



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Vancouver-Fraser  
*Mental health for all*

# CMHA Vancouver-Fraser Volunteer Handbook

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# Contents

PART ONE: VOLUNTEERING WITH THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION .....	3
Philosophy of Volunteers:.....	3
Purpose of Volunteer Program: .....	3
Student Volunteers:.....	3
Virtual Volunteering: .....	3
Volunteer Opportunities at CMHA Vancouver-Burnaby .....	3
Benefits and Recognition: .....	4
Membership.....	4
PART TWO: VOLUNTEER POLICIES .....	4
Purpose: .....	4
Representing the Program: .....	5
Confidentiality: .....	5
Dismissal of a Volunteer: .....	5
Resigning a Volunteer Role: .....	5
Influenza Control Policy: .....	6
PART THREE: VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES.....	7
Volunteer Opportunities & Tracking of Hours: .....	7
Accident or Injuries: .....	7
Attire: .....	7
Telephone calls: .....	6
Contact Information: .....	7

## PART ONE: VOLUNTEERING WITH THE CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

### Our Mission:

As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, the Canadian Mental Health Association facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness

### Philosophy of Volunteers:

Volunteers are essential in the CMHA's mission to promote mental health, and support resilience and recovery for individuals who have been touched by mental illness. Volunteers are involved in accomplishing our mission through advocacy, education, community-based research and services. While CMHA is welcoming of all volunteers, our program is not a therapeutic volunteering program.

### Definition of "Volunteer":

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled in the program prior to performance of the task. Volunteers are not considered employees of CMHA, but are recognized as an integral part of the team.

### Purpose of Volunteer Program:

CMHA's Volunteer Program exists to further CMHA's mission and to promote success in our community. Passionate and dedicated volunteers are matched to projects according to their abilities and the needs of the agency.

### Student Volunteers:

Student volunteers must follow the same requirements as all other volunteers, completing a volunteer application, consenting to an interview, reference check, and criminal record check if needed. Some projects may require volunteers to be over the age of 19.

### Virtual Volunteering:

Occasionally, volunteer opportunities exist for projects that can be done remotely, wholly or in part. These projects usually consist of research, web, or social media-based projects. CMHA's confidentiality and privacy policies apply to work done remotely.

### Volunteer Opportunities at CMHA Vancouver-Fraser

- Event Volunteer/Health Fair Volunteer (Various Locations)
- BC Housing Recreation Services (Various Locations)
- Office (Vancouver Office)
- Reception (New Westminster Office)
- Fundraising (Vancouver Office)
- Board of Directors (Vancouver Office)
- My Artist's Corner (MAC) (Burnaby)
- Holiday Gift Wrapping (December)
- BMO Marathon Water Station (May)
- Ride Don't Hide (June)
- Miles for Mental Health (October)

### Benefits and Recognition:

CMHA values the services that volunteers contribute to our organization, and we recognize those contributions in meaningful ways. Examples include:

- Learning about mental health, programs, events, and networking with other people and organizations
- Meeting great new people
- Access to programs and educational courses that may be available at a discounted rate
- Reference letter with volunteer hours
- Recognition in newsletters
- Appreciated as a valued member of the CMHA team

### Membership:

In addition to volunteering, volunteers can support CMHA by becoming a member. As members, volunteers have a voice in how CMHA is run through a vote and/or nomination in the election of CMHA's governing board, and attendance at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Members also add support to efforts to provide advocacy and influence policy. Members also receive CMHA's newsletter and subscriptions to Visions Journal and Mind Matters newsletter. Volunteers interested in becoming a member should check in with the volunteer coordinator. Annual membership is \$20 or \$5 for students and those on income assistance. Membership forms are available at <http://www.vancouver-fraser.cmha.bc.ca/get-involved/membership>

## PART TWO: VOLUNTEER POLICIES

### Purpose:

These policies are written to provide overall guidance and direction to both staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

### Application Process

We require that volunteers:

- Complete a CMHA volunteer application
- Submit references
- Submit a resume or CV upon request
- Attend an interview by phone or in person upon request
- Agree to follow CMHA's confidentiality policy
- Agree to follow CMHA's volunteer agreement
- Complete a criminal record check

### Orientation Process

As part of the orientation process, volunteers will receive a site tour specific to their role. The tour will orient each volunteer to emergency procedures, exits, and their role in preventing or reporting Health and Safety concerns.

Each volunteer will receive an agreement that outlines at a minimum their general duties, who to report to, how ongoing supervision will occur, and an outline of their volunteer commitment. Each agreement must be signed by both the supervisor and the volunteer.

