare any conflict of interest, in writing, immediately (no matter how small or indirect.)
- ❑ Need to ensure that your declaration of conflict is recorded in the minutes.
- ❑ Need to forbid borrowing, misappropriating or misusing agency funds or any criminal activity.
- ❑ Need to monitor the activities of the Executive to make sure they do not overstep their authority.

Agency Operations and personnel relations

- ❑ Need to understand the activities and operations of the agency and the people involved.
- ❑ Need to undertake regular evaluations of board, staff and agency performance.
- ❑ Need to insist that consistent policies and procedures are followed.
- ❑ Need to select competent employees.
- ❑ Need to ensure that the organization is adequately insured, including board "directors and officers" coverage and liability as requested by the funder.
- ❑ Need to ensure that contracts in order and up-to-date (with funders, landlord, staff, etc.)

Financial management

- ❑ Need to know who is authorized to sign cheques and in what amount.
- ❑ Need to read and understand financial statements (or request training.)
- ❑ Need to regularly receive financial statements which cover revenues, assets, liabilities, expenses, amount of reserve.
- ❑ Need to be certain that agency records are audited by a reputable firm of chartered accountants.
- ❑ Need to be confirm that employee deductions and other statutory remittances have been paid and are up-to-date.
- ❑ Need to ensure that creditors are paid in a timely manner.
- ❑ Need to ensure that annual tax returns are prepared and filed.
- ❑ Need to vote against making expenditures if funds are not available to cover the item.
- ❑ Need to avoid personal gain at agency's expense (must not vote on transactions which would create a personal profit.)
- ❑ Need to have selection and screening criteria for those individuals who will be working with agency funds.
- ❑ Need to engage a reputable bookkeeper, accountant and/or treasurer.
- ❑ Need to watch for suspicious transactions and seek explanations

The Agency:

- ❑ Needs to have clear and detailed job descriptions for all positions.
- ❑ Needs to have appropriate and documented screening and hiring procedures which are justifiable and legal.
- ❑ Needs to ensure that there is adequate support and supervision for volunteers and staff.
- ❑ Needs to create positions with tasks that are realistic and manageable.
- ❑ Needs to provide training for those who will be working with learners who have special needs.
- ❑ Needs to establish a buddy system or supervision close at hand.
- ❑ Needs to provide consistent training for staff and volunteers.
- ❑ Need to ensure that only designated people sign contracts or order supplies on behalf of the agency.
- ❑ Needs to take immediate action on problems or issues.
- ❑ Needs to ensure that regular maintenance checks of facilities and equipment are done.
- ❑ Needs to have written safety procedures which emphasize prevention practices.
- ❑ Need to ensure that policies and practices are communicated to all concerned.

Appendix #8.10.2

IMPORTANT SOURCES

Go right to the source for your legal information. Consider having actual copies of the most recent acts and regulations which apply to your agency. Reviewing your collection and updating it on a regular basis, would make an excellent volunteer or summer student position. A current legal dictionary may also be a good investment for your reference shelf.

Provincial Regulations and Requirements

- The Ontario Corporations Act from the **Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations**. Call 1-800-361-3223 (Companies Branch) or call 1-800-387-9080. The Public Accounting Act and the Charities Accounting Act stipulate how statements are to be prepared and filed for the specific organizations.
- **Information and Privacy Commissioner** (at 1-800-387-0073) for information on public records, release/consent forms.
- LBS Funding and program requirements from the Literacy and Basic Skills Section of the **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**. Call 416-326-5482 (general inquiries)
- **Ministry of Labour** for the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health Safety Act (and a Guide to the Employment Standards.) This department is also responsible for occupational health and safety issues. Call 1-800-531-5551 or try online at http://www.gov.on.ca/lab/main.htm.
- Employer Health Tax (a payroll tax which may be required to be paid by the employer) from the **Ontario Ministry of Finance**. Call 1-800-465-6699 for up-to-date information on whether this applies to your organization.
- **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board** (a crown corporation) may require the employer pay a payroll health tax. Call 1-800-387-5540 to assess your status.
- Human Rights Code, OHRC, including legal guidelines and plan language information, go to the **Ontario Human Rights Commission**. Call 1-800-397-9080 or check the website at www.ohrc.on.ca. Not to be confused with the Canada Human Rights Code which applies to federal government departments and companies with a national scope (such as airlines.) For information on the CHRC

Note: Ontario government documents are often distributed through Publications Ontario by calling 416-326-5300 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938. You can also search online for information at www.gov.on.ca.

Federal Regulations and Requirements

- Income Tax Act and Charitable Status requirements from the **Canada Customs and Revenue Agency** (CCRA). Call the business services division at 1-800-959-5525 (to be connected with the closest office for your dialling area) for information about GST, EI, payroll deductions. Ask also for the Pensions Legislation. For the Charitable division, call 1-800-267-2384. The CCRA website is at www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca.
- Human Resources Development Canada has information on the Canada Pension Plan (1-800-277-9914) while Employment Insurance and other inquiries can be handled from your local HRDC office (see telephone blue pages.)

And don't be afraid to seek out free expert advice from legal counsel, insurance advisors, government departments, human resource professionals, public relations firms, other community service agencies and even colleges and universities that offer inexpensive or free consulting services.

Appendix 8.10.3

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ALERT

(Reprinted with the kind permission of author Peter Graham)

LEGALESE

A column of general information and opinion on legal topics by the lawyers or Rural Legal Services (North Frontenac), Box 359, Sharbot Lake, Ontario, K0K 2P0, 279-3252 or toll-free: 1-888-777-8916. The column is not intended to provide legal advice. You should contact a lawyer to determine your legal rights and obligations.

Not-for-Profit Alert

In the spring of this year, the government updated and streamlined a number of corporate maintenance requirements for not-for-profit corporations in Ontario. The simplification and updating was part of the government's red tape reduction initiatives.

In this column we will outline the key changes which will make the administration of not-for-profit corporations easier for their Board of Directors.

Corporate Seal

A not-for-profit corporation may, but need not, have a corporate seal. Until the amendment, corporate seals were mandatory. Corporate seals in today's corporate environment are unnecessary and in practice seldom used.

Changes to the Head Office or Number of Directors

Each not-for-profit corporation must have a head office and a fixed number of directors or not less than three. To change either the location of the head office or the number of directors, the corporation must pass a "special resolution." A special resolution is a resolution passed by the Board of Directors and confirmed by at least two-thirds of the votes cast at a general meeting of the members.

Until the amendments, the corporations was required to file a notice of such special resolution with the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and publish the special resolution in The Ontario Gazette within 14 days after the members have confirmed the resolution. Failure to comply with the notice provisions was an offence under the

Meetings of Directors and Members

The meeting requirements for both directors and members have been simplified.

Now, a resolution for the Board of Directors which is signed by all the directors is as valid and effective as if passed at a meeting of the directors duly called and held for the purpose of passing the resolution. Likewise, a resolution of the members which is signed by all the members is as valid and effective as if passed at a meeting of the members duly called and held for that purpose.

The actual meeting procedure for directors has also been streamlined by allowing meeting by telephone, electronic or other communication facilities so long as all persons participating in the meeting are able to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously. The electronic meeting must be consented to by all participating directors and not specifically prohibited by the by-laws of the corporation.

Rotation of Directors

The general rule is that the election of directors must take place annually with all directors retiring each year but eligible for re-election for a further year. Before the amendments, if a corporation wanted to elect it directors in rotation (e.g directors elected for staggered two year terms), the authority to do that had to be included in the Letters Patent or Supplementary Letters Patent of the corporation.

Now, the provision for election of directors in rotation may be authorized in the by-laws of the corporation. In other words, there is no longer a need to apply for Supplementary Letters Patent when a corporation wishes to introduce or modify such an election procedure. However, there remains the requirement that if directors are to be elected in rotation, no director may be elected for a term of more than five years and at lest three of the directors must retire from the office in each year.

These changes parallel changes that were made for "for profit" corporation years ago and are a welcome updating of corporate maintenance requirements for the not-for profit sector. Further

Act not only with respect to the corporation itself but also for each director or officer who authorized, permitted or acquiesced in such failure! The notice requirements have bee removed by the spring amendments.

information may be obtained from the Companies Branch of the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations (1-800-361-3223).

Peter Graham, Lawyer
North Frontenac News, September 7, 1999.

SECTION NINE - POLICIES FOR SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

> *Screening of applicants refers to the range of procedures and processes used by organizations to carefully scrutinize individuals who apply for paid or unpaid positions in order to choose the best candidates and to weed out, as far as possible, those who would be incompetent or who would do harm.*
> (Lorraine Street, The Screening Handbook, 1996)

For the purposes of this discussion, the term "applicant" will be used to describe any person seeking to enter the agency as a volunteer, staff person, board member or learner.

