



AIDS
Vancouver

**Volunteer
Handbook**

Acknowledgments

AIDS Vancouver would like to thank all the volunteers who have so generously given their time and energy in the service of others

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Production of this resource has been made possible through a financial contribution from the AIDS Community Action Program, Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policies of Health Canada.

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION TO AIDS VANCOUVER

Agency Mission Statement

AIDS Vancouver exists to alleviate individual and collective vulnerability to HIV and AIDS through care and support, education, advocacy and research.

History of AIDS Vancouver

Founded in 1983 as the Vancouver AIDS Society, AIDS Vancouver (AV) was the first community-based AIDS organization to be established in western Canada.

Our agency was originally set up to provide care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS and to educate the public regarding HIV prevention and health promotion. As the epidemic changed, AIDS Vancouver developed further programs to meet an increasing demand for services and education. As well, AV took on the additional role of advocate for the establishment of HIV/AIDS policies and strategies within all levels of government.

AIDS Vancouver's programs and services are provided by approximately 25 staff and 200 volunteers. A complete introduction to our agency is available on our agency website at www.aidsvancouver.org

As a non-profit organization, AIDS Vancouver is supported financially through a variety of sources: the provincial government through Vancouver Coastal Health; the federal government; individual donors including business and corporate funders; special events and fund development projects; and philanthropic foundations.

AIDS Vancouver Statement on Volunteerism

AIDS Vancouver values volunteerism. We provide meaningful volunteer opportunities in order to achieve the mission of the agency. Paid and unpaid staff work together in an environment of respect, inclusiveness, diversity and commitment.

AIDS Vancouver Diversity Statement

We are people living with and people affected by HIV and AIDS. We the membership, volunteers and staff of AV endeavor to reflect the diversity of all communities infected/affected by HIV and AIDS. This includes individuals of any age, race, religion, culture, ability, economic level and health status. We are men, women and transgendered. We are of different sexual orientations. We value this diversity. We are dedicated to creating respectful, supportive environments and expect that all who come to AV will extend respect to all those they meet here. We at AV act to promote the inclusion of all.

At AV we do not support the practice or tolerance of discrimination or harassment against any staff, volunteer or service user. Harassment can include: written or verbal abuse; threats; unwelcome remarks; inappropriate jokes or suggestions; offensive behaviours or gestures; inappropriate physical contact; and vandalism of personal property.

Volunteering at AV

VOLUNTEERING AT AIDS VANCOUVER

Welcome From Volunteer Resources

Welcome to volunteering at AIDS Vancouver. As a volunteer, you join a team of 200 individuals and various organizations that respond to the on-going needs of HIV/AIDS community. Your valuable contribution helps us to meet our commitment to provide care, support, advocacy and education. We hope your volunteer involvement offers you the experience you are seeking. At AV we are committed to involving you in the development and delivery of our work. We recognize and appreciate your skills, generosity and commitment. We hope you come with enthusiasm, energy, and a willingness to learn and be part of a team.

Defining a Volunteer

Volunteers work in many areas of our organization to enhance the quality and delivery of our programs and services. As a volunteer you have the right to be given a meaningful assignment, to be treated the same way as paid staff, and to receive appropriate training, on-going support, supervision and recognition for your contributions. Throughout the period of your commitment of personal service, time and effort, you in return agree to perform and meet your duties, be accountable for your involvement, and support the mandate of our agency.

To volunteer at AIDS Vancouver you must be:

- 19 years of age or older;
- able to meet a six month to one year commitment;
- have a legal immigration status in Canada;
- in successful recovery from addiction(s) for 12 consecutive months if coming from an addiction/ substance use background;
- willing to complete a criminal record search if requested.

Status of a Volunteer

A volunteer placement is assigned one of the following levels of involvement: active; inactive; on leave; resigned; or terminated.

- **Active**
An active volunteer is one who is assigned a placement(s) and is actively volunteering.

- **Inactive**

An inactive volunteer is one who is assigned to a program(s) but is on authorized leave from active volunteering for a maximum of 6 months.

Volunteers who remain inactive after 6 months of leave are contacted twice by their assigned Supervisor and/or Volunteer Resources. At this point, volunteers who do not request additional authorized leave or who do not return to active volunteering are removed from the volunteer list. Volunteers who are inactive may continue to receive agency mail and information from Volunteer Resources.

