

# **Policy/Procedure Manual Vegreville Volunteer Action Centre V-VAC**



**V-VAC**  
**Helping People Help the Community**

Approved as a working document by the Board of Directors June 8, 2004



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## Value Statements:

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The Goal of the Vegreville Action Centre (V-VAC) is to provide a safe, interactive, and valuable resource to the community of Vegreville through providing thoroughly screened, trained and committed volunteers to local organizations. To this end, V-VAC encourages the active involvement of community members within all programs and activities.

Board members and FCSS staff (through the Director and Volunteer Coordinator) will work as a team in implementing the mission and programs of V-VAC, with each having an equal and complementary role to play.

All volunteers are to be treated with respect and dignity. They are to be a valued resource and as such their input and opinions should be considered in all aspects of the programs put forth by FCSS the Town of Vegreville, and V-VAC. Volunteers will have the opportunity to peruse and provide input and suggestions to the policy and procedures utilized by the organization.

This policy/procedure manual and the practices pertaining to volunteers will be fully documented and clearly communicated to all volunteers registered with V-VAC in order to aid in the effective, safe and satisfactory performance of each assignment. The policies and procedures outlined will aim to minimize the risk factors for **all** parties involved with **each and every** position provided by V-VAC.

This manual will be reviewed by The Board of Directors, the Director, and Volunteer Coordinator on an ongoing basis in order to keep relevant information up to date and applicable to the organization. The Board will review any proposed changes and make recommendation for approval or denial. Any change that is approved will be implemented as soon as possible to this manual and all volunteers will be informed in a timely manner.

By utilizing this document and the statements within, V-VAC will better provide the Community of Vegreville with a safe, professional, and valuable resource to organizations, their staff, clients, volunteers and any other persons in the community.

Please note that the policies and procedures contained herein are for the purposes of programs facilitated by FCSS or the Town of Vegreville and its affiliated organizations and departments only. Organizations **outside** of this scope will be responsible for the screening, training, orientation, and placement of any volunteers referred by V-VAC. V-VAC will **not** assume any responsibility for actions of volunteers or organizations referred outside the scope of programs offered in house.

## **Recruitment:**

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### **Policy:**

V-VAC will recruit volunteers to fill various types of positions as required by various organizations within the community. The qualification for volunteer recruitment will be the ability and suitability of any person to perform the task on behalf of the organization.

### **Procedure:**

Any recruitment strategies will reflect the particular program or position that is needed by the inquiring organization. The position or program shall be reviewed and a plan designed to recruit able and suitable persons. This can be accomplished through many facets including but not limited to: newspaper advertisements, job board postings, personal invitation, or active campaigning.

## **Job Design:**

### **Policy:**

V-VAC shall define the roles and functions of each volunteer position, including supervisory relationships based on the need and allowance of the inquiring organization. V-VAC will communicate with each organization requiring a position to be filled to assess what the needs of the job and associated tasks are.

### **Procedure:**

Volunteers are invited to offer suggestions regarding any job design or changes to any current volunteer opportunities. The design of every volunteer position will address a number of issues including but not limited to: purpose, duties required, responsibilities, skills, attitude, knowledge, time commitment needed, benefits/challenges to the volunteer, training, orientation, potential risks to all parties, client group, organization policies/procedures, level of screening and evaluation methods.

## **Job Description:**

3

### **Policy:**

A written job description of every position offered through FCSS or the Town will be provided. All volunteers will be familiar with the relevant job description and be able to provide feedback on changes in the position or its description, pending approval by the Board.

### **Procedure:**

A central file including all volunteer positions is to be created and made readily available to all parties involved. Job descriptions should follow the following format: Job title, General description, Organization, client group, responsibilities, qualifications, time requirement, training provided, benefits, level of screening, and level of supervision. Each volunteer is to be provided with the job description relevant to their position prior to its commencement, and any concerns or questions will be addressed at that time. Both the volunteer and the Volunteer Coordinator will sign the job description form to state that they are in acceptance with the position and its requirements/responsibilities after it has clearly been reviewed.

## **Application Form:**

### **Policy:**

All volunteers will complete an application form for the specific position they are interested in undertaking with V-VAC. This form will be kept in a personal file on each volunteer for their record. The form is to be reviewed by the Coordinator with the volunteer during the initial application process. Application forms will follow the guidelines for Human Rights with respect to personal privacy and non-discriminatory questions, except when they may pertain to the specific position being applied for and the information sought is deemed necessary and relevant in order to minimize risks to all involved.