Many agencies may resist the increased level of formality that screening represents. They may not realize that screening is a process rather than a single defined activity. Screening is not a magic "sorting box" which will guarantee that all newcomers are the "right" ones for your agency.

Screening may be as broad as the way you publicize and attract people to your agency and as specific as the questions you ask in a first meeting with applicants. Screening measures must be applied in a consistent manner to staff, volunteers and even to learners who seek to enter your agency. In fact, most literacy agencies already have some steps in place for screening and selection.

This chapter reemphasizes the importance of many of the key points presented already in the policy development process. Although this section encourages you to reflect on and document your approach to these important issues, it does not attempt to prescribe complicated and unnecessary steps that do not fit your organization's needs.

See also Section Three, Recruitment.

Topics in this Section

Connection to Volume One

See also:
Section Three, Policies that Apply to Volunteers, page 78 and following.

This information is no substitute for legal and/or professional counsel. You are urged to seek qualified and current advice for matters related to your agency.

9.1 About Screening

Screening has become a high priority area for research in the non-profit sector in recent years. As a result, several excellent and thorough Canadian resources have emerged as definitive information sources.

Recommended Resources

The Screening Handbook, by Lorraine Street, for the National Education Campaign on Screening, 1996.

Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport, by Brenda Gallagher for Volunteer Canada, 1998.

Beyond Police Checks: The Definitive Volunteer and Employee Screening Guidebook by Linda Graff, 1999.

Details on how to access and order these materials are included in the Supporting Documents section at the end of this Guide.

This section draws primarily on the information in these three documents and serves only to highlight the most important topics in this extensive subject. In fact, Volunteer Canada has kindly allowed Community Literacy of Ontario to include its Education Dossier handouts on screening within this document. This package was produced by the National Education Campaign on Screening to accompany the Screening Handbook (see above). You will find this useful resource located in the Appendices at the end of this section. You are encouraged to consult all of these resources and other to better prepare your agency for managing this significant issue.

Screening is an ongoing process of determining who will receive opportunities to learn, to tutor, or to serve in your agency. There is not one fixed set of screening rules that you can apply universally simply to "cover" yourself. Unfortunately, implementing formal screening processes may seem daunting, overwhelming and maybe even impractical in a community-based approach to literacy. Other arguments against screening include:

- It will scare off volunteers; people will find it distasteful in a volunteer context.
- It isn't necessary; we've never had a problem.
- We don't have the expertise to administer it properly.
- We don't have the time and budget required to do screening.
- It doesn't guarantee anything; screening won't catch the "undesirables" anyhow.

But these arguments demonstrate a fundamental misunderstanding of what screening is all about.

Screening is not synonymous with hiring, recruitment, or placement. While screening might well be considered part of each of these other processes, it has become a function of such import that it now warrants separate attention in the overall human resources/volunteer program

management process.
(Graff, *Beyond Police Checks*, 1999.)

It is important to understand that Canadian courts will uphold organizations' responsibilities to screen carefully. This is part of their "duty of care."
(Volunteer Canada, *Safe Steps*, 1998)

Community literacy agencies differ widely in their approach to screening. Some rely on a "gut feeling" when accepting volunteers or learners, while others go through several precautionary steps such as a reference check and/or police checks. No matter what practices you are currently using, you are almost certainly doing screening already. But are you documenting it?

The following box highlights some of the recommended steps which you can (and perhaps do) take to screen staff, volunteers and learners. You will notice that many points have, in fact, been covered in your policy development long before this chapter.

9.2 The 10-Step Screening Process

Volunteer Canada recommends a 10-Step Screening Process to assist organizations in the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers and staff. Areas to consider include:

Before you hire

- determining the risk
- position design and description
- recruitment process

The hiring process

- application form
- interviews
- reference checks
- police record checks

Managing the volunteer

- orientation and training
- supervision/evaluation
- participant follow-up.

(Gallagher, *Safe Steps*, 1998)

With an outline for a screening process in hand, consider the following "toolbox" of specific **screening tools**:

- position description
- pre-application tests and assessments
- resumes and application forms
- interviews
- reference checks
- qualifications check
- police records check
- driver's record check
- credit bureau check
- performance assessment
- home visit
- medical/psychological test
- orientation and training
- probationary period

Other screening devices, although NOT applicable to literacy, include: medical tests, lie detectors, psychological profiles, handwriting analysis, blood testing, child abuse registers (if available), personality testing, to name a few.
(Graff, *Beyond Police Checks*, 1999)

9.2.1 Determining the Risk

Screening starts with assessing the potential for loss or injury within your agency's programs. You must then try to develop steps to stop, minimize, prevent, or eliminate that potential. Your risk assessment has to be balanced with finding solutions otherwise, it becomes easy to get unproductively "stuck" in imagining the "what ifs."

Vulnerable person: One who has difficulty protecting him/herself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, or handicap.

The law asks us to consider our "duty of care" to those who are vulnerable. The question to answer for your organization is who, if anyone, is in any way vulnerable? Lesser literacy skills, physical size, strength, socioeconomic status, or expertise may put staff, learners or volunteer tutors at a disadvantage, but is this the same thing as being "vulnerable"? It could be said that both parties working in a one-to-one situation are at risk, therefore the same measures of care should be extended to both. At some level, staff may be considered to have an advantage because of their paid position of responsibility, however they may be working in risky situations which make them vulnerable. The degree of vulnerability will depend on the working environment and the position.

9.2.2 Position Design

Each position must be analysed for the risk associated with its unique tasks, clients, setting and supervision. The development of job descriptions has already been discussed in the section on Recruitment earlier in this volume. A job description template is also included at the end of that section.

A general review of job descriptions might include:

- analysis of duties, including the complexity, responsibility and degree of risk inherent in each
- explanations of products/outcomes and decision-making frameworks
- tools, services and/or accommodations required to complete the duties
- thoroughness and frequency of supervision
- interactions between the candidate and persons inside and outside the organization
- time allocations and requirements
- formal training required
- skills necessary (including the "soft" skills, such as empathy, ability to work as part of a team, ability to plan work independently).

In this review, the details of position characteristics should be examined for:

- degree of supervision
- degree of isolation
- degree of physical contact
- degree of physical demands
- degree of trust/degree of temptation
- degree of risk inherent in the task or environment
- degree of emotional demands
- requirements for knowledge
- requirements for skill/experience
- nature of the contact with clients.

A "one size fits all" screening process will not be appropriate for all categories of staff, volunteers or learners. You may even want to group the "risk factor" of the positions into high, medium and low, then tailor your screening requirements for each category. Tutors who work with small groups may be given a lower rating for exposure to risk than a tutor who works one-on-one in the learner's home. The diverse positions in your agency may even require screening steps that are specific to the requirements of each job. For example, the treasurer of the board may have to undertake additional screening measures beyond those of the other board members since, this position requires an especially high degree of trust and responsibility.

Consider appropriate screening measures for:

- service volunteers, such as tutors and teaching helpers
- administrative volunteers, such as office and fundraising help
- governance volunteers, such as board members (all positions on the board)
- part-time staff
- full-time staff
- agency accountant or bookkeeper
- temporary or casual workers
- special consultants for projects, training
- learners/students
- outside professionals, such as auditors and insurance agents.

You may need to develop appropriate policies for people already within your agency who want to switch jobs or try a new position. A volunteer or learner who moves from working in a small group to a one-to-one setting will need to undergo the necessary screening for the new position, even though you already know the person well. You may find it difficult to apply screening policies to someone you already have a relationship with. For consistency it may simply be easier to screen broadly at the beginning.

In some non-profit agencies, volunteers go through a more rigorous screening protocol than paid staff members. Such an approach may be justified if the volunteers are indeed in positions of higher risk. Other agencies go to great lengths to screen their volunteers while doing very little to set eligibility or selection criteria for their clients. If people perceive your process to be "unfair" you may want to consider a more equitable approach or a better educational campaign to explain the purposes of your screening.

As you study each position, consider whether some duties and tasks could be modified to reduce the risks. Perhaps

- learners and their tutors could be required to meet in public places rather than going through a series of interviews, police checks and reference checks;
- volunteers in the office should not be allowed to access confidential files or financial information rather than be required to undergo reference checks which may be difficult to obtain for people with little work experience;
- board members could require that their Treasurer not be given sole signing authority rather requiring a police records check;
- tutors should not be allowed to drive their learners to and from lesson meetings rather than being required to provide details of their driving record and inspection of their vehicle.

Changing or redesigning key elements of the position or the environment are important strategies in risk management.

After assessing the position fully, try to determine what information you really need to know about the applicants in order to make decisions about accepting or rejecting their applications.

What information do you need about prospective volunteers?
Which screening measures will provide this information?