- **Resigned**

A volunteer who has decided to end their volunteer placement(s) with the organization.

- **On Leave**

Volunteers may go on leave for up to one year. This leave may be taken at the volunteer's discretion for any reason including bereavement, study, illness, stress and burnout.

- **Terminated**

A volunteer who has been asked to leave their volunteer placement(s) with the organization.

Status of a Practicum Student

Practicum Students fulfill an agreed upon and scheduled work/practical placement arranged between a specific Program Coordinator, the interested student and their academic institute. This placement allows the agency to enhance its services as well as furthering the skills and professional experience of the applicant. The placement must satisfy the student's academic requirements as well as meet a current practicum opportunity at AV. Steps for student placement include:

1. The interested student contacts Human Resources at 604-893-2227 or the specific Program Coordinator to inquire about potential placements.

2. The academic institute provides relevant documents in terms of placement expectations and requirements.
3. The interested student forwards a completed student practicum application form and resume to the Program Coordinator.
4. An interview between the agency's assigned practicum placement Supervisor and the student is arranged.
5. The Staff Supervisor and student arrange a schedule which includes on-going tasks, training, supervision and support for the duration of the placement.
6. An evaluation process is undertaken at the end of the placement.

Criminal Record Checks

You may be asked to complete a criminal record check in order to be placed with various programs. Your Program Supervisor will provide you with information and details regarding the process should it be required.

Training at AIDS Vancouver

Agency Orientation and Education is provided to all paid and unpaid staff. These sessions are mandatory for all AIDS Vancouver volunteers unless negotiated otherwise. Suitability for particular programs will continue to be assessed through program specific training and on the job orientation.

After you have successfully completed your screening and placement process with the Volunteer Resources Coordinator and your Program Supervisor(s) you will:

- Be assigned your volunteer shifts and schedule;
- Complete any specialized or program specific training;
- Be registered to complete our next scheduled Agency Orientation and Education session;
- Receive on-going support, supervision and follow up from your Program Supervisor.

Assigned sessions are not optional. The HIV/AIDS Orientation and Education session is designed to acquaint individuals with various issues regarding the agency, HIV/AIDS and related issues. These sessions will provide you with:

- A BIG welcome to the AIDS Vancouver team;
- An understanding of AIDS Vancouver's structure, operations, policies and procedures;
- A better understanding of confidentiality, ethics/values, boundaries, diversity and conflict;
- An overview of AIDS Vancouver's framework and guiding philosophies;
- An understanding of the local and global realities of the HIV/AIDS epidemic;
- A comprehensive overview of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis ABC;
- An understanding of what it is like to be living with HIV;
- An opportunity to strengthen and build new relationships, skills and knowledge to assist you during your volunteer contribution; and
- An opportunity to meet, learn and have fun with fellow volunteers and staff.

HIV/AIDS Orientation and Education provides an opportunity for new volunteers to build relationships with their peers and learn more about the organization. For this reason, it is unlikely that an individual would be exempt from this training. Exceptions might occur where the Program Supervisor and/or Volunteer Resources Coordinator agree the individual would not benefit from the training and therefore this requirement may be waived or deferred. Please note, all Support Program volunteers must complete both the HIV/AIDS Orientation and Education session and Support Programs specialized training before they can provide services to clients.

Volunteers are encouraged to attend any on-going agency in-services and trainings offered to AIDS Vancouver volunteers. These trainings can provide volunteers with information, knowledge and skills to enhance their personal and volunteer experience while at AIDS Vancouver.

Time Commitment

Volunteers are requested to meet a six month to one year commitment of 4 hours per week, unless otherwise negotiated with a Program Supervisor and/or Volunteer Resources Coordinator.

Missed Shifts

For any absence, a volunteer is required to notify his/her Supervisor before the scheduled work time or as soon as possible thereafter.

Shift Commitment and Schedule Changes

Becoming a volunteer with AV means making a commitment to be available as agreed upon, except in cases of illness or emergency.

Lateness or absenteeism results in inconvenience and reduction or loss of services to clients for which volunteers are so vital. For this reason, AV staff and service users depend on volunteers to honour their commitments to the agency. Please consult with your Program Supervisor if you require a change in your schedule or commitment.

