

# **Strengthening We Care Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador's Capacity to Recruit, Train, Engage, Support and Retain Its Personnel**

**By:**

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## **Overview**

We Care Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador (WCFNL) delivers programs and services to immigrant, refugees, racialized women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ community in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The organization takes into consideration their economic, social and cultural integration using a variety of strategies to allow them to more fully participate. WCFNL has been registered and incorporated since 2015. WCFNL operates largely through funding received from the Government of Canada through the Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Women's Foundation, Black Business Initiative, Food Banks Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

WCFNL currently employs one full time and five part time staff, along with nine contract consultant workers. In addition, there are also six ongoing program volunteers, and many event volunteers that work on a need-basis for the organization.

## **Goals**

1. Develop Comprehensive and Effective Personnel and Volunteer training tools and give recommendations for strategies for Recruitment, Engagement, Support and Retention.
2. Train WCFNL Key Staff on how to use personnel recruitment strategies.

## **Recommendations**



In order to build the capacity of WCFNL from a Human Resource perspective, I've drawn upon both research and past experience. As a current employee of Multicultural Women's Organization of NL, and a board member and HR Committee member of Jimmy Pratt Foundation, both which are working on capacity building areas as well, I've been able to utilize my expertise and aim to develop tools that will be effective for future personnel of WCFNL.

## Recruitment Recommendations

**Some strategies for recruitment of volunteers/employees process could include:**

- Distributing clear visualized poster through networks and social media (including Facebook and LinkedIn) to include the following information (organization, job title, duration, some brief roles and responsibilities, link to a more detailed job call-out)
- Detailed Job Call-out for personnel:
  - Statement about inclusion and diversity, since research shows that women and marginalized population are less likely to consider themselves qualified for positions
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Hours and flexibilities (hybrid work, work from home environment, etc)
  - Salary description leads to a transparency
  - Any additional benefits and perks
- Standardized hiring policy and procedure to ensure equitable and fair hiring process for personnel:
  - Standard interview questions with room to add more specific questions based on position for hire
  - Standardized matrix or rating system for evaluating candidates answers
  - Standardized questions for reference checks

## Engagement Recommendations

### 1. Engaging Your New Volunteers

It is recommended to reach out to volunteers after they register on an **online registration form** for an opportunity promptly. The goal with this initial contact is to

introduce WCFNL mission and invite them to attend an orientation program. Things suggested to include in the initial outreach:

- Welcome to your organization
- Thank you for signing up
- A brief introduction to your organization
- Invitation to orientation and request for confirmation to attend orientation

After the volunteer registers for an orientation, WCFNL could send another email that gives volunteers a sense of what to expect at volunteer orientation. Include or attach supplemental documents that will help acquaint attendees with your volunteerism program prior to orientation:

- Volunteer Orientation Manual
- Volunteer Orientation Agenda
- Date, time, and location details on orientation

### **Following Up With Your Volunteers After Orientation**

A follow-up email is a great way to encourage volunteers to sign up for new opportunities and invite participants to attend further volunteer training.

It's also important to evaluate the effectiveness of your orientation program and collect feedback from your volunteers. Consider conducting a **volunteer post-orientation survey** (within a week of the orientation).

You can ask your volunteers questions like:

What did you find most valuable about your volunteer orientation?

What questions do you still have?

What do you wish you received more information on during your volunteer orientation?

What would you change/add to your orientation experience?

### **2. Engaging Your New Employees**

It is recommended to reach out to a new employee right away, and follow a checklist to delegate different onboarding responsibilities amongst staff and executive director. The goal with this initial contact is to introduce WCFNL mission, introduce them to the board

and staff, and invite them to attend the onboarding process. Things suggested to include in the initial outreach:

- Welcome letter to your organization
- Employee Handbook
- Organization foundation material (bylaws, mission statement, extra policies and procedures)
- Methods of communication and introduction to the team
- Material needed to support working from home

The goal is to establish that this employee, who may be working virtually or in a hybrid environment, feels involved and welcomed from the initial steps. Working from home policies and procedures also need to be outlined so that individuals understand accountability to the organization, and the expectations of how they can rely on their team and supervisors.

### **3. Website Recommendations to Increase Engagement:**

- On-line registration forms should be readily available for volunteers, under a drop-down menu titled something like “get involved” where interest forms for board of directors, other volunteers, and participants to fill out, which would automatically be linked to a staff email address
- Being relatable: Including information about your team and board can help humanize your operations to your users. By providing a page that includes team pictures and biographical information, for example, you might evoke a sense of trust that can encourage your visitors to take action.
- Using responsive design (which means your site can adapt to various screen sizes while making it easy to see all important information and graphics) is important for the target demographic to easily access tabs and information
- Reducing distraction: omitting features such as complicated animations, extra images and colors outside the brand profile