9.2.3 The Recruitment Process

Having determined the information you really need about applicants, you will need to decide which screening measure will provide you with this information. For example, a police check might seem like an effective way to keep out "undesirables," however it may not provide you with the specific information you need since it only identifies any convictions on record. Intentions, activities and other encounters with the law are not revealed by this type of check.

The chapter on Recruitment outlines the importance of where and how to seek people. This will, in turn, determine who is likely to approach your organization to volunteer, to work or to learn. Avoid desperate pleas. There are other ways to advertise your need for volunteers or clients. Even though non-profit agencies, and community-based literacy agencies in particular, have a long-honoured tradition of not turning people away, we have to recognize that we cannot be everything to everyone. We know that not "just anyone will do," so why be shy about communicating the specifics?

Be open about screening. Demonstrate that screening is a positive feature of your organization. Let volunteers know they were **chosen, not just recruited**.

9.2.4 The Application Form

Whether you call it an Application Form, Information Sheet, Background Data, Learner Registration or something else, the fact is that you have to collect some basic information on those who seek to join your agency whether as staff, volunteers or learners. For the purposes of this guide, the term Application Form will be used.

The application form should be created to determine the suitability of the candidates for a specific position.

- Do you really need to know the educational background of the volunteer who is applying to tutor or are you more interested in their motivations for wanting to volunteer?
- Do you need to know a learner's job history for the last five years or is it more pertinent to know about their experiences and attitudes towards education and learning?
- Does your funder require any information (as MTCU requires us to ask about a learner's source of income)?
- Are you looking for factual information or attitudes and opinions?
- Do you have time to go through the information once you have requested it?

These are questions that your agency must answer for itself. Whatever questions you ask on an application, be sure that you have genuine reasons for wanting the information.

Consider these questions as you review and revise your application forms:

- Why are we asking for this information?
- Is it necessary to establish the applicant's qualifications for this position?
- What effect will the answers to these questions have on the individual's chances of being chosen?
- Do these questions ask for information that could be considered discriminatory according to Human Rights legislation?

(Gallagher, *Safe Steps*, 1998)

Your agency will also need to decide whether to have different application forms for different positions or whether a general form would be more useful. Typically, board members are not typically required to fill out any kind of application form, however, it may be a good idea to have consistent background information on each board member.

Your forms should be easy to understand and fill out. This should not be a test. If you want to test the reading or writing levels of applicants, be up-front about it. This can prevent frustration. Clear directions which explain why you are asking for certain information, can turn those terse, point-form answers into the paragraphs of thoughtful opinion you are truly seeking.

Legal Note. The screening protocol for any position must be directly connected to, and indeed is determined by, the bona fide occupational requirements. (Graff, *Beyond Police Checks*, 1999)

Consult a legal expert to ensure that the application form complies with Human Rights and other legislation. Be clear on who will have access to the information on the application forms. Neither learners or tutors should have to reveal personal information to one another until they are comfortable with the match. Board members may also want to keep personal information private. How the information is used and stored is just as important as why it is collected, so be sure to explain who will have access, when and why. Decide, also, on a process that allows individuals to review and submit revisions to their own files.

For literacy learners, an application may be daunting if not impossible to fill in, so consider other methods of getting the information you need. A staff person or volunteer intake worker may have to take the time to fill out the form with the learner to assist with interpretation and perhaps writing and spelling. The information itself may also be problematic. When asked for other recent and relevant experience volunteers may get anxious that they have nothing to include. Learners may be unused to being asked open-ended questions on such things as their preferred learning style or their goals. The main thing is to collect information in a consistent manner and to keep it in secure files.

When reviewing the completed application forms, you may want to have a rating system to compare applicants. Watch for warning signs or "red flags," but don't disqualify people automatically until you have all the relevant information.

9.2.5 Interviews

The interview (either by telephone or in person) is when staff acquire most of those impressions and facts about the candidate.

Most community literacy agencies use the interview as the primary screening device. How questions are answered provides as much information as the actual responses do. Many experienced literacy staff have a keenly developed sense for who can fit where in the organization. Accountable organizations will develop consistent questions to ensure that nothing important is forgotten and that all applicants are selected based on similar criteria. A standard interview protocol could include the questions, their order and any necessary explanations, as well as who will conduct the interviews and where. Answers and responses may be recorded on an accompanying interview sheet. Once again, explaining the interview process up front puts applicants on equal footing and gives them the opportunity to prepare their questions as well as their answers.

Interviewing is a labour-intensive task but can be made more efficient by:

- setting a limit on the interview time
- setting aside certain times or dates specifically for interviewing
- preparing questions (and ideal answers) in advance
- recording responses on a standard sheet to make comparison easy
- referring to the specifics of the job description
- meeting in a standard, safe location for all interviews
- explaining the interview process
- establishing a comfortable rapport with the applicant
- treating each applicant equally
- giving the applicant opportunities to ask questions.

Since past behaviour is the best indicator of future performance, questions should focus on what has taken place rather than "what would you do if...?" Some interviewers like to use role playing or ask for a demonstration of teaching a lesson. Others may ask to see proof or examples of relevant work. In these cases adequate preparation time must be allowed.

Some organizations do multiple interviews. There might be an initial meeting at the time of application, followed by a more structured interview with the Coordinator of Volunteers. Some of the orientation meetings might be handled by experienced, trained volunteers. A standard rating tool can be an excellent basis for comparing applicants seen by different interviewers. Have a variety of interview techniques and formats related to the degree of risk and specific needs of the position.

The interview is the ideal time to address any concerns that the applicant may have and discuss the screening process in an open and straightforward way. The next step, investing time to assess learners or train volunteers, should only be done when both parties are comfortable about a "good fit."

9.2.6 Reference Checks

Although checking references is time-consuming, a reference check is a great way to obtain an outside opinion on the suitability of the applicant, while confirming their background skills and experience. As well, people who are asked to proved references become much more aware of the serious commitment they are taking on.

Be sure to follow up on the references you ask for. Based on the risk factors in the position, ask for names of those who are familiar with the applicant's work in a relevant setting (eg., working one-to-one with others, working without supervision, managing money, etc.). Professional references who know the applicant in a work capacity are only one of three types of reference. Don't rule out either personal or character references, or even family references, since valuable information may also be revealed through these. Be specific about the nature of the position so that the reference can comment on the applicant's suitability for those tasks even if they haven't "worked" with them. This is the time to note whether the applicant or those working with him will be in any way vulnerable. Try to get an opinion of the applicant's trustworthiness in such situations.

One difficulty with reference checks is the time and money required to conduct them. Community literacy agencies may not have the staff time to do the required calls, especially if they feel pressured to act quickly. Also, long distance charges may not be factored into existing budgets. If you decide to implement reference checks, you will also want to set out the procedures whereby they will be conducted. Consistency is important.

- Who will be asked for references?
- Why?
- What information is to be sought?
- Who will conduct the reference checks?

A standard script for conducting reference checks will make the process easier and more efficient. You may also want an accompanying form to record the answers to these prepared questions. This can be kept in the applicant's file or discarded after she has been with the agency for a period of time. Be sure to let the person providing the reference know whether the applicant will be able to view their comments. How you will store this confidential information is another important aspect to consider.

- Do not proceed with reference checks until you have a signed release form from the applicant.
- Ask the applicant for current telephone numbers for these references.
- Describe the position clearly, indicating the level of trust and responsibility expected.
- Don't ask leading questions; let them tell you, and allow space for their open comments.
- Do more than one reference check. At least one should be able to discuss the applicant's paid or unpaid work.
- Try to contact any other non-profit agency the applicant has been involved with.
- Don't make exceptions for anyone. If you've determined that the position requires references checks, follow through on everyone.
- Be sure to talk to the persons specifically named by the applicant.
- Do not accept one bad reference without checking other references. Do not reject the applicant based solely on one bad reference.
- After you mention the name of your candidate, listen carefully for the attitude, tone, or hesitancy of those you have called. If the person sounds upbeat and positive, it is likely that the candidate was a good employee/volunteer. If the person sounds guarded or hesitant, perhaps the candidate was a problem. Remember, however, that some problems arise because of the supervisor, not because of the employee. For this reason, it is important to get several references.
- Remember that you may be able to ask volunteers or other staff to help conduct the reference checks. These volunteers, of course, would have to be specifically trained for the task. A standardized reference check questionnaire ensures everyone is asked the same questions, and when completed, it can be kept on file.

(Adapted from Brenda Gallagher, *Safe Steps*, 1998.)

The reference check is typically administered after an interview. However, it may be done before, during or after the interview. The main thing is to inform the applicant, and get his permission to contact the references. If necessary, you can help them think of appropriate contact names.

