

# The **Canada Comics Open Library** Volunteer Handbook



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# INTRODUCTION

This volunteer handbook is a summary of policies, procedures, and practices related to human resource management with respect to volunteer roles at the Canada Comics Open Library (CCOL).

The President, Volunteer Coordinator, Director of Technical Development, and Diversity Director are accountable for leading the development and implementation of the policies outlined in this manual. Directors are responsible for human resource management within their own teams and should reference this manual to ensure organizational consistency in the application of these practices.

The President, Volunteer Coordinator, Director of Technical Development, and Diversity Director form the Human Resources Committee and as such are responsible for maintaining the procedures and systems which support human resource management for the organization and are available to answer any questions or provide clarification on any content of this manual.

# STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

CCOL wishes to maintain a work environment that fosters personal and professional growth for all volunteers. Maintaining such an environment is the responsibility of every staff person. Because of their role, where applicable, directors and supervisors (staff or volunteers) have the additional responsibility to lead in a manner which fosters an environment of respect for each person.

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to:

- Foster cooperation and communication among each other
- Treat each other in a fair manner, with dignity and respect
- Promote harmony and teamwork in all relationships
- Strive for mutual understanding of standards for performance expectations, and communicate routinely to reinforce that understanding
- Encourage and consider opinions of other employees or members, and invite their participation in decisions that affect their work and their careers
- Encourage growth and development of staff and volunteers by helping them achieve their personal goals at CCOL and beyond
- Seek to avoid workplace conflict, and if it occurs, respond fairly and quickly to provide the means to resolve it

- Administer all policies equitably and fairly, recognizing that roles are different but each is important; that individual performance should be recognized and measured against predetermined and agreed upon standards; and that each volunteer has the right to fair treatment
- Recognize that employees in their personal lives may experience crisis and show compassion and understanding

## WHO WE ARE

The Canada Comics Open Library (CCOL) is a registered non-profit organization that aims to be an inclusive, educational, and recreational public space for comics and graphics novels while showcasing the work of Canadian comic artists and supporting comics communities.

### Vision

At CCOL, we view comics as a medium, rather than a genre. As such, our library collection will be organized along lines which reflect its true narrative and stylistic diversity, ranging from such significant areas as queer-comics, life-narratives, mental health, and intersectional works, to the explorations of the historical, fantastical, and the speculative.

CCOL also promotes Canadian artists on a local and global level through public outreach including our website and social media platforms.

### Mission

CCOL aims to fill a hole in the current cultural landscape with regards to comics accessibility. We hope to broadly promote the medium and creators through developing meaningful partnerships and a diverse collection. We also work with various Canadian artists and comics-related communities in Canada to promote accessibility to and recognition of the Canadian comics scene. We also want to be a part of increasing representation of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and marginalized comics creators, stories, and art.

### Scope

We are building a diverse and inclusive collection using a unique cataloguing and display system.

We are working with open source software, a malleable cataloguing and call number system, mindful subject displays with book facings to promote the diversity of comics, and

knowledgeable reference services. We hope, through mindful open principles, to maintain a browsable and accessible comics collection.

We are working towards building a collaborative community space where anyone from any age or background can engage with comics and comics resources. We hope to be a centre for comics collaboration in Canada through arts events, instructional workshops, panel talks, and artist talks.

## VOLUNTEERING AT CCOL

### Equity

CCOL prides itself on equal opportunity, and recruits staff and volunteers without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability. While remaining alert and sensitive to the issue of fair and equitable treatment for all, CCOL has a special concern with the participation and advancement of members of four designated groups that have traditionally been disadvantaged in employment and recruitment: women, visible minorities, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.

This document, and as a general practice all CCOL documents, use person-first language, however CCOL recognizes people's rights to identify as they wish and the importance of doing so. All volunteers should respect the wishes of any person regarding their identity. If unsure, volunteers should ask for clarification in a manner that respects both the person and their identity.

As part of our Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliance, and to ensure fair treatment and access to all of our community members, all volunteers are required to complete 1) complete both AODA and Customer Service Standard training, and 2) provide proof of this training to the Human Resources Committee. Since this is a requirement by law for employment in Ontario and volunteers may have completed training elsewhere, volunteers may submit their proof of prior training. Modules for this training can be found here:

Customer Service Standard

<https://www.accessforward.ca/newado/csstandardmodule/>

Working Together: The Code and the AODA

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda/certificate-version>

The CCOL Toronto branch is located within the Centre for Social Innovation @ Regent Park, please also read CSI's Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Policy:

<https://socialinnovation.org/csis-diversity-inclusion-anti-discrimination-policy/>

## Recruitment and Selection

All volunteer opportunities at CCOL are posted on CCOL's website and the websites of affiliated organizations. Occasionally, they are posted on volunteer websites or with a volunteer placement agency. Some targeted volunteer roles are posted in/at institutions that seek training or internship opportunities for their students.

