



Nova Scotia
Physiotherapy
Association

Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association

Volunteer Handbook

Resources for NSPA's *Volunteers*

October 2011

NSPA Volunteer Handbook – Volunteer Resources

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Introduction: Overview of Volunteering

Overview of Volunteering in Canada / Nova Scotia

According to the Canadian Survey of Giving and Volunteering, 2007, almost 12.5 million Canadians or 46% of the population aged 15 and over, volunteered during the one-year period preceding the survey. Canadians volunteered almost 2.1 billion hours in 2007 – the equivalent of close to 1.1 million full-time jobs¹.

Nova Scotians are keen volunteers. According to the province's Department of Labour & Advanced education:

- 453,000 Nova Scotians volunteer
- Rates of volunteerism increased 7% between 2004 and 2007, though the average hours of volunteerism per person declined
- 65% of Nova Scotian youth volunteer - The highest rate of all age groups
- 44% of Nova Scotian seniors volunteer
- Volunteers contribute \$1.8 billion worth of services to the Nova Scotia economy

With our very limited staff resources, the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association is highly dependent on volunteers for setting the direction of the association, establishing priorities, representing the profession, and executing projects. **Thank you for being one of the many Nova Scotians contributing through volunteerism!**

Additional Suggested Reading and General Volunteer Management Resources

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement is the “Gold Standard” for principles of volunteer management for Canadian not-for-profits. A summary of the Code can be found at Appendix 1 of this Handbook. The entire code can be found on the Volunteer Canada website (listed below).

Here are some links to volunteer information sites, with lots of resources:

Volunteer Canada: www.volunteer.ca

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources: <http://cavrcanada.org/>

Charity Village: www.charityvillage.com

NS Volunteer Forum: www.nsvolunteerforum.ca

Volunteerism and the Voluntary Sector in NS: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/lae/volunteerism/>

¹ Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. Imagine Canada & Volunteer Canada, 2007 http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/files/giving/en/csgvp_highlights_2007.pdf.

Volunteering with NSPA: Description of volunteer opportunities and functions

Volunteer opportunities available through NSPA run the gamut from the Association president and Board Chair, through to members who contribute a couple of hours once or twice a year at an exhibit booth. All contributions are valued and contribute to our success as a profession. The range of volunteer opportunities available helps to ensure that volunteers can be matched appropriately with volunteer roles.

Understand your Interests and Availability

While NSPA's volunteer leaders understand that you are volunteering your time, and will be as flexible and accommodating as possible when scheduling meetings and Committee work, this does not mean that there are no expectations or accountabilities for volunteers. NSPA has very specific goals and objectives established in its Strategic Plan, and the work done by Committees is critical to the accomplishment of these goals. Being realistic in what you can take on is therefore very important.

Before volunteering:

- Identify why you are interested in volunteering and what you hope to get out of the experience (e.g., a better understanding of the association; some volunteer experience for professional / career development; opportunity to expand knowledge in a specific area such as media relations or on-line learning);
- Don't be shy about stating what you want out of the volunteer experience – this will help volunteer leaders to place you in the position with the best fit for your interests;
- If you are worried about time commitment, talk to the Chair or Executive Director about your availability and whether or not it will be sufficient for the volunteer role you are considering.

While time commitments vary depending on the priorities of the day, the following provides an overview of volunteer opportunities available through NSPA:

Board of Directors

The composition of the NSPA Board is established by the Association's bylaws. Normally, opportunities to join the Board occur once annually, during the elections prior to the Annual General Meeting. Occasionally there are vacancies that need to be filled by appointment between AGMs but this is uncommon.

Board members are expected to attend Board meetings every 8 weeks, as well as the semi-annual meeting and the Annual General Meeting. Many Board members also chair or participate on one Committee in addition to their Board responsibilities. Some Board positions, such as President or Treasurer, may involve additional meetings and responsibilities.

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee is responsible for administering the NSPA awards program, as well as coordinating the nomination of Nova Scotia members for CPA awards. This Committee also administers the association's Volunteer Program. The Committee meets three or four times per year, for approximately two hours per meeting.