A final note about conducting reference checks. Your agency will need to develop a response or policy to handle requests from former learners, staff, board members or volunteers to provide references on behalf of your agency. You might outline the agency's policy and process in an exit interview. Consider the amount of time it might take to respond to these inquiries but balance that with the information you are glad to receive from others who have provided references to your agency. Consider as well, the liability of the agency if a person feels that an unfair reference has been provided. Finally, consider what aspects of the job the supervisor will or will not comment on.

9.2.7 Police Record Checks

The Police Record Check (PRC), also known as Criminal Record Check (CRC) is simply a check of the records held by local, provincial and/or national police departments. The following information on Police Record Checks comes from *Safe Steps: A Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport* (Gallagher, 1998)

Police Record Checks

Police record checks are probably the most misunderstood element of screening. Too many people believe that doing a PRC means that the person has been screened. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is not only important to know if someone has been convicted of a crime, the nature of that crime is also important. If a conviction is an abuse or harassment offence, it can be more pertinent than a conviction for shoplifting, depending on the position the volunteer will be filling.

What information do the police see when they enter a volunteer's name in their database?

Contrary to popular opinion, not all police forces check the same data sources. Your local police units will consult their local records but may or may not consult the national database. In contrast, a national search done through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) produces federal level data but may not reveal pertinent local details.

Local police forces

- convictions and charges
- information as plaintiff, victim, suspect, and witness

CPIC database

- criminal charges and convictions
- probation
- related court orders (eg., possession of firearms, etc.)

Prior to requesting a PRC, organizations should decide what type of information they require from the police. For example, if the position allows the volunteer access to the organization's finances but there is no risk of one-on-one contact with a participant, the police should be checking the database for any convictions related to theft, fraud, etc. If the police receive very specific information about the organization's needs, it is more likely that they will be able to provide you with the information you need.

Unfortunately many abusers and sex offenders have never been convicted of a crime. Furthermore, despite the excellent RCMP data system - the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) - there are inherent problems with any "list."

- There are lags in sending records from one country to another.
- Relying solely on police record checks is dangerous. Organizations may believe that they have done enough; a false sense of security may be created.
- The individual may be using an alias, so only fingerprint checks will ensure

they are "clear."

- The information may not be available because the conviction occurred while the individual was a youth and is protected by the Young Offenders' Act.
- The individual may have obtained a "pardon" and therefore is no longer on the list.

Despite the built-in limitations of PRCs, they do serve a purpose, particularly in those cases (high-risk positions) where the organization is committed to a full and complete screening process. The PRC will also signal, in a very public way, that the organization is concerned about the safety of its participants.

The following steps should be taken when requesting a PRC:

- The position application form, for high-risk positions, should state that the employee or volunteer will be asked to provide a PRC; the applicant should confirm acceptance of this. Just as stating your screening policy in your recruiting notices can be an effective deterrent, making all applicants aware that you conduct police record checks can ensure that some applicants screen themselves out.
- Use a release form which states the agreement of the volunteer or employee to a PRC. The resulting information can be handled in one of two ways:

    1. The organization may ask the applicant to give permission to the police to release the result directly to the organization (the results will only indicate whether or not there has been a conviction), or
    2. The organization may ask the applicant to take the form to the police, have the results released directly to the applicant and bring it back to the organization. This option puts more control into the hands of the applicant and allows him or her to make the decision whether or not to share the results.

- A written policy should be in place - that all current and prospective employees and volunteers are familiar with - that defines organizational policy on selecting individuals with criminal records.
- A number of police forces and municipalities now charge for doing PRCs. The organization will need a policy on whether these costs will be borne by individuals, the organization, or are dependent on the position etc.

In some provinces / communities an organization signs a memorandum of understanding with their provincial / local police force which specifies the roles of the police, the organization, and the individual being screened. There is also an agreement about cost being developed.

The following should be taken into consideration when your organization is developing a screening policy, which includes police record checks:

1. Clear guidelines must be developed concerning how your organization will handle a volunteer whose PRC shows a previous conviction. For example, organizations can determine that for positions of trust where there is the opportunity for one-on-one contact with a participant, certain classes of convictions (eg. fraud, violent crimes, sex-related crimes) will automatically preclude a volunteer from filling that position.

   Organizations must decide in advance the position they will take with regard to volunteers with convictions outside the specified classes (e.g. theft, possession of narcotics). There is a range of positions that an organization may consider:
   - establishing a panel to assess individual cases which fall in the "grey area"
   - accepting volunteers with a criminal history, as long as they are not in positions of trust and dependent on the tasks required in the position they will be filling.

   The decision your organization makes will depend on the activities you carry out, the participants you deal with as well as the organization's purpose, philosophy, and values.

2. When deciding whether to accept or reject an applicant, the organization will base its decision on the following:

- the nature of the program, services, and activities provided;
- the character and degree of vulnerability of the client group served and the organization's duty of care to the participants, to the staff, and to the community;
- the relevant moral, ethical, legal and policy issues and principles
- the potential risks involved in the position the individual is applying for, based on the client group being served, the nature of the position and its activities, the setting in which it takes place, and the way in which it is supervised.

3. Once organizations receive information about an applicant, whether from the applicant directly or from the police, the organization becomes responsible for that information and is then subject to many of the same legal requirements and regulations as other holders of personal information, in terms of confidentiality and access.

Organizations must carefully consider and determine the following:

- What types of information would be helpful to them?
- Who will have access to the information once received?
- What policies will govern the gathering or storage of information?
- If the organization receives a report from the police (directly or given to them by the individual), where will the information be kept?
- How is it recorded or transferred?
- How long is it kept?
- How secure is it?
- Who has access to it? Why?
- In what circumstances, and with whom, is the information discussed? Why?

In some communities, the police may give the report to the individual rather than to the organization. While this may be less convenient for the organization, it may actually be a better system. If information is given to the individual concerned, the police may be able to provide more complete information than if the report goes directly to the organization.

Consider the following when the information is provided directly to the applicant:

- Does your organization require an original or a copy of the document?
- Is the document kept or just verified?
- If it is kept, how does your organization deal with the issue of confidentiality?

If the information goes to the organization directly, the organization must be vigilant about confidentiality as well as storage and access to the information.

4. Organizations must also decide whether or not they will conduct police record checks more than once. Some organizations require that PRCs be done annually, or every two or three years. This requirement may act as a deterrent to some; however, the limitations on police record checks remain regardless of the number of checks conducted.

   The bottom line is that police records checks can be an extremely important step in the screening process, however, they may not be appropriate for all positions. The only certainty is that they should never be the first, last, or only screening step used by an organization.

9.2.8 Managing the Volunteer

The final steps three steps in the 10-Step Screening Process are:

- orientation and training
- supervision/evaluation
- participant follow-up

Each step is concerned with the ongoing work of managing the volunteer. We are reminded that true screening does not end when the volunteer starts their position, nor is screening strictly a linear process. Although it is beyond the scope of this section to examine each in depth please note that most of these topics are covered in other sections of this Guide. All focus on the need to continually encourage open communication and have clearly documented policies and procedures.

9.3 Screening and Mandatory Service Placements

Consider whether your screening measures will apply to mandatory service workers such as those performing community service, workfare or co-op placements. The general rule is to apply the same screening protocol for all applicants regardless of who has referred them. You cannot assume that the agency which refers these people will conduct screening sufficient for your needs or standards, so it is advisable to be safe rather than sorry. However, your agency may need to negotiate arrangements with the referring organization to help cover the costs of screening. At the very least, you will have to explain your policies and procedures in detail to the referring agency to ensure maximum cooperation.

9.4 Screening and Board Members

Agencies are usually so pleased to find board members that thorough or consistent screening measures are often overlooked. However, board positions carry significant responsibility and liability. Screening is important not just to safeguard the agency but also to convey a perception of fairness and equity to the other volunteers. Every organization has to decide whether board members automatically undergo the same screening as other volunteers, or whether a separate set of screening tools needs to be applied. In either case, all of the information about screening volunteers can be applied to board and committee volunteers. Even those board members sought for their high-profile or connections in the community must be not be considered to be above the screening policies.

9.5 Screening Learners

In most non-profit groups, there is considerable discussion about screening of volunteers, however, clients of the service are often not screened. For community literacy agencies this creates an unequal partnership, because both the learner and the tutor are equally vulnerable in a one-to-one setting. Although the learner has to provide a lot of personal information to the program, she is not usually required to undertake any further background checks.

Without making overwhelming demands of potential learners who may already be tentative or intimidated, community literacy agencies may need to consider some screening measures for students. Elgibility criteria and referral protocols help establish a clear profile of who your agency serves but appropriate measures to further screen learners, may still be required. Having background information on learners can not only help protect volunteers and the agency, it may also provide valuable insights that will enable the student to maximize his learning experience. Also, try to determine if there are any negative influences in the learner's home environment, which will impact their learning or pose a risk to the people in your agency.

