

Policy Direction – Volunteer Engagement

Rationale and Relationship to Vision, Mission, and Values

MS Canada supports and values the important role volunteers have in building an inclusive, connected and resilient MS community. Volunteers strengthen organizational capacity as they make impacts in mission delivery and help us to realize our vision of a world free of MS.

MS Canada embraces and promotes meaningful partnerships between staff and volunteers across all areas of the organization. Recognizing the changing realities of volunteer engagement trends and practices, and the broad range of support needed to champion a culture of volunteer involvement, designated staff are responsible for supporting all aspects of the volunteer experience to ensure successful and meaningful integration of volunteers.

Supports are put in place to ensure a superior volunteer experience, which includes staff and volunteer agreement to the following policies:

- Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
- Respectful Workplace & Environment
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Disclosure and Protection (Whistleblower) Policy

Depending on the nature of the volunteer’s involvement with MS Canada, additional policy sign-off may be required.

Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to define and support the involvement of volunteers across all areas of impact at MS Canada.

The policy is designed to:

- Ensure the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer involvement
- Ensure a safe and supportive environment exists for all volunteer activity

MS Canada – Policy Manual	
<i>Applies to:</i>	All staff and volunteers
<i>Frequency of review:</i>	Every five years
<i>First approved:</i>	February 26, 2015
<i>Last reviewed:</i>	May 19, 2021
<i>Next scheduled review:</i>	May 2026

Policy Application

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at MS Canada.

Authorization

The policy was first approved by the MS Society of Canada Board of Directors on February 26, 2015.

Policy Details

MS Canada is committed to ensuring that all volunteers have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activity and reach their desired impact.

1.0 Guiding Principles

- 1.1 Volunteers are valued team members and MS Canada commits to designing an infrastructure to support volunteers.
- 1.2 Volunteers have rights and responsibilities and MS Canada practices ensure effective steps are taken to support volunteer integration and involvement.
- 1.3 Volunteers build capacity of the organization. MS Canada should seek to partner with volunteers in all areas of work. All staff will employ established best practices and procedures when partnering with volunteers.
- 1.4 Individuals from all backgrounds are encouraged and welcomed to engage in volunteer activity. Pathways to participating in volunteer activity are clear, flexible, adaptive, inclusive and accessible.
- 1.5 Resources will be developed and evaluated to support volunteer-staff partnerships. From planning and recruitment procedures to role creation, evaluation and recognition procedures, resources will be provided that align with both sector best practices and organizational needs.
- 1.6 Volunteer motivations, abilities and skillsets will be understood and leveraged so that meaningful and equitable opportunity for participation will exist for all volunteers.
- 1.7 The benefits and impact of volunteer activity are understood and celebrated by all staff and communicated across the organization.

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1.8 Volunteers will be recognized for their contributions on an ongoing basis. Meaningful recognition activities will take place year-round to ensure that volunteers feel appreciated, valued and engaged.

2.0 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers have rights. Volunteers have the right to meaningful assignments; be treated with respect and dignity; work in a welcoming and safe environment free from harassment of any kind; effective supervision; full involvement and participation; and, be recognized for their contributions. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in opportunities that meet their interests and skillset, and to contribute across multiple portfolios and roles. Volunteers will have access to training and development opportunities as appropriate.

Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to MS Canada. Volunteers will act with respect for the cause, the stakeholders, MS Canada and the community it serves. Volunteers will carry out their involvement with responsibility and with integrity. Volunteers will actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and act in keeping with the goals, policies and procedures of the organization.

Executive Champion

The Vice-President (VP), People Innovations & Volunteers is the executive champion for this policy direction.

The Executive Team is authorized to develop detailed procedures for the application of the Volunteer Engagement Policy Direction and related procedures.

Monitoring and Compliance

The VP, People Innovations & Volunteers is responsible for leading the monitoring of the application and compliance of this policy direction in conjunction with other members of the Executive Team. The VP will work with appropriate staff to ensure compliance.

Policy Review

The policy is to be reviewed at least once every five years following its approval on February 26, 2015.

- Reviewed and approved May 19, 2021

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Definitions:

Executive Team - The most senior level of staff leadership within MS Canada comprised of the president and chief executive officer; division presidents; senior vice-president(s) and vice-president(s). One person may hold more than one position. The president and chief executive officer may alter the composition of the executive team as required from time-to-time.

Volunteer – A volunteer is anyone whose time is given willingly, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, and who performs a task on behalf of the organization.

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