

Guidebook

Supporting Volunteerism by People with Disabilities



Prepared for: Employment and Social
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Executive Summary

This document was prepared for ESDC as part of a larger project examining volunteerism and people with disabilities. The intention is to provide not-for-profit organizations that rely on volunteers with tips and resources on how to build an inclusive environment where diverse volunteers can feel welcome and able to utilize their skills. We developed this guidebook from a comprehensive scan of information available about volunteering by people with disabilities. We also conducted sixteen interviews: to gain some first-hand knowledge of peoples' experiences volunteering with a disability: ten with volunteers with disabilities, three with volunteers without disabilities and three with volunteer coordinators (all without a disability).

Information from national and regional surveys on volunteering and giving suggest that persons with disabilities are underrepresented in volunteer activities. Many people with disabilities experience physical and attitudinal barriers in their daily activities. These same barriers may result in skilled and enthusiastic volunteers with disabilities choosing not to volunteer. It is important that we remove barriers to participation in all aspects of society, especially in emotionally rewarding activities such as volunteering. Volunteering opportunities are particularly important for people with disabilities and other populations that experience barriers because they can alleviate social exclusion. Volunteering also allows individuals who may require assistance or supports for some of their daily activities to be in a position of helping others and develop a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Volunteers who we spoke with told us that they have become accustomed to not being accommodated when they volunteer. Many told us that they take their skills and expertise to organizations that serve people with disabilities because they had a better chance that they would be treated respectfully and that they would have their needs accommodated at those organizations. Some just stopped volunteering.

Attracting Volunteers with Disabilities

Four features stand out in studies of organizations that attract and retain volunteers who have disabilities:

- 1) They are committed to accepting all potential volunteers and the diversity that entails.
- 2) They provide training and supports that enable volunteers with disabilities to participate effectively.
- 3) They are conscious of what accessibility and inclusion entails.
- 4) They actively identify and seek to remove barriers to participation.

The usual barriers to inclusion are often easily removed through proactive planning and simple solutions. **This guidebook provides strategies and resources to make your organization more inclusive in recruitment, training, task development, volunteer support, environment, policies and procedures.** Many useful online resources are provided in the appendix to further support your organization in creating a culture of inclusion.

Background Information

The suggested strategies in the guidebook were developed from a comprehensive scan of literature relating to volunteering by people with disabilities and sixteen interviews: ten with volunteers with disabilities, three with volunteers without disabilities and three with volunteer coordinators (all without a disability). Interestingly, not all of the ten participants who had disabilities self-identify as having a disability.

Definitions of Volunteering and Disability

DEFINING VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers and volunteering are defined in the Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP)ⁱ as:

Persons aged 15 and over who did any activities without pay on behalf of a group or organization, at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. This includes any unpaid help provided to schools, religious organizations, sports or community associations.

Other help activities may also be viewed by some as informal volunteering. The CSGVP defines these activities as:

Helping people on one's own, that is, not through a group or organization, in the 12 months preceding the survey. It includes help given to friends, neighbours and relatives, but excludes help given to a person living in one's household.

Most of the individuals we spoke to agree with this definition although some felt that caring for an aging parent or individual who required extra care because of illness or disability should also be included. One participant provided an alternative view of volunteering as “the [unpaid] assistance that is provided by people to take the burden off of social assistance. It could be taking care of a family member or someone else but because it is not structured it is unrecognized [in current definitions].”ⁱⁱ

The Participation and Activity Limitation (PALS) survey defines volunteer activities as “unpaid work” in the previous twelve months by persons aged 15 and up. The generic definition is followed up with activity specific questions that are described in Table 2: Participation in various types of volunteering by gender for adults with disabilities who volunteered, 2006 (%).

DEFINING DISABILITY

Some of the participants interviewed had a disability but did not self-describe as having a disability. Two of these participants had hearing impairments that would require a degree of accommodation.

ⁱ Vézina M. & Crompton, S. (2012). *Volunteering in Canada*. Stats Can Cat. No.11-008-X. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11638-eng.htm#a2>

ⁱⁱ Participant with a vision impairment, age 52.