The information in this section on screening can, to some extent, be applied to learners seeking to enter your program, although some modifications may be required. Family references may provide some useful information about the learner's motivation and support that the learner has which would be far more useful than finding out a complete work history. Once again, the information you require must be relevant to the position, which in this case is "student." As with volunteers, the way in which these requirements are presented to the learner will make all the difference in whether your agency is perceived as a bureaucratic nightmare or as a caring, effective and respectful service provider.

Regardless of what level of screening you do on learners, it is important that the teachers and tutors are informed of the level of background checking that has been done on students. Even without sharing all the details, it is only fair that you declare what you do know about the learners. An agency cannot avoid responsibility by simply urging tutors and teachers to be cautious because a learner's background is unknown. Screening learners is a shared responsibility which must be tackled creatively with tact and respect.

Screening involves that fine balance between the rights of the applicants and the rights of the agency. Screening is about providing a safe environment, not creating paranoia. Whether art or science, your approach to screening should be documented in policy. You must be able to justify your actions and decisions.

9.6 Your Turn

General Principles

- ❑ Our screening standards are based on the applicable moral/ethical responsibilities and legal obligations of our agency.
- ❑ Our screening systems are written down.
- ❑ Our screening policies and procedures have been reviewed within the last year.
- ❑ We create and retain concrete documentation to prove that our screening measures are being followed.
- ❑ Our screening measures are chosen to suit the characteristics of the position, activity, setting and supervision.
- ❑ We have a screening protocol for learners.
- ❑ We do not reject candidates based on characteristics that are not directly related to the job they are applying to do.
- ❑ Our policies on screening identify who will be responsible for doing the screening.

- ❑ Our screening measures are fair and equitable.
- ❑ All applicants are informed, at the outset, about minimum qualifications, automatic disqualifiers, and the screening procedures which they can expect.

Application Forms

- ❑ Our application form asks only for information related to the position being applied for.
- ❑ We have justifiable reasons for all the information we request of applicants.
- ❑ Our application forms and interview questions have been carefully reviewed to avoid causing offence or contravening the Human Rights Code.
- ❑ We explain to all applicants why personal data is being collected as well as how it will be used and stored.

Records Management

- ❑ We always obtain written consent from applicants before checking their references.
- ❑ All staff, volunteers and learners have access to their own files and may suggest corrections to the data.
- ❑ All information collected about learners and applicants is kept strictly confidential.
- ❑ Our confidential information is stored in a secure location.
- ❑ We share the results of screening with the candidates.

Interviews

- ❑ We have trained interviewerswho know what they can and cannot ask in interviews.
- ❑ Volunteers who assist with intake and screening work are specially selected and trained.

Reference Checks

- ❑ We have a standardized Reference Check form to guide screener when they are calling references for information on an applicant.
- ❑ We document our screening sufficiently to provide a defence against an allegation of discrimination.

Issues

- ❑ We have a system for turning down unacceptable applicants.
- ❑ We have a process for terminating a volunteer or reassigning those who are not working out in their positions, using the position description as the basis.

Training

- ❑ We have mandatory orientation and training sessions which form an integral part of the placement process.

Ongoing Screening

- ❑ We continue to be vigilant in our monitoring and supervision.
- ❑ We have strategies to evaluate the work of volunteers who work in isolation.

9.7 Tips and Resources

You decide. There are convincing arguments on both sides of the question of whether or not to impose "new and improved" screening standards on existing staff and/or current volunteers or learners. Ultimately it is your agency that will have to live with the decision and the risk. If you choose to apply a new set of screening policies to existing staff members, be sure to consider policies about those who refuse or those who do not meet the acceptable standards.

Consult the Ontario Human Rights Commission for an excellent guide on what can and cannot be asked on application forms and in interviews. It is available free of charge by contacting: Also: Employers can seek advice and assistance on their data collection needs or other special programs by contacting the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Systemic Discrimination Section, 400-90 Sparks Street, Ottawa, ON, K1A 1E1. Order their **Guide to Screening and Selection in Employment** by calling 613-995-1151.

Is a credit check required? If you have a position in which the person has access to funds/money/bookkeeping systems you may want to consider a credit check. For more information contact the Credit Bureau of Canada for their guidelines.

New volunteers wanted. If you are considering using volunteers to carry out screening functions, be sure to conduct appropriate training. You may wish to reconsider your recruiting strategies. Seek volunteers from students of legal programs, human resources or business studies who might be very interested in developing their screening experience.

Consent required. If you plan to ask applicants to undergo a Police Record Check, consult with your local police department to see how the process is handled in your area. Use the appropriate consent forms or draft one together with the Police Department. Requests, whether forwarded by the agency or the individual applicant, will not yield the desired results if the wording is not specific enough.

Alternatives to screening include modifications to the position or the environment, such as:

- working in a "buddy" system (pairs) to avoid working in isolation
- restricting work to on-site locations where there are others nearby
- having a probation period that includes extra supervision
- conducting unscheduled monitoring visits or spot checks (especially for higher risk situations).

Screening Awareness. The Ontario Screening Initiative is a project scheduled to bring training sessions on volunteer screening to communities across the province. Although they have not included literacy agencies in the first round of training sessions, the idea is that members in each community will be trained to deliver the workshops to other non-profit organizations in the area. Most importantly, screening will be better understood, respected and practiced, which will help us all. CLO has developed a link with this project and will share information as it becomes available.

9.8 For Reference

The following sample policy statements are presented as examples of different sense, style and wording you can adapt in your own policy development. You can then develop procedures to outline how the policy will be implemented. The statements are presented under several sub-headings, which follow the general sequence of information in the foregoing text. Please refer also to Volunteer Canada's Education Dossier on Screening (developed by the National Education Campaign on Screening), Appendix 9.9.8, at the end of this Section.

Sample Policy Statements

Screening

- This agency will inform all applicants of its screening expectations prior to beginning the process.

- Written consent must be obtained from an applicant before any reference checking is started.

- This agency reserves the right to accept volunteers based on their suitability for the tasks described in the job description. All volunteers will go through the same screening process. Unsuitable applicants have the right to information concerning the reasons for their being refused.

- At first contact between the agency and the volunteer applicant, the agency is responsible for declaring that not all applicants are automatically accepted as volunteers.

- The immediate supervisor for any position is responsible for reviewing the selection criteria and conducting the reference checks. Additional trained staff or volunteers may assist in carrying out the other steps in the screening process.

- Board members, whether elected or acclaimed, must complete a background information sheet.

- Each candidate has the right to know the findings of the screening process. Applicants will be contacted about any negative findings in order to determine if there are legitimate reasons for the findings.

- All staff, board members and other volunteers in this agency will be subject to the same screening protocol, as follows:

- All interested applicants will fill out a one-page Volunteer Interest form.
- Suitable volunteer candidates will be invited to a brief orientation/information session.
- Background checks will be done and references contacted.
- All volunteer candidates must attend at least one personal interview with the Volunteer Coordinator who will be their supervisor.
- Volunteers must attend mandatory training sessions.
- Prior to the close of the training, volunteers will be asked to complete another form with additional details to help assign them appropriately.

Documentation and Confidentiality

- Access to confidential files is strictly limited to ____. Written permission to access the subject's files is required for anyone other than the subject, the Executive Director and the Volunteer Coordinator.

- Information collected during screening will be considered private and confidential. Only the Coordinator of Volunteers and the Executive Director are permitted to view volunteer files. These files will include the application, results of background checks, notes from the interview, performance appraisals and any complaints, praise or concerns.

- Confidential information is retained only until the reasonable possibility of being charged with discriminatory screening practices has passed, then notes will be shredded.

- A file will be maintained on each volunteer, learner and staff person in the agency, which can only be accessed by the individual and her immediate supervisor. The file will be considered personal and confidential and will contain the initial background form as well as all progress and evaluation reports.

Interviews

- All volunteers must have at least one personal interview with a staff member before being assigned to their duties.

- Prior to an interview, all interested volunteers are sent an up-to-date information package which includes information about the organization, the position and the screening measures.

- Notes from the interview process will be held for six months until it is determined that no suits of discrimination are going to be launched.

Reference Checks

- The Volunteer Coordinator will maintain the records of any background checks as part of the volunteer's file. The volunteer may access this file at any time.

- All persons providing a reference must be informed that the applicant will have access to the notes and records made during the reference check. All notes will indicate the source.

- Written references will not be accepted unless they can be followed up with a person-to-person call to the writer of the letter.

- Both learners and volunteers must be willing to provide character references so that the agency can do a background check.

- All volunteers are required to submit personal and/or professional references prior to being accepted as a volunteer. Those who refuse this request will not be accepted as volunteers.

- A record of the reference check will be kept in each volunteer's file.