If a volunteer is repeatedly absent without prior notification or reason, the Program Supervisor will contact you to determine your continued placement or potential resignation. If you are unable to be reached, your Program Supervisor will resign you from the position/placement.

Shift Supervision and Support

During your volunteer shift you will have a paid staff person to refer to for on-going support and supervision. This person is referred to as your Staff Supervisor.

Requesting a Change of Status or Assignment

It is recommended that a volunteer desiring a change of status or assignment discuss the desired change with their Program Supervisor and/or Volunteer Resources Coordinator. At least one month's notice of leave or change of interest or ability to commit to the program or event is requested. If reassignment occurs, all necessary steps will be taken: screening; placement; orientation; program/event specific training; and any other components that are required for the new position.

Volunteer Forms

Volunteer Resources provides the following forms for recording purposes: time sheet; mileage reimbursement and client notes. Please see your Program Supervisor if you require these or any other forms. Volunteer application packages are available with Volunteer Resources or on our agency website.

The Volunteer Bulletin (Newsletter)

The Volunteer Bulletin is produced quarterly and mailed out to all active volunteers. This newsletter is a medium for the communication of information regarding volunteerism, HIV/AIDS and related issues, volunteer activities and AV organizational information. It is also a vehicle for the development and appreciation of the volunteer community of AV. Volunteers are encouraged to forward submissions. To do so, please contact Volunteer Resources for our editorial policy.

Evaluation

AIDS Vancouver facilitates various forms of evaluation to ensure that we are meeting our agency goals and objectives. Evaluation of volunteer involvement could take place in the following forms:

- **Group Evaluation:**
Volunteer Resources completes an annual evaluation of all AV volunteers. Each year volunteers receive a survey asking about your volunteer experience and involvement at the agency.

- **Individual Evaluation:**
A performance evaluation of your involvement may be facilitated upon request and/or may be a scheduled protocol within your program/department. Please ask your Program Supervisor.

- **Program Evaluation:**
AV welcomes your feedback regarding the program(s) you volunteer in. If you would like to share your thoughts and experiences, please ask your Program Supervisor for further details.

Practicum Students will complete an evaluation process that fulfills the requirements of their academic institute as well as their placement within AV. The assigned Staff Supervisor is to forward a copy of that evaluation to Volunteer Resources.

AGENCY PHILOSOPHIES, VALUES AND PROCEDURES

Privacy and Information Policy

AIDS Vancouver respects and upholds an individual's right to privacy and to protection of his or her personal information. AIDS Vancouver is committed to ensuring compliance with the *BC Privacy Protection Act* and the *Canadian Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. For more information please refer to AIDS Vancouver's Privacy Policy located on our website: www.aidsvancouver.org

Confidentiality

AIDS Vancouver respects the right to privacy and honors the confidentiality of current, former and prospective: service users; volunteers; board members; members; donors; sponsors; and paid staff.

All employees, volunteers, students, board members, and other individuals with access to confidential and privileged information are required to sign a policy on confidentiality before commencing their involvement at AV. Please refer to your signed confidentiality agreement for more information.

Confidential Information

At AIDS Vancouver confidential information includes but is not limited to the following:

- HIV status;
- identity;
- the fact that an individual is a current, former or prospective service user of AV;
- diagnosis or medical condition;
- family relations;
- sexual orientation;
- personal contact information.

Unless authorized by your Program Supervisor, you will be restricted from accessing the following records:

- financial;
- personnel;
- union/management;
- client;
- contracts.

Disclosure of Information

It is important to consult with your Program Supervisor before releasing any information. Aside from sharing essential information with those people involved in our continued work at AIDS Vancouver, there are four limits to confidentiality or ways in which information may be released:

1. Upon court order or as required by law;
2. Upon written authorization of the client;
3. Suspicion or direct disclosure of child abuse;
4. Harm to oneself or others.

Equipment and Resources

Direct Services Office – 1107 Seymour Street, Vancouver

- Building Access – is available between 9AM and 5PM. The main switchboard phone number is 893-2201 and the fax number is 893-2205.
- Transportation and parking – meter parking is available. Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation and commuting costs.
- Lunches can be stored in the refrigerator on site. Coffee and tea are also available.
- Washrooms – are located on the first floor.
- Computers are available for volunteer work-related use.
- Photocopier is located in the library. All photocopiers require a number code and are for work related matters only. Please see your Program Supervisor for codes.