One participant used hearing aids to assist with hearing but still had difficulty hearing some frequencies and the other could hear well with one ear. The participant who had acquired deafness in one ear stated that he had felt disabled but no longer did because he had learned that he could still participate in things that were important to him such as music and social activities but had to make sure that he positioned himself in the right place to enable his hearing. Another participant with an episodic back disability acknowledged that he had to choose what activities he could participate in carefully because unrelieved sitting, standing or lifting could cause a flare-up of his back injury which could immobilize him for long periods of time.

Another participant who uses a mobility device, discussed “health-based” definitions of disability and stated that she finds questions on disability surveys that ask about “health conditions” difficult to answer. Although she uses a wheelchair, she feels and is very healthy. Newer definitions of disability such as that of the Canadian Survey on Disability define “disability as the relationship between body function and structure, daily activities . . . who experience a limitation in their daily activities.”ⁱⁱⁱ

These differences in defining, understanding and living with disability illustrate that the focus on what individuals cannot do or of disability as an illness may not be the most productive way to enable accessibility. Individuals that we spoke to are completely capable of participating and, typically, want to participate in activities such as volunteering but are more typically hindered by other peoples’ disabling attitudes and non-inclusive environments that fail to provide flexible options.

Prevalence of Disability in Canada

The most recent statistical information on prevalence of disability in Canada experienced by individuals 15 years of age or older^{iv} was collected in Fall 2012 by Statistics Canada as part of the Canadian Survey on Disability^v. This survey excluded persons living in institutions and thus is not a complete representation of people with disabilities who may live in group homes, senior homes or other care facilities. Prevalence of disability was 13.7% of the population (or 3.8 million). This prevalence was higher in adults aged 45 and older. Half of those with disabilities were classified as having very severe or severe levels of disability.

Age-related disability rates are likely to increase in the next fifteen years as the Baby Boomers enter their retirement years and the proportion of the population aged 65 and older rapidly increases.

Volunteerism Rates in Canada

The CSGVP conducted during 2007 and 2010 with individuals aged 15 and older is one of the most recent national surveys on volunteering in Canada. In 2010, 13.3 million Canadians aged 15 and over (or 47% of the population) volunteered. The survey reveals that while young people have the highest rates of volunteering,

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistics Canada (2013) *Disability in Canada: Initial findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability*.
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>

^{iv} As of May 10, 2011

^v Statistics Canada (2013). *Disability in Canada: Initial findings from the Canadian Survey on Disability*.
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2013002-eng.htm>

the average number of hours volunteered by seniors is twice that of youth (233 hours vs. 130 hours). As the population distribution in Canada continues to shift to an increasingly “older” population in the next 15 years, it is reasonable to assume that seniors will make up an increasing proportion of volunteers and will provide a significant proportion of volunteers hour worked. With age-related disability also expected to increase, it is important that organizations continue to work towards an environment of inclusion that meets the needs of people with disabilities in order to continue to attract and maintain skilled volunteers.

According to the last *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* (PALS) in 2006^{vi}, 34.4% of people with disabilities participated in volunteer activities. If this rate has remained consistent up to the CSVGP then it could be expected that 1.3 million or 10% of volunteers in Canada have a disability.

Factors that Affect Volunteer Rates

Factors that had an effect on volunteering in the CSVGP included:

- employment (volunteerism was lowest by those who were unemployed),
- commuting time (volunteerism was 21% for those with commutes of 30 minutes or less vs. 15% for longer commutes);
- gender (women were more likely to volunteer than men as well as more likely to report that volunteering helped them get a job or start a business); and
- flexibility of work schedule/location (those having greater control in these areas volunteer more).

One limiting factor from this list can be easily accommodated by volunteer-based organizations: time. Many individuals need greater flexibility in when they can volunteer. Finding ways to design tasks so that time becomes more flexible will have a large impact on people with disabilities’ ability to volunteer.

Accommodations could include providing long-term casual volunteer opportunities and saving a volunteer time by enabling them to work off-site. Internet-based technologies make working from any place very easy to accomplish.

