

FAQs – For Community Members Interested in Applying for the Pandemic Volunteer Pool

About the application process

Before starting your application, please have the following information prepared:

- Have a username (minimum of 6 characters) and password in mind. Please note you will need this information again so create something you will remember
- 3 non-family references are required for positions working with vulnerable people
 - **What if I don't have 3 references?** As part of the application and screening process you are required to provide 2 non-family member references. If there are any reasons why this is not possible please contact the Volunteer Action Centre to discuss: pandemicvolunteer@volunteerwr.ca or 519-742-8610 (9am – 4pm Mon – Fri).
- While there are some positions that will not require a Police Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check (PRC/VSC), the majority of roles will be working with the vulnerable in our community. We will ask that you apply for a PRC/VSC so that you will qualify for the full breadth of positions needed.

How do I complete an application form?

- Click on the yellow “Fill in an application” button
- Answer all questions to the best of your ability
- Read and consent to all waivers

How long will the application take to complete?

Completing the application and reading all the required documents will vary for each person, however once you start the application you cannot save the information and return to it to finish at another time. If you have any issues with the application process please contact the Volunteer Action Centre for assistance pandemicvolunteer@volunteerwr.ca or call 519-742-8610 (9am – 4pm Mon – Fri).

How will I know you received my application?

You should receive an email from us shortly after you submit your application. If you do not, please check your junk email and if it still not there please contact the Volunteer Action Centre for assistance pandemicvolunteer@volunteerwr.ca or call 519-742-8610 (9am – 4pm Mon – Fri).

About the Intake Process

What is the purpose of the volunteer intake process?

The goal of the Volunteer Pool intake process is to help connect essential service agencies with volunteers who have the skills, experience, and availability they are looking for. This helps the agencies by checking references and verifying other qualifications in advance, so they don't have to. Doing this work takes time, especially when we live in such a caring community where so many community members want to help.

In addition, Agencies registered through this program qualify for WSIB coverage for their volunteers during a declared State of Emergency.

How will my intake interview be scheduled?

After your application has been reviewed you will receive an email telling you how to sign up for an interview through your volunteer profile you created when you submitted your application. Interviews

will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

Do I get to pick where I volunteer and what I do?

Meeting the needs of agencies is our priority, so our goal is to deploy volunteers where they are most needed/where they will have the greatest impact. Community members in the Volunteer Pool who are matched with an agency will be matched based on how their skill set, interests, availability, etc. fit with agency needs. Volunteer preference indicated in the application form will be considered but priority will be given to community need and impact when matching volunteers with agencies. That being said, if you are matched with an agency or role that you don't feel is a good fit for you, you can request to go back into the Volunteer Pool to be considered for other opportunities.

If you are a volunteer with an eligible agency in a qualified position (your agency will ask you to register through this process), this will be noted in your file and as a Pandemic Volunteer you will be assigned back to your current position.

If I am accepted, who I am volunteering for?

Community members who are successfully matched will be volunteering with a community support service agency that is providing a critical service during the pandemic.

About the Matching Process

How long can I expect to wait after my interview before I find out about a placement? Am I guaranteed to get a volunteer placement?

Community members who successfully complete the intake process will be placed in the Pandemic Volunteer Pool and considered for placement. Depending on the needs of community agencies, community members may be placed immediately or not at all. The need for volunteers will fluctuate based on the needs of the community and we will be matching priority needs with volunteer skill sets. Therefore, placement is not guaranteed. We appreciate your patience and willingness to help.

How do you match volunteers with agencies?

After your intake phone interview and reference checks are completed your application will be reviewed to see if you are a good match for any of the agencies seeking volunteers to help with their pandemic response. In addition to the needs of the agency, we will do our best to take into consideration volunteer skills/experience/interests, availability, location preference and more.

How will I be notified if I have been matched with an agency?

Community members who are matched with an agency will receive an email introducing them to the volunteer supervisor from that agency along with details about next steps.

If I say no to a placement, does that mean I won't be able to volunteer?

Community members who determine that a volunteer role or agency is not a good fit will be added back to the pandemic volunteer pool and considered for other opportunities.

About the Volunteer Placements

I have been placed with an agency, what are the next steps?

Each agency will have their own intake process, which may include another interview, and will involve orientation and training.

I already did an intake interview to get into the pandemic volunteer pool. Why do I have to do

another one with the agency?

The Pandemic Volunteer Pool intake interview is very general and the agency might need more information to determine if the placement is a good match. If the agency asks you to participate in another interview, it is an opportunity for you to learn more details about the role and the agency, and to determine if it is the right fit for you/them.

How I will get my volunteer schedule?

The agency will provide the volunteer their schedule.

I can only volunteer on certain days, how do I ensure I am not scheduled when I am not available?

The agency will try their best to offer shifts based on availability. If the agency doesn't have shifts that fit with a volunteer's schedule, the volunteer will be placed back in the Volunteer Pool and considered for other opportunities.

What type of training and orientation will I receive?

Each agency will provide their volunteers with the necessary orientation and training to ensure that the volunteer can safely perform the volunteer duties.

When will I start volunteering?

Volunteers who successfully complete the agency's screening, orientation and training will start volunteering as soon as they are scheduled by the agency.

I can't make my volunteer shift, who do I contact?

Please tell your volunteer supervisor at the agency as soon as possible so they can make other arrangements to cover your shift(s).

I can't continue to volunteer, what do I need to do?

Please tell your volunteer supervisor at the agency as soon as possible so they can make other arrangements to cover your shift(s).

I don't think my current placement is a good fit but I still want to volunteer with the pandemic response, what can I do?

Please tell your volunteer supervisor at the agency as soon as possible so you can be added back into the Pandemic Volunteer Pool.

What safety measures have been put in place?

We are working with agencies to ensure they have the appropriate safety precautions in place as well as the necessary protective equipment for staff and volunteers. If you feel unsafe inform the volunteer supervisor at the agency. If you still feel unsafe you have the right to refuse the work and/or leave.

How long will I be expected to volunteer with an agency?

Volunteers who are successfully placed with an agency will continue until they are no longer able or until the Region of Waterloo's State of Emergency has been lifted. Volunteers that are interested in continuing to volunteer with the agency after the pandemic volunteer program has ended, will need to register as a volunteer directly with the agency.

Why is being covered under WSIB important to me?

Even if you are retired or are currently unemployed, WSIB will cover health benefits related to your volunteering during the State of Emergency.

Contact Information

Who can I contact if I have any questions about my application or any part of this process?

Please email pandemicvolunteer@volunteerwr.ca or call 519-742-8610 (9am – 4pm Mon – Fri).