Administrative Offices – 2006 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver

- Building Access – is available between 9AM and 5PM. The main switchboard phone number is 893-2201 and the fax number is 893-2211.
- Transportation and parking – street parking is available. Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation and commuting costs.
- Lunches can be stored in the refrigerator on site. Coffee and tea are also available.
- Washrooms – are located on the same floor.

- Computers are available for volunteer work-related use.
- Photocopier is located in the Supply Room. All photocopiers require a number code and are for work related matters only. Please see your Program Supervisor for codes.

Gayway - 913 Davie, Street, Vancouver

- Building Access – is available between 10AM and 4:30PM, Monday to Friday, additional access arranged as needed. The main switchboard phone number is 682-3900 and the fax number is 682-3988.
- Transportation and parking – meter parking is available. Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation and commuting costs.
- Lunches can be stored in the refrigerator on site. Coffee and tea are also available.
- Washrooms – are located on the same floor.
- The photocopies and computers are available for volunteer work-related use.

Conflict Resolution/Grievances

All complaints/concerns regarding your volunteer involvement at AIDS Vancouver should be addressed in a respectful and timely manner. A volunteer with a complaint/concern should attempt to settle the issue as quickly as possible with the appropriate AIDS Vancouver staff member, or volunteer. If you feel that resolution has not been achieved, please contact the Volunteer Resources Coordinator.

Dismissal/Resignation

Under normal circumstances, where policies, procedures, or professional practices are ignored or contravened, progressive discipline of volunteers is implemented. Steps in this process may include: verbal warning; written warning; invitation for discussion and positive resolution; and possible dismissal.

Professional Conduct

Professional relationships among employees, volunteers and service users are based on respect and mutual interest in service. When working together at AV, it is important to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. In order to facilitate meeting our agency's goals and objectives, AV discourages both paid and

unpaid staff from pursuing romantic and/or sexual relationships with each other, and with AV clients. Romantic and/or sexual relationships between supervisors and those they supervise, as well as volunteers and those they serve, are particularly discouraged. Should a relationship develop that may compromise the work of the agency or lead to a potential conflict of interest, appropriate Supervisors are to be notified for guidance.

Service Users as Volunteers

AV encourages and supports the participation of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS at all levels of the organization. As such, service users at AV may apply to become volunteers and may be accepted as volunteers provided they are able to place the needs of those they are serving above their own personal needs. In the event that a service user acting as a volunteer is unable to do this, the volunteer may be asked by the Volunteer Resources Coordinator to go on leave or resign as a volunteer. This will not affect their status as a service user. The Volunteer Resources Coordinator in consultation with the service user determines when he/she might be ready to again assume his/her volunteer responsibilities.

References

Volunteer Resources and/or Program Supervisors provide both written and verbal references for practicum students and/or volunteers. A request and consent of the student/volunteer is required prior to providing a reference. Reference letters will reflect your contribution to the agency.

Agency Spokesperson/Media Relations

The Executive Director deals with all media requests and issues. If you receive a call from the media it must be directed through to your Program Supervisor.

Occupational Health and Safety

Health and safety refers to physical safety and health related to the workplace. Verbal and written health and safety concerns are directed to the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. Volunteers may submit concerns via their Program Supervisor to the Committee. Contact your Program Supervisor for agency forms, policies and procedures.

Personal Safety and Liability

At AIDS Vancouver, we are committed to providing a safe and healthful environment for our volunteers. Our commitment includes providing the proper tools and equipment, purchasing necessary safety equipment, affording insurance coverage, and defining important safety rules. Our commitment to safety also requires active participation by volunteers and staff. You can help assure your own safety by performing your volunteer tasks in a safe manner and by relying on common sense to protect yourself and others from injury. Your Program Supervisor will inform you of any safety rules in your volunteer area. Contact your Program Supervisor for agency policies and procedures.

Accident prevention is our goal, so please report any hazardous conditions that you may see to your Program Supervisor.

Responding to a Critical Situation

If you witness or are involved in a critical situation at AV, inform your Program Supervisor or a paid staff person immediately. Volunteers are not responsible for intervening, mediating or handling potentially harmful or critical situations. If in the absence of paid staff support, you think your safety is at risk, call 911 immediately for police intervention.