Motivations and Activities

MOTIVATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERING

It is a reasonable assumption that people with and without disabilities volunteer for largely similar reasons. Motivations for volunteering were addressed in the CSGVP in which participants were asked about motivations for volunteering at the volunteer’s main organization. As is shown in the following table, the chief motivations for volunteering were contributing to the community and using skills and experiences, while the lowest ranked motivations were improving job opportunities and fulfilling religious obligations or beliefs:

^{vi} Statistics Canada, (2006). Participation and Activity Limitation Survey: Disability in Canada
<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?objId=89-628-X&objType=2&lang=en&limit=0>

Table 1: Reasons for volunteering at the volunteer's main organization

Reasons for Volunteering	% of volunteers
To make a contribution to the community	93
To use skills and experiences	78
Personally affected by the cause the organization supports	59
Friends volunteer	48
To explore one's own strengths	48
To network with or meet people	46
To improve job opportunities	22
To fulfill religious obligations or beliefs	21

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, 2010.

Motivation is not a barrier for people with disability in volunteering; the interest and desire to volunteer is there. The strategies section below will help you better understand and remove the barriers that are keeping motivated volunteers with disabilities from volunteering at your organization.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

It is also not clear if people with disabilities tend to participate in any specific activities with greater frequency than people without disabilities. According to PALS 2006 data, people with disabilities participated in the following volunteer activities:

Table 2: Participation in various types of volunteering by gender for adults with disabilities who volunteered, 2006 (%)

Type of volunteering	Women	Men
Canvassing, campaigning or fundraising	35.7	40.3
Teaching, coaching, providing care or friendly visits through an organization	35.7	36.7
Sitting as an unpaid member of a board or committee	33.3	39.8
Collecting, serving or delivering food or other goods	26.1	21.5
Consulting, executive, office or administrative work	25.0	24.6

Source: Statistics Canada, *2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*

The CSGVP defined activities more discretely which makes direct comparisons between the activity rates from each survey more challenging. The rates for activities in this survey were as follows:

Table 3: Volunteer Activities Carried Out, 2010

Type of volunteer activity	% of volunteers
Fundraising	45
Organizing events	44
Sitting on a committee or board	33
Teaching or mentoring	30
Collecting, serving or delivering food or other goods	28
Counselling or providing advice	28
Office work, bookkeeping	23
Coaching, refereeing or officiating	18
Providing health care or support	19

Type of volunteer activity	% of volunteers
Driving	17
Environmental protection	18
Maintenance or repair	16
Other activities	15
Canvassing	14
First-aid, fire-fighting or search and rescue	6

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010*.

Perceived Benefits of Volunteering

The *Bridging the Gap* Study^{vii} of volunteering in Canada of 2010 examined trends in volunteering across the country. The most highly rated opportunities from volunteering were related to emotional rewards such as feeling good, supporting or helping others while lower rated opportunities related to enhancing employment, skills and training. It is important that the rewards of volunteering be available to *all* individuals and making sure that volunteers feel the reward of volunteering is a great way to retain their skilled help.

Volunteering is perceived as particularly important for people with disabilities because it can alleviate social exclusion especially for individuals with severe or cognitive impairments who are typically the most marginalized of individuals with disabilities. Volunteering also allows individuals who may require assistance or supports for some of their daily activities to be in a position of helping others, which can help them develop a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Views from our Interviews

In order to build a greater understanding of volunteering for people with disabilities, we conducted sixteen interviews: sixteen interviews: ten with volunteers with disabilities, three with volunteers without disabilities and three with volunteer coordinators (all without a disability).

Making Accommodations

Two coordinators discussed placement of volunteers within their organizations while the third chose to discuss the branch of her work that places individuals with intellectual disabilities served by her organization at other organizations for paid and volunteer positions. All coordinators identified they did not actively recruit volunteers with disability but had real life stories about accommodating someone with a disability. The solutions often lie in redefining tasks and being flexible in determining how roles can be carried out. Ideally, flexible options and task definitions will already be in place at your organization to make fitting a task to a volunteer relatively easy to do. If not, however, then flexible options can be relatively easily developed.

^{vii} Volunteer Canada (2010). *Bridging the Gap. Enriching the volunteer experience to build a better future for our communities*. <http://volunteer.ca/content/bridging-gap>

Organizations have to be willing to take the first step of finding a good fit. One volunteer who is blind noted that she has experienced unwillingness in organizations to help find a good fit for her skills:

So often people just say it's not a good fit or that they need someone who is able bodied. I think this is sad because we talk so much about how we want people with disabilities involved and included in the community. Many people with disabilities are more than willing to volunteer but, don't have the same opportunities due to a lack of accommodation or need to problem solve what that would look like.