Professional Development Committee

The PD Committee is responsible for selecting and administering professional development activities for members, as well as for reviewing external PD opportunities for recommendation to members. The Committee meets approximately four to six times per year for an hour. As well, Committee members may be asked to assist on-site at PD events hosted by the Association.

Public Relations Committee

The Public Relations Committee provides recommendations to the Board related to advertising and public awareness activities including traditional advertising, social media, sponsorships, and trade shows. The Committee is responsible for the Association's participation in National Physiotherapy Month activities, and administers a budget of approximately \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year. The Committee meets approximately five or six times per year for 1.5 – 2 hours.

Other Opportunities

Depending on Association activities in a given year, short-term volunteer opportunities may be available for trade show participation, National Physiotherapy Month initiatives, assisting at professional development events, or helping with the Annual General Meeting. If you are interested in participating, let the Association office know where your interests lie!

Volunteer Orientation and Training

So – you're now on a Committee! What happens next?

As a new volunteer, you should receive an orientation to the mission and structure of the Association; the role of the Committee for which you are volunteering; and the specific activities or projects currently being undertaken by the Committee. This orientation may be fairly informal, depending on the role you are taking on, and will normally be conducted by the Committee Chair and/or Executive Director in advance of your first meeting. A checklist of items that you may receive to review in advance of the first meeting can be found below.

At your first meeting, you will be introduced to your fellow Committee members. During the meeting, don't hesitate to ask for history on items of business that were not covered during your orientation. Also, you should feel free to participate actively in the meeting. NSPA needs a diversity of volunteer opinions and ideas so don't hesitate to speak up!

Resources for New Volunteers

The Committee Chair and/or Executive Director will provide you with a variety of resources to help get you up to speed with your new role. The check-list below will give you a sense of what to expect:

- Overview of the role of CPA. For a general orientation to the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. The following items are recommended for review:
 - The "About CPA" Section of the CPA website:
<http://www.physiotherapy.ca/public.asp?WCE=C=32|K=S222488>

- CPA Bylaws: http://www.physiotherapy.ca/PublicUploads/222695CPA%20Bylaws_June2009.pdf
 - CPA Rules and Regulations: <http://www.physiotherapy.ca/public.asp?WCE=C=47|K=222846|RefreshT=222511|RefreshS=Container|RefreshD=2225115> (note: you must be logged in to the CPA members' website to view the Rules & Regs.)
 - CPA Position Statements: <http://www.physiotherapy.ca/public.asp?WCE=C=47|K=222537|RefreshT=222559|RefreshS=LeftNav|RefreshD=2225590>
- Overview of the role of the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association. The following items are recommended for review:
- The "About NSPA" Section of the website: <http://www.physiotherapyns.ca/index.php/site/about/>
 - NSPA Bylaws, Strategic Plan and policies: http://www.physiotherapyns.ca/index.php/site/member_resources27/ (login required)
- Other sections of the CPA / NSPA website may be relevant based on the specific volunteer role. For example the Professional Development sections of the two websites would be relevant for PD Committee volunteers.
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Previous minutes (approx. 6 months worth, or one year if the Committee meets infrequently)
- Any relevant role descriptions
- Policies that apply to Committee volunteers:
- Any official documents such as Memoranda of Agreement, contracts, etc. that are relevant for the role
- For new Board volunteers, the Board Orientation manual should be provided and reviewed with the new Board member.
- Directories with contact info for all Committee members/staff
- Background info/resources on specific Committee projects.
- Budgets
- Ensure that the new volunteer has been added to the Committee Portal for the NSPA website so that they can access Committee resources on-line.

Getting the Most out of your Volunteer Experience

Few of us have the luxury of spare time these days. Precious volunteer hours can be put to effective use with a good understanding of various roles and responsibilities, and by following some simple rules for effective meetings.