**Procedure:**

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All volunteers will receive an application form for the position they want to fill in order to begin the screening process. This is completed prior to any acceptance of position with V-VAC and will take place in the initial interview with the Volunteer Coordinator. The completed application will be reviewed by the Coordinator and may be passed on to the Director for final approval if needed. The initial application and interview will address all concerns and questions with the position and the skills, time, and suitability with the organization. Volunteers that are currently working in positions within the scope of V-VAC should complete an application for their personal file, an interview however, will not be required. The application form will be the first document in the personal file of the volunteer and is to be kept in the filing cabinet and made available for their perusal. Application forms that are filled out in complete but not acted upon will be kept on file for the period of six (6) months and then removed.

**Interview/Screening:****Policy:**

Volunteers that are applying for positions of trust, as deemed by the Volunteer Coordinator, will be subject to a second and more thorough interview process. Positions of trust may include but are not limited to: working with children, seniors, persons with disabilities (either mental or physical), or other persons deemed vulnerable; working with money, financial records, personal information, or confidential files (either personal or organizational). This interview shall be part of the screening process to determine whether or not the individual applying for this type of position will be suitable and able to provide a safe, and effective working environment that will seek to minimize risks to all parties. The interview will contain questions deemed necessary to minimize risk factors to all parties involved. Questions that are invasive to privacy or are discriminatory will not be posed unless it is deemed necessary and relevant to the specific position applied for.

**Procedure:**

The Volunteer Coordinator will interview the applicant for the specific position and ask a series of questions designed to screen out those who pose potential risks to vulnerable persons or the community. If necessary the Coordinator may ask that the Director attend this interview as well to aid in determining a level of risk. The interview format should be standard and the same questions posed to all applicants of the position. Notes should be taken by the Coordinator and kept on the individuals file in case of the need for further review.

## **Reference Checks:**

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### **Policy:**

Reference checks shall be conducted on all applicants in order to minimize risks to all parties involved with the position. Special attention will be placed on those applications who are seeking positions deemed by the Volunteer Coordinator to be of trust. Current volunteers registered with V-VAC prior to this policy's approval will not be required to undergo this method of screening. The Coordinator will go on the past record of achievement with this organization and the word of its staff as a reference. All persons applying for the same position shall be subject to the same level of reference check, as they shall be conducted on the basis of position and not individual.

### **Procedure:**

Three reference checks will be completed for each person applying for any position with V-VAC. References should come from a variety of sources including but not limited to: employers, community members, past volunteer supervisors, school officials, friends, and family members. Persons applying for positions of trust shall undergo a more rigorous reference check with more specific questions posed to their references. The reference checks will be recorded and placed on each applicant's file, and will take place prior to commencement of the position. Any reference checks should be conducted with the consent of the individual applying for the position, and not otherwise. Any person who refuses a reference check will not be accepted to register with V-VAC for FCSS and Town operated programs by the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Criminal Record/Child Welfare Checks:**

### **Policy:**

The inquiring organization utilizing FCSS or Town operated programs may or may not conduct its own checks based upon its policies. V-VAC will not perform criminal record/child welfare checks unless the organization has no policy in place and has requested the Volunteer Coordinator to do so. Criminal record/child welfare checks shall only be conducted when deemed necessary (i.e. positions of trust). The volunteer is responsible for obtaining the check, and shall provide a copy to be placed on file. V-VAC will make a recommendation based on the completed check to the organization. Charges or convictions shall not be held against the applicant unless they are directly related to the position or deemed to pose significant risk. Criminal record/child welfare checks shall not be requested unless the applicant has consented.

**Procedure:**

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The official form utilized by the police should be used in conducting the check and the Volunteer Waiver form should also be completed at that time. The volunteer will return the completed check to be reviewed by V-VAC prior to the position commencing. Volunteers in current placements with V-VAC will be required to provide any checks deemed applicable for any positions of trust they may be applying for. Any completed check will be copied and placed on file for future review by either the volunteer or the Volunteer Coordinator. Any volunteer who refuses the necessary or required check will not be considered for the position.

**Placement:****Policy:**

V-VAC shall not place a volunteer in a position for which they are not qualified for, or for which they pose a risk to any party involved. In addition, if adequate training has not been provided, the volunteer will not be placed in the position until such training is completed.

**Procedure:**

The Volunteer Coordinator will assess placement based upon all screening processes undergone by the applicant, as well as personal suitability with the position and the inquiring organization. Equal attention should be given to the interests and goals of each volunteer applying for a position, as it is to its requirements. The Coordinator should not place a person into a position until they have accepted it and have been successful in the screening process. Each volunteer will be notified if they have successfully completed the screening and have been accepted into the position.