SUPPORT INCLUSIVE IDEALS

The frontline aspect of volunteer work poses an additional consideration for making volunteering accessible. When “fit” with service recipients is determined, it is important that disability not affect selection and coordinators must also consider any barriers and discriminatory attitudes that the volunteer with a disability may face when working directly with the public.

I have been in situations where a coordinator has been more than willing to support me in a front line support or mentoring role and parents have refused to have me work with their kids on the basis of my disability.

Be prepared to stand by volunteers who have disabilities and come against negative attitudes in the populations that your organization serves. If a discriminatory attitude becomes a barrier then work to remove the discriminatory attitude and not the volunteer with a disability.

Valuing Every Contribution

Sometimes it can be challenging to differentiate between using a volunteer's skills and not paying for labour. Always have a clear definition of tasks for paid employees and unpaid employees. Do not expect people with disabilities to be content being offered an unpaid position for a role that is normally a paid position. One interviewee cited that she often volunteers for roles that people who are able bodied are paid to do. Volunteers with disabilities discussed feeling like their labour wasn't wanted or that

“We had a volunteer who was deaf but the role is mostly one-to-one peer counselling. We didn't have an [American Sign Language] interpreter so we offered her an administrative support role and she accepted it Another volunteer we had was blind and she wasn't really comfortable being alone with strangers. We shifted the role for her so that she could do group counselling and support.”—Volunteer coordinator at student centre

“We had someone apply who used a scooter we adapted the volunteer training to be wheelchair accessible. She was really interested in mentoring a child with a disability. We didn't have children with a disability so we referred her to an organization that would have the actual population she was interested in working with.”—Volunteer coordinator with Big Sisters/Big Brothers

organizations wouldn't appreciate their help because they would need accommodations. There was a sense that accommodation was too much to ask for a volunteer position because volunteering is viewed as a luxury rather than a necessity. Even simple accommodations like a volunteer partner seem to volunteers as an imposition. For example, a volunteer with an episodic disability said, "I don't think that an agency would support me as a volunteer because they need someone reliable to care for pets." She would like to volunteer on a regular basis but understands that there may be a day when her disability will prevent her from being able to work. This participant describes her best case volunteer scenario this way:

Having a support worker or partner that could fill in when I can't go would be great too. Where one of us can do the job but sometimes it would be both of us together . . . enables me to feel that I'm not short-changing them and that I'm doing my job as best I can.

If your organization makes it clear that diversity is welcome then volunteers will be more comfortable asking for accommodations that you may not yet provide.

Barriers to Volunteering: Simple Supports

Disability or disability accommodation was not always the person with a disability's only or biggest barrier to volunteering: struggles with transportation, the need to find or privilege paid work, and time commitments also came up as barriers. Transportation came up over and over with many of the people we spoke to about barriers to volunteering. People cited difficulty finding and accessing accessible transport, as well as cost and time. In Toronto, for example, public transit is very unreliable for people with disabilities and disability-specific transportation is also extremely slow at busy times of the day.

Transportation and general access is a big one. If places were willing to pay for your transportation this would help out. I think it would help to be flexible on time.—Wheelchair user

Developing tasks that can be completed at home, being flexible about volunteering schedules and establishing virtual volunteer pathways or enabling participation through conferencing software can alleviate some of the challenges of transportation. Many tasks are already done using a computer, so virtual volunteering is not as challenging to develop as it may sound. Anyone with a computer, relevant software and an Internet connection has the capacity to be a virtual volunteer with your organization.

When asked about ways to better support or make it easier for people with disabilities to volunteer, one participant who is blind said:

JOIN is a good example of such an organization in that they reach out to people with disabilities to volunteer and they provide orientation, transportation and support throughout the process. At the same time, because they are associated as a disability environment . . . it limits the volunteer. We need mainstream organizations that use volunteers with disabilities in their day to day activities; we need to take away that segregation. There's too much of a focus on the disability lens and not on an inclusion lens.

Organizations that do not specifically serve people with disabilities need to be particularly forthcoming with inclusion statements. All organizations will be better able to support people with disability in volunteering roles if they: focus on inclusion throughout the activities of the organization, provide flexible time commitments, provide flexible volunteering arrangements (e.g. co-volunteering), provide sensitivity training for volunteers and staff, take time to find best fit and focus on skills, and provide flexible task options.