## **Support Recommendations**

### **Volunteer Support Recommendations**

### **Conduct Orientation (in-person or virtual) & Training**

- Present slideshow to highlight important content to make it more appealing and digestible for dense material (mission, origin of organization, ways to get involved, documents to review, etc)
- Timelines and descriptions of major organizational events and activities that they could volunteer
- Highlight procedure to report health and safety violations and injuries
- Confirm work dates, times, and anticipated duration of participation
- Review check-in and time-sheet procedure
- Discuss skills and support needed for specific volunteer role
- Culture and Language of Organization
  - Clarify key terms within the organization that may be unfamiliar to the public
  - Dress code, mannerism, cultural respect and sensitivity awareness

## **Personnel Support Recommendations**

### **Conduct Onboarding (in-person or virtual) & Training**

- Present slideshow to highlight important content to make it more appealing and digestible for dense material (mission, origin of organization, ways to get involved, documents to review, etc)
- Work with them to outline specific goals, activities, and budget so they have all the information needed to design an effective work plan
- Highlight policies and procedure they will need to review as they are developed for the organization (for example, Occupational health & safety, Work From Home Policy, etc)
- Confirm work schedule and expectations of communication and accountability
- Review check-in procedures, performance review schedules, payment schedule, etc.
- Discuss skills and support needed for specific role
- Culture and Language of Organization
  - Clarify key terms within the organization that may be unfamiliar to public

- Dress code, mannerism, cultural respect and sensitivity awareness
- Professional development opportunities (webinars, conferences, etc) to support their learning and growth also shows the organization is supportive of professional growth of the individual

## Retention Recommendations

### Personnel Retention Recommendations

- Conducting confidential interviews with current and previous staff members will determine the specific gaps and successes in retaining staff, identify trends impacting turnover of staff, and use data to strengthen the organization. From these interviews, customized recommendations can be determined for WCFNL.
- Some common factors impacting retention in the non-profit sector, with a gender based lense, that could be important for WCFNL to consider include:
  - Funding and compensation
    - Explore funding options that are multi-year, or create a reserve to continue a momentum with existing staff. Lack of financial stability when one does not know if their funding and subsequently their employment status from each fiscal year
    - Strategically consider the hours of employment. Lower hour contracts are ineffective and are not conducive to attracting and retaining qualified staff
    - Explore health and benefits programs for small scale organizations. No health and group benefits could be problematic for individuals supporting themselves and dependants and can reduce retention for ongoing employees.
  - Training and development
    - training and professional development to assist staff in carrying out their work effectively would be very beneficial and allow them to feel growth and expand their contribution in the organization
    - Formalized orientation and onboarding would set the tone for an organizations roles, expectations, and culture for new employees
  - Organization environment and culture

- Factors such as policies and procedures in place, communication style, roles and expectations, inclusion and equity, will all play a factor amongst the staff retention rate
- Communication, recognition and performance feedback
  - With a work culture that is either hybrid or working from home, regular check-ins, staff meetings, performance feedback can not only increase a overall connection to the organization, but also enhance motivation
- Lack of flexibility and emphasis on work-life balance
  - For those that have children or other dependants, this was noted to be an important factor in continuing to work for certain sectors

### Volunteer Retention Recommendations

Understanding and measuring the volunteer retention rate in the last 5 years will assist WCFNL determine what percentage of volunteers are consistent, and what the turnover rate is. Interviews and focus groups with past volunteers will also help determine customized volunteer programs that work for this organization. Some general methods WCFNL can utilize to increase volunteer retention by investing in three key volunteer management activities (if this is not already in place):

- Volunteer recognition
  - Underappreciated and undervalued is one of the primary reasons volunteers retention rate can be low, and in order to alleviate this, several methods can be utilized:
    - Tracking and communicating volunteer impact in the organization
    - Award volunteers (ex; volunteer of the month” certificate)
    - Host an appreciation event
- Volunteer training and professional development
  - Offering volunteers the opportunity to enrich their experience can help boost retention rates, using methods such as:
    - Leadership opportunities (lead event planning, consult and lead orientation, etc)
    - Community ambassadors

- Career training
  - Volunteer screening and opportunity matching
    - Get to know the demographic and personal interests of the volunteer, through screening and interview questions
    - Discuss matching opportunities and how to align the interest of the organization with their own personal goals and outcomes from volunteering with WCFNL

With the recommendations in the areas reviewed and the tools developed below, WCFNL will continue to be vital in assisting newcomer, LGBTQ2+ immigrant self-identified women in this province to feel empowered, develop a sense of belonging and gain knowledge and skills that support their goals. These capacity building steps and tools will be a strong starting point to strengthen its impact by the attraction, engagement, support and retention of well-equipped personnel and volunteers.

### **Tools Developed for Training (Developed from September-December, 2023):**

Employee Orientation Presentation : [WCF NL Employee Orientation](#)

Personnel Code of Conduct: [WCF NL Personnel Code of Conduct](#)

Organization Structure: [WCF NL Organization Structure](#)

Volunteer Orientation Presentation: [WCF Volunteer Orientation](#)

Volunteer Code of Conduct: [WCFNL Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

Volunteer Time Sheet: [WCFNL Volunteer Time Sheet](#)

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy: [WCFNL Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy](#)

### **Resources**

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