**Orientation:****Policy:**

All volunteers accepted into an FCSS or Town operated position with V-VAC shall undergo an orientation which is to include the policies and procedure outlined in this manual, as well as any in the inquiring organization. Each volunteer will be oriented to the risks, requirements and safety procedures involved with the position.

**Procedure:**

Orientation should include but not be limited to the following: value statements, policy and procedure manual, volunteer agreement, job training, and the organization they are to volunteer for.

**Training:****Policy:**

All volunteers shall receive complete, timely and up to date training to ensure they are qualified for the position they have accepted.

**Procedure:**

The organization should be contacted to set up a training program for the volunteer and it should be carried out by the supervisory person. The organization should set up a length of time deemed appropriate to train the individual performing the tasks. The Volunteer Coordinator should be in contact with the organization to see whether or not the volunteer has completed the training successfully and to the organizations satisfaction. If not, then the Coordinator shall set up a meeting with the volunteer to discuss further training that may be required.

**Confidentiality:****Policy:**

All volunteers shall sign an Agency/Volunteer Agreement with V-VAC which will state that any and all documents and information contained in the personal file will be treated as confidential. Volunteers shall have access to their own file, but not the files of others and no information will be publicized by V-VAC regarding any volunteer, with the exception of the Director, Volunteer Coordinator, and the Board if necessary to reduce possible risks to the community.

**Procedure:**

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All information regarding volunteers should be held in the strictest of confidence and may only be shared with the Director or the Board by the Volunteer Coordinator in order to assess and minimize risks. The Agreement should be signed by the volunteer and the Coordinator prior to commencement of the position applied for. This document will mean that the volunteer is held accountable to V-VAC for their actions and any violations of it may be grounds for immediate dismissal. The Coordinator will explain this to each volunteer prior to signing. The signed copy will be placed on the personal file and will be kept confidential along with any other documents within. Any volunteer who refuses to sign this agreement and comply with confidentiality will not be considered.

**Records/Files:****Policy:**

There shall be a personal file kept on every volunteer that registers with V-VAC. It is to contain all completed forms, documents, record checks, and any other pertinent information the volunteer or Volunteer Coordinator wishes to place on file. The personal file shall be kept in a filing cabinet in a confidential manner, and will only be made available to volunteers on request. No outside person shall have access to these files or the documents contained within.

**Procedure:**

The volunteer files will be kept in the filing cabinet in the Volunteer Coordinators office. There should be a file on each volunteer with the relevant information and documents kept up to date. If a volunteer wants access to their file, they must ask permission to view it from the Volunteer Coordinator and be supervised while doing so, as they will not have free access to the cabinet for confidentiality reasons. Inactive files will remain in the cabinet for a period of three (3) years in case of reactivation, and after such time will be destroyed. Any volunteers that are terminated will have their file contents placed in a sealed envelope and kept in the cabinet indefinitely. Contents of the file should not be shared with anyone outside V-VAC.

## **Supervision/Evaluation/Appraisals:**

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### **Policy:**

Volunteers shall be supervised by both the inquiring organization and V-VAC on an ongoing basis, dependent on the nature of the position and the risk level. Evaluations and appraisals shall be performed on an ongoing basis to ensure satisfactory performance and effective risk management. An appraisal and evaluation shall be conducted and placed on file in intervals of two weeks, 3 months, 6 months and one year of position commencement and every year thereafter depending on length. Volunteers shall have access to these appraisals and evaluations upon request to the Volunteer Coordinator. Negative reviews will be discussed with volunteers in order to maintain quality of programming.

### **Procedure:**

Every volunteer should have a supervisor, either within the organization their position is in or by V-VAC. If supervision is provided by V-VAC, the Volunteer Coordinator will be the direct supervisor supplemented by the Director and Board as deemed necessary. The supervisor of the organization utilizing the services of the volunteer will be in direct contact with V-VAC regarding performance and conduct on an ongoing basis. Feedback should be given by the organization within the first two weeks of commencement. The Volunteer Coordinator will record feedback on an evaluation form which will be kept on file. Feedback will also be conducted with the volunteer regarding the position and the level of satisfaction the volunteer feels within the position. Regular appraisals and evaluation will take place throughout the course of the position and will be placed on the personal file. The evaluations/appraisals should motivate the volunteer to perform to the highest standards and be constructive, supportive, and opportunity should exist for volunteer input regarding the review.