Understand "Who does What"

Sometimes it can be confusing to sort out who is responsible for what. What are the different roles of staff versus volunteers? Committee members versus Board members? The following list provides an outline of who should be responsible for what²:

² Excerpted from the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, available at www.volunteer.ca

Board Members

- Define and review vision, mission and values around volunteer involvement Develop a strategic plan that considers integrating volunteer involvement as a core function and resource to support achievement of the mission
- Manage and lead volunteers within a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement
- Identify and develop governance policies
- Develop policies for programs and operations

Executive Director or Leadership Volunteers (e.g., Committee Chairs)

- Review vision, mission and values regularly to ensure new initiatives are consistent with these overarching guiding statements
- Assist with strategic plan development
- Develop and manage operational strategies and goals and the annual plan
- Create and lead a supportive environment and culture for volunteer involvement
- Manage in a manner that supports governance policies
- Identify and obtain the resources (human and financial) required for programs and operations to be delivered
- Ensure effective management of human resource strategies in the organization
- Lead the involvement of volunteers and the integration of volunteer involvement standards and practices
- Link operational work to vision, mission and values
- Manage annual operating goals and strategies

Volunteers

- Individually contribute to support an environment and culture for volunteer involvement.
- Understand how volunteer work links to vision, mission and values
- Undertake volunteer work to achieve operational goals and strategies
- Follow policies
- Provide volunteer service and leadership for effective program delivery

Effective Meetings:

Meetings can be used to advance projects and make key decisions, or they can be time-intensive exercises in frustration. All participants have a role in making meetings work. As a meeting participant, here are some tips for getting the most out of meetings.

At meetings:

- Participate actively at meetings, particularly where you can contribute direct experience and knowledge
- Arrive at meetings on time and stay until the meeting is adjourned. If unable to attend for the full meeting, advise the chair in advance.
- Avoid sidebar or “corridor” conversations.
- Turn off or silence cell phones. Give the meeting your full attention.
- Support the efforts of the chair to control meeting flow through co-operation with the guidelines for good conduct. Respect the chair’s role in controlling speaking order, duration, and topic. Avoid tangents.
- come to meetings prepared to report on progress of any tasks assigned to you at the last meeting
- listen to everyone who is speaking and don't interrupt

- work to the benefit of the organization, rather than for personal gain
- remember that you represent all members
- disagree with ideas, not people
- remember that the accepted motion is the will of the Committee
- Respect each other, but encourage debate.

Between meetings:

- Respond as promptly as possible to electronic requests for feedback (e-mail exchanges can often replace meetings, if done effectively with good participation)
- Support decisions made by the group, even if you disagree during the discussion.
- Take responsibility and follow through on any action items that have been assigned to you. If you are not able to complete an action item in the time frame identified at the meeting let the Chair know, and be prepared to be responsible for finding an alternative way to complete the work.
- Be alert to issues or developments that might be relevant or of interest to the broader Committee

Evaluation

Sometimes, volunteers are surprised at the idea that volunteer work is evaluated. However, evaluation of the work of a Committee can help to identify process improvements, make recommendations in a helpful and constructive way, and identify new ideas.

NSPA has identified two forms of evaluation: self assessment for individual volunteers, and evaluation of the overall work of a group of volunteers (Committee, Board, etc.). Self-assessments are done on a confidential, individual basis and are for the personal reference and reflection of the volunteer. Committee evaluations are intended to be done by all Committee members, and focus on process and accomplishments rather than individual behaviours. Please participate actively in any evaluations that your Committee undertakes. They can be a valuable learning experience! Some sample evaluation forms that might be used by your Committee can be found at Appendix 2A and 2B.

Policies and Procedures Applicable to Volunteers

The Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association has approved a detailed Policy Handbook, which guides the operations of the Association. While many of these policies apply only to the Board, there are several that are relevant and applicable for volunteers on Committees. Your Committee chair or the Executive Director should provide you with copies of policies that apply to volunteers as part of your orientation. These policies may include:

- Conflict of Interest
- Privacy Policy
- Official Spokesperson
- Course fees (for PD Committee members)
- Advertising & Sponsorship (for PR Committee members)
- Communication (for PR Committee members)
- Awards Program (for Awards Committee members)
- Expense Reimbursement

If you have questions about policies, do not hesitate to ask your Committee Chair or the Executive Director.