- All volunteers will be asked for names of at least three references. The agency will check at least two of the references provided.

- Any negative or questionable information revealed by a reference will be followed up by additional reference checks and a discussion with the applicant.

Police Checks

- All volunteers applying for positions which are rated with a "high" risk factor will be required to undergo a police check and to provide at least one satisfactory professional/work reference and one satisfactory character/personal reference.

- It is the responsibility of applicants to pay for the costs of obtaining a police check.

- This agency has a budget for enabling funds to help those who could not otherwise afford the cost of a police check.

Orientation

- All volunteers will receive an orientation to the organization which covers its mission, safety information, policies, procedures and job instructions specific to the position. This will be done before the volunteer takes up the position.

- Staff members will assume responsibility for designing and delivering orientation for volunteers, although experienced volunteers may also be involved.

- When group orientation sessions are not available, staff may provide a brief individualized orientation, as required.

- Volunteers may not begin their work until they have attended an orientation session.
- This agency believes that orientation and training play an important role in screening new volunteers. Procedures for training and orientation are as follows:

  1. All applicants will be asked to attend an initial orientation session before being accepted for tutor training. In this session prospective volunteers will be told about

     - the agency
     - the types of positions available
     - what to expect in the application, screening and selection process.

     They will also be given an opportunity to ask questions about the organization.

  2. If interested in tutoring, prospective volunteers must attend all of this agency's tutor training sessions. In the final training workshop, they will be asked to submit a detailed tutor data sheet describing their suitability for the position they are seeking.

  3. Each applicant will then be given an interview to discuss placement with the Coordinator of Volunteers prior to being matched with a student.

APPENDICES FOR SECTION NINE

Appendix #9.9.1

SAMPLE OF A VOLUNTEER APPLICATION / INTEREST FORM

Name: ____

Address: ____________________________ City: _________________________

Province: ______________________ Postal code: ____________________

Phone: (Res.) ______________________ Phone: (Bus.) ______________________

Fax: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Choices of volunteer positions within the organization:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

Why are you interested in this type of volunteer work?

____

____

____

____

Working conditions:

Times available:

____

____

Preferred working location (or other special needs or concerns):

____

____

List any previous volunteer positions:

Name of organization: _____________________________ Dates: _______________

Volunteer position: ____

Tasks and duties: ____

____

____

Name of organization: __________________________ Dates: _____________

Volunteer position: ____

Tasks and duties: ____

____

____

Name of organization: __________________________ Dates: _____________

Volunteer position: ____

Tasks and duties: ____

____

____

Other jobs, education, experiences (if applicable):

Where: __________________________________ When: _______________

Describe:

____

____

Where: ______________________________________ When: _________________

Describe:

____

____

Special Skills:

____

____

____

____

How did you hear about our agency?

____

____

Signature: ___________________________________ Date: ____________________

Thank you for your interest! You will receive a call of acknowledgment within two weeks.

Appendix # 9.9.2

TEN ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER

(Reprinted from Volunteer Canada's website library at **www.volunteer.ca**)

1. How did you find out about this volunteer opportunity?
2. Have you given your time previously as a volunteer?
3. Why do you want to volunteer with this organization?
4. What would you like to get out of the volunteer experience?
5. What are your interests?
6. What skills, abilities, and qualities do you have to contribute to the organization?
7. How long do you think you would like to be involved with our program?
8. Do you have any special needs?
9. Are you prepared to attend training and/or information sessions?
10. Are you prepared to undergo screening and/or a background check for our safety, your safety and our clients' safety?

Appendix #9.9.3

SAMPLE OF A REFERENCE CHECK CONSENT FORM

I give my permission for ______________________________________ (Name of Agency) to contact the following people to do a Reference Check about my suitability for the position of _____________________________.

Name	**Position and Organization**	**Telephone**
1) _____________________	_______________________	_______________________
2) _____________________	_______________________	_______________________
3) _____________________	_______________________	_______________________

I understand that this information will be kept in confidential files which can only be accessed by the Volunteer Coordinator, the Executive Director and myself.

____ (signature)

____ (print name)

____ (date)

Appendix # 9.9.4

SAMPLE OF A REFERENCE CHECK SCRIPT

The following is an outline for conducting a reference check. You may use or adapt the sample script below or develop your own questions. If you are working with a hiring or interview committee, collect the information on a standard form for easy review and comparison. This format can be used for telephone, person-to-person, mail, or fax checks.

Make the Introductions

- Indicate your name and position, your organization, and the purpose of your call
- Verify that you are speaking with the person named as a reference.
- Determine if this is a convenient time to discuss the applicant.
- Let the reference know that you have obtained permission and indicate whether the results of the discussion will be available for the applicant to review.
- Explain the duties of the position that the applicant has applied for.
- Try to establish a comfortable rapport with the referee

Review the relationship with the applicant

- Verify the dates, positions, responsibilities and reason for leaving.
- Find out how the applicant was supervised and whether results of evaluation were satisfactory.
- Ask about how the applicant handled unfavourable criticism.

Ask the Questions

Try to avoid leading questions by asking open-ended questions such as:

- How do you think that the applicant would fit into our organization/position?
- What are the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in regard to working with ____ (indicate a specific client group)
- It is important that our volunteers are _____ (indicate an important trait)... tell us about your experiences with the applicant with regard to this trait.
- This position will require the applicant to ______ (describe activity). Could you comment about the applicant's ability to meet these requirements?
- How would you feel about having the applicant work on a one-to-one basis with your child/elderly parent/special needs friend?
- The applicant commented on ____ (strengths/ accomplishments/awards, etc) during her time with your organization. Ca you describe that?
- Can you comment on where the applicant's skills/performance might be improved?
- Is there any reason you know of why this applicant would not be able to perform the duties necessary for this volunteer position?
- Would you ever consider re-hiring this person?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the applicant?

Finish the Discussion

- Thank the referee for their time and assistance. Do not reveal information revealed from other referees.
- Sign and date the form with the notes/responses.

Appendix #9.9.5

SAMPLE OF A REFERENCE CHECK RECORD SHEET

This form should be adapted to match the order and the questions to be asked in your agency's reference checks.

Applicant name: ___________________________ Position applied for: ______________

Name of Reference: _____________________________ Position: __________________

Telephone: ____

Interviewed by: ____________________________ Date: __________________________

1. How long have you known the applicant? _______________________________

   ____

2. In what capacity? ____

   ____

3. What are the applicant's strengths? ___________________________________

   ____

4. Is the applicant punctual? ____

   ____

5. Is the applicant reliable? ____

____

6. Can he/she work independently? ____________________________________

   ____

7. How does he/she handle supervision? _________________________________

   ____

8. How does he/she handle confidential information or positions of trust? ________

   ____

9. Was his/her position of trust handled to your satisfaction? __________________

   ____

10. Describe his/her relationship with teaching. _____________________________

    ____

11. Is there anything you feel we should be aware of in accepting this person?

    ____

    ____

(Further notes/observations can be recorded on back of this sheet.)

(Adapted from Brenda Gallagher's *Safe Steps: a Volunteer Screening Process for Recreation and Sport*, 1998)

Appendix #9.9.6

AN OUTLINE FOR TRAINING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TO DO SCREENING

The following is a list of important topics to be covered when training staff or volunteers to do screening.

1. Legal aspects of screening
    - relevant legislation
    - prohibitions
    - consistency and equity in screening methods

2. Reviewing resumes and applications
    - what to look for
    - how to standardize assessment

3. Interviewing
    - basic skills
    - what to ask
    - what not to ask
    - assessing performance

4. Checking references
    - what to ask and how to ask it
    - what not to ask

5. The basics of records checks
    - police records checks; credit bureau checks, drivers record checks
    - how to begin a record check
    - how to interpret results

6. Verifying qualifications
    - spotting imposters
    - the list of qualifications to check

7. Dangerous ground and common pitfalls
    - the risks in screening
    - where the boundries are

8. Making the Decision
    - equity issues
    - weighing and evaluating information

9. Documentation
    - what to record, what not to record
    - storage and destruction of screening results.

(From: Linda Graff's *Beyond Police Checks*, 1999)

Appendix #9.9.7

A SAMPLE OF A BACKGROUND SHEET FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

This is a draft outline of the background information that is provided for new and prospective board members with Community Literacy of Ontario.

Background Information on Community Literacy of Ontario

- Who we are
- What we do

Orientation for board members

- CLO's Board manual
- Orientation meeting
- Support from current board members

Role of CLO board members

- Board member job description (including expected time commitment)
- Legal responsibilities of board members
- How our board communicates
- Our committee structure

Information needed from board members

- Full contact information, including e-mail
- Home address
- The name of the community literacy agency you represent
- Your involvement with the community literacy agency you represent
- Is this literacy agency a full member of CLO

Board member goals and interests

- Why do you want to be a CLO board member?
- What are your goals and interests for joining CLO?
- How can we support your involvement as a CLO board member?

