

# Subscriber Social: Tackling the Recruitment Challenge

In July 2022, Volunteer Toronto shared that there had been a 20% decrease in volunteer interest in April 2022 compared to the previous year. In October, volunteer managers from across Toronto got together to share their own experiences, and how they are tackling recruitment moving forward. Here's what they had to say.

## An Evolving Recruitment Landscape



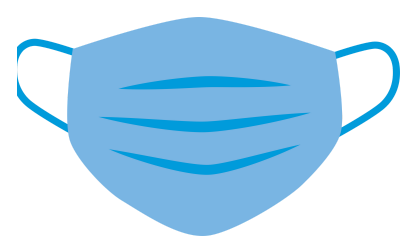
### ***A marked decrease in volunteer applications:***

- There is an overall sense of less applications to volunteer roles compared to 2020-2021
- Some organizations are also struggling to retain volunteers for longer periods of time



### ***Volunteer needs and motivations for volunteering are changing:***

- Looking for more flexibility in roles and commitment which is making virtual volunteering more popular
- Increased concerns about health and safety in roles
- Some organizations have been engaging demographics that are newer for them, and have different motivations and expectations from their usual volunteer base



### ***Some volunteers still concerned about health risks***

- Volunteers who are immunocompromised (themselves or family member)
- Volunteers reluctant to return to high-risk spaces such as long-term care and hospice
- Volunteers are still scared, and for youth volunteers, their parents are scared. Some organizations are meeting with parents to explain safety protocols and reassure them.



### ***Volunteer response to screening requirement vary***

- Some organizations are still asking for proof of vaccination, which reassures some volunteers, turns away others
- Vaccination requirements also create an additional barrier to recruitment and increases administrative burden for the organization
- Other organizations have removed the proof of vaccination (and mask) requirement, and have received concerns about safety/health risks from volunteers in response
- Decreased willingness to participate in screening steps like interviews



### ***Challenges within organizational policy***

- Organizational pandemic policies are often inflexible and slow to change, creating barriers for engaging new and returning volunteers
- Other organization staff do not understand the challenge facing volunteer leaders in recruitment and are expecting pre-pandemic engagement

# Evolving Solutions for Volunteer Recruitment

## Increasing and diversifying digital engagement

- Schools now utilize Google Classroom to disseminate resources. Volunteer Managers are sharing digital recruitment flyers that are deployed across the school. Similar digital engagement is now possible with faith organizations and community centres
- Virtual interviews can reduce barriers to some volunteers during the screening process, even if the role itself is in person
- Organizations have begun to increase their use of social media to recruit volunteers, and to recognize volunteer impact



## Collaborations and partnerships for capacity building

Some organizations are forming new partnerships with faith communities or other community organizations to recruit new volunteers. Examples:

- Yonge Street Mission partnered with Volunteer Toronto for their Give 6ix campaign and found that 20% of their volunteers for the year came through that partnership
- Several meal delivery programs have partnered with volunteers at Bike Brigade to deliver food to vulnerable communities by bicycle
- Some organizations are building new partnerships with corporate teams as part of their new recruitment strategy



## Rethinking volunteer programs and roles

Subscribers discussed reassessing their volunteer roles for the current landscape. This has included:

- Considering who is available to volunteer now and what are their needs, expectations and motivations
- Assessing barriers to recruitment that may prevent volunteers from signing up, such as tedious application forms, reference and police checks
- Re-evaluating the costs of volunteering and the need for honoraria or reimbursement (e.g. volunteer drivers)
- Deciding whether roles should be virtual, in-person or hybrid, based on the needs of clients and volunteers



### Looking for a new recruitment partner?

- Contact [Jeff Abraham](#) at Yonge Street Mission if you're interested in joining their [Give 6ix Campaign](#)



### Are you posting with VT?

- [Review our posting guide](#) and this [Position Description Template](#) (pg. 9)



**Are you ready to rethink your volunteer program?** Two upcoming opportunities to learn:

- [Program Evaluation](#) (November 22)
- [Recruitment](#) (December 6)



### Engaging Youth Volunteers?

- Take [Meaningful Youth Volunteer Engagement](#) on Learnvt.ca for \$20 (50% off) until Jan 1, 2023

Resources