Volunteer Recognition

NSPA has developed a Volunteer Recognition Program to ensure that we say thank you to our volunteers for their contribution of time, energy and ideas. The program provides for the recognition of volunteers based on their degree of involvement with the work of an association. As a Committee volunteer, for example, you will be listed annually in the Annual Report, acknowledged at the AGM, and, at the end of your term, provided with a certificate of recognition for your contribution.

Questions or Concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns about your volunteer experience with NSPA, please do not hesitate to contact your Committee Chair / volunteer leader, the NSPA President (president@physiotherapyns.ca) or the Association office (info@physiotherapyns.ca or 902-405-6772).

Thank you for volunteering!

Appendix 1: Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

The following standards are excerpted from the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. The complete Code, which includes information on adopting the code and integrating it into day-to-day operations, can be found at <http://volunteer.ca/files/CodeEngJune2006.pdf>

Standard 1: Mission-based Approach

Volunteers help the organization achieve its mission and objectives. Volunteer involvement must be aligned with the organization's goals and resource allocation. The Board and senior management should understand and approve of the direction of the volunteer program.

The Board of Directors, leadership volunteers and staff acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose and mission.

- The Board of Directors adopts a statement declaring the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's mission.
- The organization's planning process incorporates volunteer involvement.
- The Board has approved the overall strategy for volunteer involvement.
- A budget is allocated for volunteer involvement.
- Adequate space and equipment are allocated for volunteers to perform their assignments.
- Appropriate insurance is acquired to minimize volunteer liability.
- Volunteer involvement goals are evaluated regularly by the Board of Directors.

Standard 2: Human Resources

A healthy organization encourages volunteers to grow. Volunteers are supported and encouraged to become involved and to contribute in new ways beyond initial assignments. Volunteers need to be included as equal members of the team. The definition of team should not be limited to those who are paid within the organization.

Involved and informed volunteers who feel part of the team are far more likely to continue contributing their valuable time and skills.

Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valued and integral members of the organization's human resources team. The organization has a planned approach for volunteer involvement that includes linking volunteers to the achievement of the mission, providing the appropriate human and financial resources to support the volunteer program, and establishing policies for effective management.

- Staff is given training and recognition to work effectively with volunteers.
- Input from volunteers is welcomed and solicited for the organization's planning and evaluation.
- Volunteers are encouraged to grow within the organization.
- Volunteers are included as equal members of the team.

Standard 3: Program Planning

Policies and procedures help clarify responsibilities and ensure consistency. They should be developed and documented on a broad spectrum, from volunteer assignments and screening, to grounds for dismissal. The organization's Board of

Directors needs to ensure volunteer policies are congruent with other policies within the organization. The manager of volunteer resources is responsible for identifying the specific policies and procedures required.

Policies and procedures are adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and supports the involvement of volunteers.

- The organization's planning process incorporates volunteer involvement.
- The Board has approved the overall goals for volunteer involvement.
- Governance and operational policies are in place, are reviewed regularly, and incorporate volunteer involvement practices.
- Policies and procedures are communicated to all staff and volunteers.
- Policies and procedures are followed consistently and equitably.
- Policies and procedures are consistent with national and provincial/territorial Human Rights Codes, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and provincial/ territorial employment standards legislation.

Standard 4: Program Administration

Managing volunteers is both an art and a science. The job demands a wide range of skills with a high level of complexity. Regardless of whether they are staff members or volunteers, managers of volunteers should have the necessary skills, experience and support to do the job well.

The organization has a clearly designated individual with appropriate qualifications responsible for the volunteer program.

- The designated person has an appropriate level of education and experience to manage the volunteer program.
- A written job description for the designated person is developed and reviewed regularly.
- The designated person is a member of the management or administrative team or key leadership volunteer.
- The designated person works collaboratively with staff, the local Volunteer Centre and other organizations to encourage the effectiveness of the volunteer program.
- Professional development opportunities are provided on a regular basis.
- The performance of the designated person is reviewed regularly and includes feedback from both staff and volunteers.