Depending on their volunteer role, some volunteers will be asked to attend a formal orientation as part of a group, while others will complete a much less formal, one-on-one orientation as part of their volunteer interview.

If a volunteer's supervisor is not the volunteer coordinator, their supervisor is responsible for orienting the volunteer to their role.

#### Placement Process

The volunteer coordinator will explain current volunteer opportunities, and the benefits volunteers can expect to gain from volunteering in each area. As part of the placement process, our staff will work with volunteers to identify your areas of interest and desire for personal growth. Where possible, the volunteer coordinator will make a placement that matches CMHA needs with volunteer interests and skills.

#### Representing the Program:

Volunteers are not authorized to speak to individuals, other organizations, or the media (including social media) on behalf of the branch unless they are given express directions to do so by program staff. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

#### Confidentiality:

Volunteers are expected to abide by CMHA's confidentiality policy. The full confidentiality policy can be obtained from a staff member. Confidential information relating to service users, fellow volunteers, or staff cannot be released without their written permission, except in case of emergency. Breach of CMHA's confidentiality policy can result in dismissal from the volunteer program.

#### Dismissal of a Volunteer:

Both student and regular volunteers are required to follow branch policies and procedures. Additionally, each student and regular volunteer will receive a position description that outlines their role and general duties. Students and regular volunteers that find themselves struggling to perform their duties conduct themselves in an ethical manner, or follow instructions from their supervisor may be provided with constructive feedback and/or an alternate role from their supervisor. Together, the supervisor will meet with the individual and try to develop their skills.

The Human Resources Manager will be consulted prior to the dismissal of all student or regular volunteers. If the student or volunteer cannot meet the expectations of the role, they will be informed by their Supervisor and/or Human Resources Manager as to the reasons why, prior to their dismissal. The Branch Human Resources department has the right to terminate the relationship with a student or regular volunteer if in their opinion a breach of a policy or procedure has occurred. The department will maintain a record of its decisions relating to any dismissal of a student or regular volunteer.

#### Resigning a Volunteer Role:

Volunteers are expected to notify the volunteer coordinator if they plan to end their volunteer role at any time. Additionally, an exit interview may be conducted by the volunteer coordinator to review the volunteer's experience.

### Influenza Control Policy

CMHA V-F abides by the Ministry of Health's policy concerning flu shots, which requires that every staff person or volunteer needs to be immunized or wear a mask in patient care locations during the flu season, which is generally December 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Volunteers working off-site, such as at events or health fairs, are not affected by this policy. For volunteers working at CMHA offices, the policy applies when in any common spaces in the office. If a volunteer is also a service user, the policy applies to you in their capacity as a volunteer.

Flu shots are available for free at local pharmacies. Masks are available at the CMHA office for volunteers who choose not to be immunized. The volunteer coordinator needs to know whether volunteers choose to get the flu shot or choose to wear a mask. No printed proof of vaccination is required.

Volunteers will receive a reminder via email when flu season approaches, with additional FAQs and policy included for their reference.

## PART THREE: VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

### Volunteer Opportunities & Tracking of Hours:

Current volunteers will be notified periodically of new opportunities and can sign up for new roles if appropriate. Volunteer hours are tracked by the Volunteer Coordinator and are approximate. It is the responsibility of volunteers to sign in and out.

### Accident or Injuries:

All staff are trained in Emergency first aid. If a medical emergency is treatable with a first aid kit or AED device, staff that are trained and authorized to apply emergency first aid should do so if safe. If a volunteer is trained in first aid and is confident in administering first aid in a situation in which no staff are present, they should follow standard first aid procedures.

If an accident or injury occurs, please notify any staff present and report to volunteer coordinator.

### Attire:

Volunteers are expected to dress respectfully and in keeping with the role they are filling. Casual or business casual dress is appropriate for assignments in the CMHA office or programs in the community. Volunteers will be notified if a specialized type of attire is needed for their role.

### Telephone calls:

Generally, volunteer positions do not require volunteers to answer telephone calls on behalf of CMHA. If a volunteer role requires a volunteer to use the telephone in an official capacity, supervisors should provide the volunteer with a title to use to identify themselves as volunteers.

Volunteers should not be using their personal cell phones during volunteer activities, especially while interacting with clients.

### Contact Information:

Volunteers will be assigned a staff supervisor and can contact that person should questions arise about their volunteer position. If volunteers have general questions or feedback about the volunteer program or are interested in other assignments, they should contact the volunteer coordinator:

- Email: [volunteervf@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:volunteervf@cmha.bc.ca)
- Primary Phone: 604-872-4902 ext. 253 (office)
- Fax number: 604-872-5934
- Office address: 110-2425 Quebec St. Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6