Strategies to Enable Volunteerism among People with Disabilities

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting. Providing flexible options and making accessibility an expectation rather than an afterthought are important aspects of developing a culture of inclusion within your organization. It isn't enough to be inclusive when it's requested. Inclusion and accessibility should be part of your organization without someone having to ask for it.

“There was an issue once where I went to volunteer, they said it wasn't a problem I was blind. I showed up and it turns out they couldn't accommodate me. It really deflates a person's worth, because in volunteering there's this sense that every little bit helps but, when the little bit you are willing to give isn't seen as valuable enough to allow for, it's hard. “

Making your organization inclusive may require changes in many areas: recruitment, training, task development, volunteer support, environment, policies and procedures. Many of these changes are inexpensive to implement and there are a variety of resources already developed to help your organization become more inclusive.

Many resources are available to address questions and provide tips on including volunteers with disabilities and developing a culture of inclusion within your organization. For example, Imagine Canada provides a variety of resources such as *Simple Solutions* (http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/manual_pei_council_eng.pdf) which guides NGOs through ways to remove barriers with the organization. Strategies below are divided into recruitment, training, task development, volunteer support and organization. While resources are referred to in the

text, you can also review resources listed in the Appendix.

Strategies for Recruitment

Words as well as imagery and accessibility of your recruiting message have an impact on your ability to recruit volunteers with disabilities, as the following quotation from a senior volunteer with an episodic disability highlights:

I wanted to volunteer for their organization but I looked on their web site and it says right on there “Must be able to commit to regularly scheduled days.” They don't want you if you can't make a time commitment. I want to commit but some days are good and some days are bad. I understand that they want to schedule people but I don't know why they have to be so inflexible. – Senior volunteer with an episodic disability

The following table highlights strategies to help you target your message to people with disabilities and better engage them to volunteer.

General Strategies for Inclusive Recruitment	Examples & Tips
Advertise that you are looking for volunteers of all abilities	<i>We are an equal opportunity organization and welcome volunteers with diverse abilities.</i>
Use diverse imagery within your advertising and media materials, such as those available at www.photoability.net/ a paid database of stock photos of people with disabilities.	Use images that show diverse individuals in empowered roles. Do not use images that convey people with disabilities in a negative or dependent way.
Actively recruit members of the community with disabilities by networking with organizations that support people with disabilities	Organizations that serve individuals with disabilities can help you broadcast your recruitment message and they can provide you with guidance on how to make your organization more inclusive.
Advertise in media/locations (virtual and physical) that are frequented by people with disabilities and ask them to help you reach people on their listservs, newsgroups, social media and email lists	<i>Abilities</i> magazine is one place where you can place targeted advertisements. Use an internet search of social media pages to find local groups with a disability focus like the <i>Blind Sailing Association of Canada</i> which keeps a Facebook page
State on your website that you provide off-site opportunities for volunteers with access to a computer and/or the Internet	<i>We have flexible volunteering options that will enable you to volunteer at your own pace on site or at home.</i>
Enable volunteers to apply online through your website or via email	A simple email contact or reply form on your webpage is a great way to turn a view of your web page into a recruited volunteer
If you must have an application form, make sure that it is accessible and can be completed on a computer	You can learn about making accessible Word and PDF forms at http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/
Most individuals who do not use social media know someone who does; do use social media to reach a broad audience for your recruitment campaigns even if you think your target participants don't use it	Make social media a planned part of your communication strategy and use it to actively recruit individuals with disabilities

STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA MATERIALS

Media materials refer to all of your communications, not just recruitment.