Standard 5: Volunteer Assignments

Assignments should be developed to address the needs of the organization and the volunteer. Volunteer assignments should be linked to the organization's mission. Individual needs vary considerably, so successful volunteer programs adapt volunteer assignments to fit these needs when possible. It is necessary to periodically review volunteer assignments to ensure their relevance and value.

Volunteer assignments address the mission or purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways that reflect the abilities, needs and backgrounds of the volunteer and the organization.

- Volunteers and staff (including bargaining units of unions where applicable) are consulted when developing new assignments.
- Volunteer assignments have written descriptions that include duties, responsibilities, skills needed, time required and benefits.
- Volunteer assignments are developed to reflect the needs of the organization and the needs of volunteers.
- Volunteer assignments are reviewed periodically with staff, volunteers (and bargaining units of unions where applicable) to ensure relevance and value.
- Volunteers with special requirements or challenges can become involved with the organization.

- The level of risk is assessed and minimized for all volunteer assignments.

Standard 6: Recruitment

Effective recruitment messages are realistic and clear. They leave an accurate impression of the organization and its needs. Genuine effort should be made to recruit and select volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds. A healthy organization has a mix of age, gender, ethnicity, and abilities in its volunteer group.

Volunteer recruitment incorporates internal and external strategies to reach out and involve a diverse volunteer base.

- Recruitment messages are realistic and clear about the volunteer assignments and expectations.
- Various techniques are used to recruit volunteers.
- Recruitment messages indicate that screening procedures are followed in the organization.
- Genuine effort is made to recruit and select volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences to represent the community served by the organization.
- Selection of volunteers is based on actual requirements and pre-determined screening measures.

Standard 7: Screening

Screening is an essential process that lasts for the duration of a volunteer's involvement with the organization. Screening procedures are delivered consistently with no exceptions made for certain individuals. Screening protocols are assigned to positions because of inherent risk; individuals do not determine screening. Screening should be viewed as evidence that the organization cares about its programs and its people.

- A clearly communicated screening process is adopted and consistently applied by the organization.
- Screening is considered to be an essential process that continues throughout the volunteer's involvement with the organization.
- Policies relating to screening practices are developed, adopted and clearly communicated to staff and volunteers.
- All volunteer assignments are assessed for level of risk.
- Appropriate screening tools are used according to the level of risk of the assignment.
- Once defined, screening practices are delivered consistently with no exceptions made for certain individuals.

Standard 8: Orientation & Training

An orientation clarifies the relationship between volunteers and the organization. It familiarizes volunteers with the organization by providing information on the policies and procedures that influence work and involvement with others. Volunteers need adequate training to perform tasks without putting themselves or others at risk. Training prepares volunteers to do the work required by the position and to meet the expectations of their volunteer assignments.

Each volunteer is provided with an orientation to the organization, its policies and practices (including the rights and responsibilities of volunteers) and receives training customized to the volunteer assignment and individual needs of the volunteer.

- Volunteers receive information on the history, mission and structure of the organization.
- Volunteers receive information on the policies and procedures specific to their volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers are given adequate training for performing their assignment without putting themselves or others at risk.
- Volunteers are informed of the boundaries and limits of their assignments.

Volunteers have ongoing training opportunities to upgrade their skills and adapt to changes in the organization.

Standard 9: Supervision

Prior to the placement of volunteers, the supervision level of the assignment should be determined based on the complexity and risk of the assignment. Each volunteer should know who their supervisor is. Supervision increases the motivation of volunteers, helps ensure the organization's mandate is met and gives volunteers a sense of belonging within the organization.

Volunteers receive a level of supervision appropriate to the task and are given regular opportunities to offer and receive feedback.

- The complexity and risk of each assignment determines the level of supervision.
- Volunteers are assigned and introduced to their supervisors at the start of their assignment.
- The performance of volunteers is evaluated on a regular basis.
- Random spot checks with volunteers (and clients) are used to verify volunteer performance.
- Volunteers are given and encouraged to use mechanisms for providing input to the organization.
- Situations requiring reprimand and dismissal follow policies and procedures fairly and consistently, while respecting the safety and dignity of all concerned.

