



Volunteering in Canada Newcomer Requirements

There are many benefits to engaging newcomers as volunteers. Not only can volunteering help build relationships and provide a sense of community, it can also help newcomers gain valuable Canadian experience for their resumes in pursuit of jobs. Organizations who engage newcomers as volunteers receive the benefit of various skills, experiences and diversity.

There are a number of different ways people can obtain permission to live in Canada: Work Visas, Student Visas, Visitors Visas, Temporary Resident and Refugee Status. Each one has different parameters depending on the individual and situation.

The Government of Canada has strict rules regarding immigration and volunteering. It is important to be up to date on the laws regarding this and to work with the potential volunteer to ensure they are not in violation.

Key Points to Remember

- Although they have been allowed into Canada, there could be limitations on the work or volunteering they are allowed to do.
- During the screening process, check with the potential volunteer to ensure they are eligible to volunteer – not all newcomers are allowed to volunteer.
- Ask to see their paperwork.
- If they will be working with children make sure the paperwork does not have conditions (not all Visas are screened for working with children).
- Anyone on a Visitor's Visa are not allowed to volunteer in a role that could potentially be paid (i.e. painting walls), but can usually volunteer at an event where the position would always be covered by a volunteer and is a one-time position.
- Not all conditions are listed on the paperwork; when in doubt have the volunteer double-check with their lawyer or Immigration.
- More often than not, immigrants and refugees are permitted to volunteer in Canada; however, the penalty for someone who is not allowed to volunteer can include deportation.
- If a volunteer is on a Visa there is no need to complete a Police Background Check as the government does a thorough check.