Strategies for Inclusive Media Materials	Examples & Tips
Check that your website meets web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) so that your website can be Perceived , Operated , Understood and is Robust (POUR)	Use free site checkers such as www.achecker.ca or http://wave.webaim.org/ to help identify accessibility issues. Learn how to make an accessible POUR website at http://webaim.org/articles/pour/
Make sure that all media materials (website, social media, posters, advertisements, other media opportunities) reflect that you are an inclusive organization	Include statements: <i>We are an equal opportunity organization and welcome volunteers with diverse abilities.</i> Include images of diverse volunteers and make sure that you provide alternatives to information in images or in audio (e.g. alt text for images and transcripts of audio)
Use plain language in communication materials	Plain language helps people everyone understand your message quickly and with greater ease
If you produce your own videos, use free captioning and description software to make your videos accessible	Visit http://www.dcmp.org/learning-center to learn how. Try free captioning and description software such as magpie http://ncam.wgbh.org/invent_build/web_multimedia/tools-guidelines/magpie or as available on Google's You Tube https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en
Not all social media is accessible for people with disabilities so critical information should also be placed on your accessible website	Make your accessible web page the place where you also post very important messages and announcements that you send via social media
Get familiar with availability of third-party accessible interfaces like Easy Chirp for twitter (www.easychirp.com) and location of accessibility information for social media sites such as Facebook, Google+ Hangouts and YouTube if you want volunteers to use these tools	If you want volunteers to help manage your social media messages, then you can make the task inclusive by knowing some of the accessible interfaces for social media

Strategies for Training

When you prepare or revise your training materials do so with inclusion in mind. POUR principles for web pages can be a useful framework:

Perceivable: Can the information be perceived? For example, does an image have a description? Does audio have a transcript or caption?

Operable: Can the material be accessed in different ways? For example, is a hardcopy also available in digital formats?

Understandable: Have you written the material using plain language principles? Have you conveyed information in a variety of ways such as images and text explanations?

Robust: Have you kept up with new technologies and format that may enhance the accessibility of your training materials? For example, converting all materials to accessible digital document will ensure longevity of your materials.

Strategies for Inclusive Training Materials	Examples & Tips
Take advantage of the flexibility of electronic text	Digital or electronic text is easily read aloud by a screen reader, enlarged, converted to Braille, adjusted for colour and contrast as well as shared
Take advantage of freely available and inexpensive audio and video conferencing solutions to enable remote participation in training activities. Augment face-to-face training with a remote online training option	Tools such as Skype and Google+ Hangouts can enable real-time and video capacity and have free versions with extensive and accessible features
Use plain language in training materials. Plain language helps everyone to understand your message and is especially helpful to people with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities or people with a different first language	There are some free online training resources available from the US because the government has passed plain language legislation: http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/plainlanguage.html NIH offers a free plain language internet-based training course: https://plainlanguage.nih.gov/CBTs/PlainLanguage/login.asp
Convert training materials to accessible digital formats. Digital documents are usually more accessible and support virtual training activities	Visit http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/ to learn how to make accessible digital documents.
Use web-based training materials and communication as a way to enable volunteers to learn at their own pace	Not all volunteers learn in the same way or at the same speed. Being flexible about training by providing resources online makes it easier for volunteers to learn in the way most comfortable for them
Create simple training videos. Multi-media is a great way to provide information in several formats to support diverse ways of learning	Use free tools like Magpie or Google’s auto-caption tool on YouTube to easily make your video accessible. Make sure that any important visual information is described in the audio or in video descriptions

Strategies for Task Development

Bring flexibility into as many aspects of volunteering as is possible. The manner in which an organization describes and develops volunteer tasks can have a dramatic effect on a person with a disability's ability to volunteer. If you have flexible concepts of tasks, then these tasks can be tailored to fit peoples' skills and be shared more easily between volunteers. Review tasks and then divide them into essential and non-essential functions/skills to better enable flexible deployment of tasks and accommodations of different skill sets.

Strategies for Inclusive Task Development	Examples & Tips
Do not assume that someone cannot do a task, instead consider how it could be modified so that someone can do it.	For example, an individual who is blind could teach a skill to a group of children with the help of a sighted person to manage physical supervision
Consider what tasks or parts of tasks can be carried out by volunteers in their home and reserve those tasks for volunteers who prefer remote volunteering	Many tasks can be accomplished on a computer. How many of these tasks must be done at the office? Learn more about virtual volunteering programs at http://www.serviceleader.org/virtual
Make sure that you advertise that you have remote or at-home volunteering opportunities	<i>We provide diverse volunteering options to suit your time and travel abilities. Volunteering from home is one of the many options we offer.</i>
Support at-home volunteers with remote training and meeting options	Remote volunteering doesn't have to be isolating. For those who cannot easily come in then video conferencing with Skype or similar software is a good alternative
Evaluate meeting demands for volunteer roles and develop flexible options	Consider online board meetings or conference calls to reduce travel
Ask potential volunteers what they would like to do for your organization, the skills they would like to utilize and their goals in volunteering	Avoid focusing on what volunteers cannot do or asking what is "wrong" with them
Be flexible in how you allow people to volunteer and the number of volunteers you will assign to a task	When possible, create roles with flexible timelines or opportunities to participate remotely or with a support worker; if possible seek out volunteers with disability to specifically do these jobs
Create an online task list and enable your volunteers with episodic disabilities (or other schedule challenges) to learn about and select tasks when they are able to complete them	A simple system such as Dropbox can allow you to posts tasks for "pick-up" by virtual volunteers