Incident/Accident Reports: What is the Process at AV?

Immediately report incidents including accidents, injuries and property damage to your Supervisor who will provide you with a form. An incident report should be completed and forwarded to your Program Supervisor when there is a situation which presents a threat of or actual danger to employees, volunteers, clients or visitors, and/or which results in damage to or theft of property of AIDS Vancouver or AIDS Vancouver employees, volunteers, clients or visitors.

Dress Code

Employees and volunteers are expected to dress in a manner that appropriately reflects their job and professional responsibilities. These expectations vary from position to position. Dress is informed by the community-based values inherent to AIDS Vancouver, including the valuing of diversity. Individual cleanliness is a priority in all positions.

Scent Policy

The smell of perfume or other heavily scented hair care and personal care products can be distressing to those who are ill. In addition, there are also individuals who are allergic to fragrance. At AV we respectfully request that all staff and volunteers voluntarily refrain from using or wearing heavily scented products. Individuals can use their own common sense and judgment when it comes to identifying products that may be problematic.

Smoking

In accordance with City of Vancouver by-laws, smoking is prohibited inside buildings. All smoking must take place outside of the building, away from entrances.

Alcohol

Although alcohol is not an illegal substance, it can interfere with professional relationships and the working environment. Volunteers are asked to not be under the influence of alcohol when volunteering for AV.

Unauthorized Drugs

Volunteers are not to manufacture, distribute, consume or possess illegal drugs while volunteering for the society. A person applying to volunteer with a history of problematic substance use must have been in successful recovery and seeking support for at least twelve consecutive months.

Gifts

Fees and honorariums must be discussed and agreed upon with your Program Supervisor prior to service offered. No money is to be exchanged between a volunteer and client.

Reimbursement

AIDS Vancouver does not provide bus tickets or taxi fare expenses, unless authorized by a Manager or Program Supervisor. Delivery drivers for AIDS Vancouver Grocery will receive mileage reimbursement based on the mileage rate indicated in the Community Sub-Sector agreement. Mileage sheets must be recorded as specified and be forwarded for monthly reimbursement. Mileage records must be forwarded to the appropriate Program Supervisor no later than 10 days following the preceding month.

Theft

Theft of property belonging to the AIDS Vancouver employees, volunteers or clients is a criminal offense and will be dealt with promptly and professionally.

Building Access/Security

Your Program Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that appropriate building security procedures are being followed to protect staff, clients, volunteers and property.

Staff are expected to be knowledgeable about and to carry out specific procedures regarding building security. Volunteers are also required to notify their Program Supervisor of identified security problems.

Strikes/Labour Action

When appropriate or necessary you will be notified by the agency regarding any potential or active labour action. This may result in two scenarios:

- 1) All volunteer activity within the agency is suspended;
- 2) Outside volunteer activity continues.

We support volunteers in respecting picket lines.

Job Postings of Paid Positions

Volunteers are not members of the bargaining unit and are not eligible for internal postings, however volunteers are welcome to check the agency website for postings that have become available for external applications.

Emergency Procedures

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Preventing Fires

Be alert around electrical equipment. Report any problems immediately to your Program Supervisor or other available staff.

Fire Preparedness

Know the location of the exits closest to you. Learn where the fire alarms are located and how to activate them. Learn the sound of the fire alarm.

If You Discover a Fire/ Hear a Fire Alarm

Activate a fire alarm and call 911. Leave the building using the nearest stairwell. Do not use the elevator!

- For the Direct Services Office (Seymour St.): Gather outside across the street from the building on the South east corner of Seymour and Helmcken. Do not re-enter the building unless directed to do so.
- For the Administrative Office (Maple St.): Gather outside across the street in the school yard. Do not re-enter the building unless directed to do so.
- For the Gayway Office (Davie St.): Gather outside in courtyard. Do not re-enter the building unless directed to do so.

First Aid

Each AV site has a first aid attendant and kit. The first aid kits are located as follows:

- Seymour site - at the reception desk.
- Maple site - in lunch/meeting room.
- Gayway site - above photocopier.

Notes & Questions

put your heart and hands together

Volunteer