Standard 10: Recognition

An effective volunteer program acknowledges volunteers throughout the year by knowing volunteers as individuals and providing recognition that is meaningful on an ongoing basis. In addition, it is essential that those responsible acknowledge internally and publicly (where appropriate) the importance of volunteer involvement to the organization.

The contributions of volunteers are consistently acknowledged with formal and informal methods of recognition.

- Senior management acknowledges the efforts of volunteers.
- Formal methods of recognition are delivered consistently.
- Informal methods of recognition are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner.

Standard 11: Record Keeping

Records should be maintained on every volunteer involved with the organization, using a confidential, secure system. Records should include application forms, records of interviews, assignment descriptions, letters of reference, performance appraisals and current contact information. Records are also useful in evaluating the impact of the volunteer program through the contribution and time donated by volunteers.

Standardized documentation and records management practices are followed and in line with relevant legislation.

- Records are kept for each volunteer using a confidential, secure system respecting the privacy of personal information.
- Statistical information about the volunteer program is regularly shared with staff and volunteers in the organization.
- With appropriate agreement, testimonials about volunteer involvement are shared within the organization to promote volunteer involvement.
- The organization keeps informed of new legislation, Human Rights Codes and other relevant guidelines for record management, privacy and confidentiality practices.

Standard 12: Evaluation

Volunteer involvement should be evaluated regularly to ensure that involvement of volunteers is contributing to the organizations mandate. An evaluation of volunteer involvement should include: reviewing goals and objectives, identifying

results achieved, obtaining feedback from current volunteers and clients, collecting and reviewing both quantitative and qualitative data about volunteer involvement.

The impact and contribution of involving volunteers and of the volunteer program are continually evaluated to ensure the needs of the organization are being met in fulfilling its mandate.

- Performance goals are established annually for the volunteer program.
- Achievement of performance goals is assessed on an annual basis.
- Volunteer involvement goals are evaluated regularly by the Board of Directors.
- Opportunities exist for volunteers to give feedback to the organization about their involvement.

Appendix 2A: Volunteer Program Evaluation Form Template

EVALUATION - TO BE COMPLETED BY VOLUNTEER

Name: _____

Position: _____ Period of evaluation: _____

Rating scale:

1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Needs improvement	fair	good	very good	superior	Not applicable

I. Orientation and Training

- _____ Goals and purposes of organization were clearly explained
- _____ Job description for your position was reviewed
- _____ Procedures to be followed were explained
- _____ Effective training and tools were provided

Comments:

II. Your Supervisor / Committee Chair

- _____ Supervisor/Chair was available to you when you had questions or needed information
- _____ Supervisor/Chair demonstrated professional regard
- _____ Supervisor/Chair had a progressive agenda for the organization

Comments:

Please respond to the following questions:

What other training or growth opportunities would you like to pursue?

What additional tools would make your work more effective and/or pleasant?

What are some suggestions or goals you would offer for the volunteer program?

How could the organization improve its volunteer-staff structure and relationships?

Source: Canadian Society of Association Executives. Volunteer Handbook, pp. 31-32, 2006.

Appendix 2B: NSPA Committee Member Self-Assessment

The following questions are to be completed annually by all NSPA Committee members as part of a self-assessment and reflective process. Answers are confidential and do not need to be shared with others. Committee members answering yes to these questions are likely fulfilling their responsibilities as volunteers.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Do I understand and support the role and work of the Committee?			
2. Am I knowledgeable about the Committee's Terms of Reference and activities?			
3. Do I understand the Committee's budget and how it links to the Association's overall budget?			
4. Do I have a good working relationship with the Committee chair and/or staff?			
5. Do I recommend individuals for service to this Committee?			
6. Do I prepare for and participate in Committee meetings?			
7. Do I arrive on time and participate actively for the full meeting?			
8. Do I act as a good-will ambassador to the organization?			
9. Do I find serving on the Committee to be a satisfying and rewarding experience?			