Strategies for Volunteer Support

Many supports for volunteers with disabilities are very easy to develop and offer. Many relate to understanding what the volunteer needs to be comfortable in the volunteer environment or to help offset the costs of volunteering.

Transportation and general access is a big one. If places were willing to pay for your transportation this would help out. I think it would help to be flexible on time.—Wheelchair user

Strategies for Volunteer Supports	Examples & Tips
Offer opportunities for people to volunteer in groups or pairs	Some volunteers will be more comfortable with a companion who knows them and their needs Consider how your organization can benefit from supported volunteering. Information is available at www.chances4volunteering.org/toolkit/
Offer flexible time commitments and/or partnering arrangements that will enable individuals with episodic disabilities to volunteer	Allow volunteers to work in pairs on tasks that would normally be carried out by one person to enable those with episodic disabilities to make the required time commitment
Ask your volunteers what you can do to support their volunteering commitment or learn about their volunteering interests	Have regularly scheduled reviews to make sure that a good fit has been achieved and maintained
Provide access to refreshments	Let volunteers know that they can access these items
Provide an accessible space to secure belongings	Check guidelines for built environments for ideas
Provide parking or travel stipends	Consider any impact stipends may have on an individual's social support payments
Provide appropriate disposals for needles	
Ask your volunteers about barriers they are experiencing and look for simple and creative solutions	Have semi-annual reviews to find out about new needs

The Volunteer Coordinators we spoke to said that often when volunteers with disabilities' strengths were highlighted and support needs identified, it was easy to find a job they could do. The issue was often not accommodating the disability but creating an environment where someone felt comfortable enough to disclose or talk about their disability.

Strategies for Your Organization

Think of how you can build a culture of inclusion within your organization. Making changes to the policies, procedures and environment of your organization can foster inclusion and attitudes related to inclusion. Remember the ideal way to be accessible is to have an expectation of accessibility and inclusion in all that your organization does.

Strategies for Your Organization	Examples & Tips
Seek to have people with disabilities represented at all levels of your organization	Look for barriers to participation from the board to the frontline and recruit to fill gaps in representation
Continually set goals for inclusion and evaluate success of meeting inclusion goals and supporting diversity	One goal might be to convert all training material to accessible formats; another might be to remove all physical barriers
Have all volunteers complete an exit interview to learn more about the volunteer experience	Ask what your organization can do to support volunteers
Audit your location/built environment for accessibility	Use checklists such as those published by the Ontario government to support accessibility legislation www.mcsgovonca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/making_buildings_accessible.aspx
Prepare an inclusive attitudinal environment by providing disability sensitivity and inclusion training to paid staff, volunteers and new volunteers	Learn about common myths and facts about employing people with disabilities at http://www.mcsgovonca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility/understanding_accessibility/common_myths.aspx
Develop and implement policies and procedures that support inclusion and demonstrate a	One organization we learned about would only schedule or agree to meetings at barrier-free

Strategies for Your Organization	Examples & Tips
commitment to inclusion and diversity	locations
Develop an accessible procurement policy that requires that any device, software or media purchased by your organization be accessible except where no reasonable alternative is available	Learn more at http://www.mcsgovonca/en/mcss/publications/accessON/accessible_procurement/toc.aspx
Develop a policy to train staff to produce accessible digital documents even when the intended recipient does not have a disability	Guidance for making accessible documents in most common platforms is available at http://adodidrcocadca/
Provide sensitivity training to all paid and unpaid staff	For example, sensitivity training is the law in Ontario and many free resources are available such as this customer service course: http://www.mcsgov.on.ca/en/serve-ability/

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<http://www.ivr.org.uk/images/stories/Institute-of-Volunteering-Research/Migrated-Resources/Documents/F/fullreport.pdf>

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