Your questions

SECTION TEN - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This section has been included to offer tools and resources that will support your policy development efforts.

Topics in this Section

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SD.2 ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

With grateful thanks to the following organizations who so willingly shared their time, information and their policies and procedures throughout this project.

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*
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
*
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*
John Howard Society of Victoria/Haliburton - Outreach Literacy Program
*
Kingston Literacy
*
Literacy Council of South Temiskaming
*
Literacy Owen Sound
*
North Frontenac Literacy
*
Quinte Literacy Group
*
Timmins Learning Centre
*
Tri-County Literacy Network
*
Volunteer Canada
*
Volunteer Centre of Ottawa Carleton
*
Wellington County Literacy Council

SD.3 WHERE TO TURN FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

Alpha Plus Centre	21 Park Road Toronto, Ontario, M4W 2N1 Tel: 416-975-1352 or 1-800-788-1120 Fax: 416-975-4608 or 1-800-788-1417 Internet: **www.alphaplus.ca**. Alpha Plus is the literacy resource centre for literacy agencies across Ontario. They respond to information requests by phone and online. They also manage the online discussion groups and distribute resources.
Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources	see Volunteer Canada
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy	425 University Avenue, 7th Floor Toronto, Ontario M5G 1T6 Tel: 416-597-2293 Fax: 416-597-2294 Internet: **www.ccp.ca**. This organization has a website which features many useful articles, periodicals and an annotated bibliography. Be sure to check out the Information Centre for information on board development. They also have comprehensive and up-to-date information on fundraising. The site has a useful link to the American online resource catalogue of the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (NCNB) and more.
Canadian Heritage	This federal department, under their Community Partnerships division, has several useful online publications on recruiting volunteers, fundraising and promotion in the volunteer sector. Go to **www.pch.gc.ca/cp-pc/ComPartnE/pub_list.htm**
Charity Village	This website calls itself "Canada's supersite for the nonprofit sector." Browse their site for a broad range of information including fundraising resources at **www.charityvillage.com**
Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO)	80 Bradford Street, Suite 508 Barrie, Ontario L4N 6S7 Tel: 705-733-2312 Fax: 705-733-6197 Internet: **www.nald.ca/volman** CLO offers volunteer management information on their website including highlights from both policies and procedures Guides. Other publications such as the Volunteer Management Resource Guide (1997), and The Economic Value of Volunteers (1998) were mentioned in this Guide.

Graff and Associates	Not-For-Profit Management Consultants 167 Little John Road Dundas, Ontario L9H 4H2 Tel/Fax: 905-627-8511 Email: **ll.graff@sympatico.ca** Linda Graff has authored many books and cassettes on policy development, screening and volunteer management, which are distributed internationally. Her Ontario-based firm is also well-known for training workshops and management consulting for nonprofit organizations.
Johnstone Training and Consultation	1310 Upper Dwyer Hill Road R.R. #2, Carp, Ontario K0A 1L0 Tel: 613-256-5516 Fax: 613-256-0902 Internet: **www.jtcinc.ca** This organization has a team of facilitators and consultants who can provide training or advice on a wide range of topics related to the voluntary sector. They produce one of Ontario's the most comprehensive catalogues of valuable books, tapes and videos.
Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO)	591 Lancaster Street West, Unit 4 Kitchener, Ontario N2K 1M5 Tel: 519-743-3309 Fax: 519-743-7520 Internet: **www.trainingpost.org** or **www.nald/LLC.htm** LLO is a volunteer organization dedicated to increasing literacy in Ontario, guided by the principles of founder Dr. Frank Laubach and "each one teach one." LLO is a provincial network of 48 Laubach affiliated community-based literacy programs in Ontario. Check the "training post" website or see the Laubach Literacy Canada (LLC) website for the national and international aspects of this organization.
National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)	Sterling House, 767 Brunswick Street Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 1H8 Tel: 1-800-720-6253 Fax: 506-457-6910 Internet: **www.nald.ca** This is the "mother" website for all literacy organizations across the country.
Partners Plus	9030 Leslie Street, Suite 220, Richmond Hill, Ont. L4B 1G2 Tel: 905-886-8585 Fax: 905: 886-9151 This is the training and consulting firm through which you can reach Marilyn MacKenzie renowned author and trainer in the field of volunteer management.

Pro Bono Students Canada	Faculty of Law University of Ottawa 57 Louis Pasteur Street P.O. Box 450, Station A Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Pro Bono Students Canada (PBSC) is a network of law school and community organisations that matches law students who want to do pro bono work with public interest and non-governmental organizations, government agencies, tribunals, legal clinics and providers of legal, health, and community services during the academic year or during the course of the summer. Qualifying organizations are able to access the volunteer services of committed law students , highly skilled in legal research and writing, through the assistance of PBSC Program Coordinators at the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. Every law school in Ontario, and several others throughout Canada are affiliated with PBSC. PBSC works very closely with the Volunteer Lawyers Service. Qualifying organizations across Ontario are invited to list volunteer placements on a province-wide database being created by PBSC.
Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations	c/o Grant MacEwan Community College 5-132 10700-104 Avenue Edmonton, AB T6M 2L4 PH: 780-497-4638 FAX: 780-497-4728 http://www.rcvo.org email: robertsonl@admin.gmcc.ab.ca This centre offers one-on-one consultation services to Alberta's volunteer community. They also distribute the excellent publications produced by the Muttart Foundation. The Board Development series of self-guided workbooks include these useful titles: • Developing Job Descriptions for Board Members of Nonprofit Organizations • Financial Responsibilities of Not-for-Profit Boards • Recruiting and Developing Effective Board Members for Not-for-Profit Organizations. They can be purchased for $5 each from RCVO.

The Right Type	2263 Princess Street Kingston, Ontario K7M 3G1 Tel: 613-531-5700 or 1-888-284-2006 Fax: 613-531-9004 Email: **rightype@kos.net** This desktop and publishing and graphic design service has had extensive experience designing print and online materials for a variety of literacy organizations in Ontario. The Right Type can also co-ordinate printing and other reproduction services for your program or organization as well as provide training in common desktop publishing software applications. Both Volume One and Volume Two of this Guide were published with the expert help of Steve Knowles at Rightype.
Volunteer Canada	430 Gilmour Street Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R8 Tel: 613-231-4371 or 1-800-670-0401 Fax: 613-231-6725 Internet: **www.volunteer.ca** Volunteer Canada oversees a number of important initiatives in the volunteer sector. You can get two memberships for the price of one as CAVR (Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources) and Volunteer Canada offer a joint membership for $60. Volunteer Canada also coordinates the National Education Campaign on Screening
Volunteer Lawyers Service	20 Toronto Street, Suite 200 Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2B8 Tel: 416-869-1047, ext. 36 or 1-800-668-8900 Fax: 416-869-1390 Email: **knoxon@cbao.org** VLS offers legal services, seminars and fact sheets at no charge to charitable and not-for-profit community organizations. To be eligible your organization must not have more than 10 full-time employees. Gross assets should not exceed $2 million and gross annual revenues should not exceed $1 million. An agency must also demonstrate their inability to pay for legal advice. Please note that they VLS is only active in selected regions of the province so far. VLS works closely with PBSC.

APPENDICES FOR SECTION TEN

Appendix SD.4.1

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Kindly reprinted with permission of the Canadian Association of Volunteer Resources (CAVR)

1.0 Volunteer Program Standards

Planning for volunteers, the organization's non-salaried personnel, requires a variety of decisions; the climate of readiness for the volunteers; goals and objectives; budget and resources; staff preparation and an implementation plan.

Accepted Standards

- There is a written statement of philosophy on why we seek volunteer involvement in our organization and whom we define as volunteers
- Long and short range goals for volunteer programs and volunteers are developed and reviewed annually.
- There is a diverse volunteer force that reflects the community's demographics and that provides a wide range of skills and backgrounds.
- Administration, staff, volunteers and clients have participation into the design of the volunteer programs
- There are clear policies and procedures regarding all aspects of volunteer involvement.
- Employees are trained to work with volunteers and understand the needs and motivation of volunteers.
- There is a risk management plan and appropriate insurance coverage in place to cover volunteer needs.
- Sufficient financial resources are allocated for the short and long term needs of the volunteer programs.
- There are clear definitions of the roles and relationships of both direct service volunteers and other volunteers who support the organization ie. The board of directors, auxiliaries, advisory councils and committees.
- All aspects of volunteers and volunteer programs are considered in the strategic planning of the organization.