## **Recognition:**

### **Policy:**

V-VAC will recognize volunteers and their contributions to the community through celebration of Volunteer Week (mid-April) of every year. Awards may be handed out for outstanding contributions to the community upon recommendation by the Volunteer Coordinator to the Director and Board.

**Procedure:**

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A volunteer celebration should be held at least once every year during volunteer week to show appreciation of the contributions made by volunteers. Those who are deemed to have provided an outstanding contribution level may receive prizes or awards in recognition through recommendations and nominations. Advertisements should be placed in the local media in support of Volunteer Week and the celebration and nominations by organizations utilizing volunteers through V-VAC will be considered.

**Resignation:****Policy:**

Volunteers shall inform V-VAC and the Volunteer Coordinator of their intention to resign from any position or from the volunteer program as a whole. Resignations shall be given in writing with sufficient notice and placed on file.

**Procedure:**

Any volunteer wishing to resign from a position or the program as a whole should give written notice to the Volunteer Coordinator and the organization they are volunteering with. A period of two (2) weeks should be the minimum timeframe allotted for advance notice unless the position is short-term or sporadic (episodic). This timeframe will be used by the Coordinator to recruit and screen a new applicant for the position should it still be required.

**Code of Conduct:****Policy:**

Harassment of any nature, abuse, alcohol/drug use, and discrimination will not be tolerated by V-VAC in any form. Volunteers will behave with the utmost respect and be caring, supportive and friendly in nature at all times in their positions. Staff at the organization the volunteer is employed with shall act in a reciprocal nature and infractions will not be tolerated. The Volunteer Coordinator, Director, or Board has the right to discipline a volunteer who does not conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner. Organizations who do not uphold the level of professionalism deemed acceptable may be removed from the volunteer program.

**Procedure:**

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In the event that the volunteer or organization experiences, causes or suspects abusive, discriminatory, or harassing behavior they are to notify the Volunteer Coordinator immediately. V-VAC will conduct an investigation into the allegation within a timely and professional manner, usually within five (5) business days. Any suspicion of abuse (sexual or physical) should be reported to the police immediately and will not be investigated by V-VAC due to the sensitive nature. Alcohol or drug use while in a position with V-VAC should be reported by the supervisor of the organization, and any such use may be grounds for immediate dismissal. A written report of any infraction will be completed by the Coordinator and will be placed on file and reviewed with the Director and Board. A decision on an appropriate disciplinary action will be made in a timely manner and the parties involved should be informed. Both parties should be able to make statements and express questions or concerns regarding the investigation and the report.

**Grievance:****Policy:**

A grievance procedure shall exist for both volunteers and organizations in aiding any differences or conflicts that arise. The procedure shall be outlined to all parties and made available for their perusal. Both volunteers and the organizations shall have input on any grievance made and the procedure undertaken to solve disputes. Each party will have an equal side in the process, and the procedure will not be discriminatory or biased in any way.

**Procedure:**

Every effort will be made by V-VAC to solve problems in a timely and effective manner. This process should first be done informally and cooperatively before any formal, written grievance is made. Any complaints should be addressed to the Volunteer Coordinator and will first be discussed between the Coordinator and the individual making the complaint as well as the other person or party involved. The Coordinator, Director and Board will review any written or formal complaint and decide upon the appropriate action to be taken, and this decision is to be final. All complaints will be placed on file and will be treated as confidential in nature.

## **Dismissal:**

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### **Policy:**

Dismissal of volunteers will only occur if there are no other viable options of discipline. Prior to dismissal, V-VAC will issue a verbal warning, followed by a written warning, followed by a suspension. Dependent on the seriousness of the infraction, immediate dismissal may occur and shall be based upon the decision of the Volunteer Coordinator, Director or Board. Activities that may warrant immediate dismissal can include but are not limited to the following: abuse (sexual or physical), harassment (depending upon the seriousness), alcohol or drug use/abuse, insubordination, falsifying information, illegal or violent acts, and breach of confidentiality. These actions once reported and investigated by the Coordinator will be discussed with both the Director and the Board and decided upon in terms of whether or not they warrant immediate dismissal and/or removal from the program.

### **Procedure:**

Dismissal will normally follow other levels of discipline, namely: verbal warning, written warning, and suspension of duties. The process will be dependent on the level of seriousness of the infraction, as well as the position description and performance of the individual involved. The volunteer can be dismissed by the Volunteer Coordinator, Director or Board for just cause without warning. All warnings and reports should be placed on file for record and will be treated as confidential in nature.