2.0 Coordination

Volunteers are unsalaried staff with widely varying schedules and needs. Add to this the diversity of the people who volunteer and the resulting workforce is a professional challenge to manage. A volunteer program should have a clearly designated, paid administrator to manage all aspects of volunteer assignment, development, recruitment, scheduling, assignment and evaluation.

Accepted Standards

- There is at least on paid staff person designated as the Administrator of volunteer resources and she/he has a comprehensive, written position description.
- The Administrator has the national certification designation or Certified Administrator of Volunteer Resources through CAVR and/or working toward this designation.
- The volunteer program has appropriate clerical support.
- The administrator of volunteer resources is equal in status and salary to other supervisory/management positions in the organization.
- Volunteers are considered an integral part of the volunteer program planning process.

3.0 Volunteer Assignment Guides/Description

To ensure effective use of volunteers, it is necessary to define in writing the assignment to be done. Volunteer assignment guides should include at minimum:

- a position title;
- the purpose of the assignment;
- the scope of the assignment to be done (potential and limits);
- the training and supervision plan;
- necessary time frames; and
- qualifications.

Accepted Standards

- Written assignment guides exist for all volunteer positions including board of directors, advisory councils and all committee members.
- Volunteer assignment guides are reviewed and updated annually.

4.0 Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of encouraging people to give their time and energy to an organization as volunteers. Successful recruitment requires the support of the entire organization and is closely tied to overall public relations and marketing efforts.

Accepted Standards

- There is an ongoing volunteer recruitment plan and recruitment tools have been developed (ie. Brochures, videos, pamphlets).
- There is diversity among the volunteers, reflective of the community.

5.0 Interviewing and Screening

Effective pre-screening and interviewing of prospective volunteers precents many types of supervision and management problems. It also allows candidates to be matched with the most appropriate and appealing assignment for them.

Accepted Standards

- An interview is held with each prospective volunteer to determine a mutually acceptable assignment or to screen out candidates who do not meet qualifications or are unsuitable.
- There are written criteria for screening volunteer applicants that are consistent with the guidelines outlined in The National Education Campaign on Screening from Volunteer Canada.

6.0 Orientation

The orientation process provides an overview of the organization to every volunteer, regardless of the specific assignment. It places the volunteer assignment in the context and allows for consistent introduction of policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities.

Accepted Standards

- A standardized orientation is provided to help all volunteers become familiar with the purpose, structure and policies of the organization.
- There is s complete volunteer manual, containing policies, procedures and requirements that is updated regularly.
- Comprehension in the orientation process is ensured for volunteers unable to comprehend the written word.

7.0 Training

Training is designed for each individual volunteer position or volunteer program. There is initial training, and ongoing in-service training opportunities.

Accepted Standards

- Training is customized for volunteers based on the needs of the volunteer assignments and the individual needs of the volunteers.
- There is provision for continued volunteer training and education.
- Volunteers have access to and are encouraged to attend off-site training, conferences and other educational opportunities as well. Training is customized for volunteers based on the needs of the volunteer assignments and the individual needs of the volunteers.
- There is provision for continued volunteer training and education.
- Volunteers have access to and are encouraged to attend off-site training, conferences and other educational opportunities as well.

8.0 Volunteer / Employee Relationships

Unless steps are taken to encourage teamwork, the relationship between volunteers and employees can become the biggest obstacle to effective volunteer involvement. This requires training, evaluation and administrative attention.

Accepted Standards

- The climate within the organization is conducive to productive volunteer involvement.
- Employees and volunteers are trained to work as a team.
- There is recognition given by the organization, to staff who work well with volunteers. This may be reflected in performance appraisals and/or public or personal attention at recognition events.

- Volunteers are invited to staff meetings.
- Staff are included in the development of volunteer assignment guides wherever possible.

9.0 Supervision

As with employees, volunteers need support and direction from staff with whom they work. A key aspect of the supervision is access to someone in charge when the volunteer is on duty. Not all volunteers are supervised or need to be. But will require liaison or reporting contact.

Accepted Standards

- There is a designated supervisor for each volunteer position, based on the organization's and the volunteer's needs.
- There is a procedure for supervision and ongoing contact with volunteers to the appropriate personnel.

10.0 Recognition

Recognition is a form of acknowledgement of volunteer efforts. It includes the need to thank volunteers for their efforts and to be aware of and responsive to volunteer input. An organization can provide annual formal recognition (as in certificates and dinners), but equally important are daily support and informal expressions of appreciation.

Accepted Standards

- All volunteers are appropriately, equitably and consistently recognized by the organization.
- Volunteers are provided with regular feedback regarding the quality and value of their work through evaluation, reviews and letters of recognition.
- The accomplishments and contributions of volunteers are shared with the public, funders and other supporters.

11.0 Record Keeping and Reporting

It is important to know and promote what volunteers are doing for your organization. Documenting their work assists in recruiting, training, recognition and even fundraising. Record keeping is also necessary for insurance coverage. Reports of the cumulative achievements of volunteers should be shared with volunteers, administration, other staff and funding sources.

Accepted Standards

- Personnel records are kept confidential for each volunteer and updated regularly.
- Records are kept on the activities and contributions of all volunteers that include volunteered hours, training attended and evaluations.
- Regular written reports on the activities and quality of the various volunteer programs are shared with administration, staff and volunteers.

12.0 Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the impact of volunteers and volunteer programs regularly to determine whether the service is still meaningful and being delivered efficiently and effectively. Program evaluation should be done jointly with individual volunteer performance reviews. This practice maintains standards for the program and also recognizes each volunteer.

Accepted Standards

- The volunteer program is evaluated annually, based on goals and objectives benefiting the organization and the volunteers.
- Volunteer roles and assignments are assessed regularly.
- Volunteer performance reviews are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the policies of the organization. Updated information is kept in the volunteer's personal record.

13.0 Volunteer Input

Volunteers are in a position to observe an organization and offer valuable and constructive insights. They are effectives advocates for your organization and a valuable link to the community. It is important for volunteers to have the opportunity to voice opinions and make suggestions that will be acknowledged by the organization.

Accepted Standards

- There are opportunities available for volunteers to voice opinions and make suggestions. This may be a volunteer advisory council, inclusion of volunteers on different committees in the organization etc.
- Volunteers are included in the decision making process for the volunteer program.
- Volunteers are advocates for the organization and must be kept current on the organization activities and future plans.

14.0 Professional Development

Administrators of volunteer resources require a wide variety of skills for the efficient and effective management of this (volunteer) human resource. In order to remain knowledgeable of current trends in social action and volunteerism and to have access to new and accepted management techniques there must be a commitment to continued professional development.

Accepted Standards

- Professional development is recognized and supported by administration as a tool for maintaining quality standards in the organization.
- Administration financially supports professional development and educational opportunities including: membership fees in professional associations, attendance at conferences and workshop, subscription to professional publications and periodicals, and opportunities to network with colleagues.

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources, March 1997.

Appendix SD.5

POLICY DRAFTING TEMPLATE

Policy Drafting Template			**PAGE 1 of 2**
POLICY TITLE/HEADING			
Type of policy (select the appropriate sections)			
Procedures (how to act on the policies)			
Organizational ○ Beliefs ○ Governance ○ Legal Framework ○ Planning	**Administrative** ○ General ○ Board ○ Volunteers ○ Staff	**Operational** ○ Personnel ○ Programming/Service Delivery ○ Financial Management ○ Job Descriptions	**Rules**
Policy number **Function/reason for this policy**			
Key words and phrases (state the position, action, rule)			
FIRST DRAFT			

Do we need to specify or include:	how this policy will be received and updated?
time frames or deadlines?	a preamble, reason or introduction which explains the function or necessity of the policy?
who is affected by or targeted by the policy?	a specific list of procedures?
how this policy will be communicated?	consequences for non-compliance?
How this policy will be monitored and evaluated?	when this policy applies or comes into affect?

Appendix SD.5

POLICY DRAFTING TEMPLATE

Policy Drafting Template	*PAGE 2 of 2*
SECOND DRAFT *(with revisions)*	
Options (for presentation to the board) Alternative 1: Alternative 2: Alternative 3:	
Procedures (how to act on policies)	
Final Check	
Editing for content, style, mechanics?	
Check for clarity and plain language?	
How will it be distributed, accessed?	
When will it be reviewed? By whom?	
Is the purpose clear?	
Do we really need this policy?	
FINAL DRAFT	

Appendix SD.6

PRODCEDURE DRAFTING TEMPLATE

Procedure Drafting Template
The policy statement
Procedures (how to act on the policies)
Who will be involved? *(doing or supervising the action)*
Timelines *(when, how often?)*
Processes *(describe the specific step-by-step actions)*
Other requirements *(methods, contents, schedules, definitions, forms, records)*

Appendix SD.7

Index of Sample Policy Statements

Organizational Policies

Liability and Risk

Administrative Policies

Policies that apply to Board Members