The CCOL website provides a general portal for anyone interested in volunteer roles or general information about volunteering. This can be found on the Get Involved -> Volunteer section of the website.

## Selection Nepotism

At CCOL we encourage all people to volunteer and this includes families, friends, and companies wishing to contribute to the CCOL mission. However, CCOL will require the disclosure of personal relationships that may be present during any volunteer selection process. This is the responsibility of the CCOL staff (directors or employees) involved in the selection and not the volunteer. This includes personal relationships and immediate family. Immediate family is defined as: parent(s), step parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), spouse {including common law a/o same sex partner}, step child(ren), ward, father-in-law or mother-in-law (including parent of same sex partner) of the staff member. This is to ensure the equity of the selection process. In any case where such a problem arises and is properly disclosed, the selection must be made with care to ensure that no opportunities are denied to others or power relationships do not present harm to any party involved.

## Orientation

All new volunteers to CCOL will receive an orientation session which will encompass an overview of general policies, procedures, and operations. This will also provide volunteers, new to either a position or CCOL, an opportunity to learn the performance expectations with regard to the position in question. They will be given a copy of this Volunteer Handbook and will be expected to learn its contents. Volunteers will also be emailed a copy of Library Space Procedures. Copies of Library Space Procedures as well as the Volunteer Handbook will always be available in the library space.

## Professionalism

When representing CCOL, staff and volunteers should behave appropriately. Excessive use of profanity is neither professional nor respectful to co-workers and will not be tolerated. All Harrassment, Workplace Violence, and Dispute Resolution rules and practices outlined in this handbook must be adhered to.

## Discipline

Discipline at CCOL will be progressive, and dependent on the nature and severity of the problem. Its purpose is to identify unsatisfactory performance and / or unacceptable behaviour. The stages may be:

- I. Verbal reprimand
- II. Written reprimand
- III. Dismissal

Some circumstances may be serious enough that all three steps are not used. Some examples of these types of situations are theft, assault, or wilful neglect of duty. In all cases, documentation should be included in the volunteer file.

## Hours

Typical library branch hours for CCOL are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday inclusive (excluding holidays). Operational hours of Library branch locations may differ or change—staff will notify volunteers of such changes. Special events will typically occur during specific hours, often outside of branch hours.

Typical shift durations are 2-2.5 hours in the following time slots:

- 11am-1:30pm
- 1:30pm-4pm
- 4pm-6pm

However, we recognize that volunteers have their own expectations and schedules. All volunteers will arrange their hours directly with the Volunteer Coordinator, and may include custom time slots, shorter, or longer durations. To facilitate this process, the Volunteer Coordinator may require the volunteer to register/access a volunteer management portal (such as a website or software).

Volunteers are required to notify the Volunteer Coordinator, in advance, of planned days away from their position. CCOL staff contact information can be found in the Library Space

Procedures Manual in the section Library Space Procedures > Communication. A copy of the Library Space Procedures Manual will always be located in the library space.

Unplanned absences from the position should be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as could reasonably be expected.

## DEPARTURE

### Termination for Cause

Any volunteer position may be terminated by the CCOL at any time for cause. Cause includes, but is not limited to, any act of dishonesty, conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, harassment, insubordination, or careless, negligent or documented poor work performance. The volunteer will be notified directly of such a termination.

### CCOL Property

Upon termination of a volunteer position for any reason, all items of any kind created or used pursuant to the CCOL's service or furnished by CCOL including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information, or other materials will remain and be considered the exclusive property of CCOL at all times, and will be surrendered to the President or the Volunteer Coordinator, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

## CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

### Confidential Information

From time to time, volunteers at CCOL may come into contact with confidential information, including but not limited to information about CCOL's members, suppliers, finances, and business plans. Volunteers are required to keep any such matters that may be disclosed to them or learned by them confidential.

Furthermore, any such confidential information, obtained through volunteering with CCOL, must not be used by a volunteer (past or present) for personal gain or to further an outside enterprise.



## Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property, such as trademarks, copyrights, patents, and any work created by a volunteer in the course of their tenure at CCOL, for the use of CCOL, will be the property of CCOL and the volunteer is deemed to have waived all rights in favour of CCOL unless otherwise agreed upon. All source material used in presentation or written documents must be acknowledged. Work, for the purpose of this policy refers to written, creative, or media work, **made specifically for CCOL** (library posters, signs, etc.). If a volunteer creates material in the library space/at the desk not intended for CCOL, they of course belong to the creator.

## IT Information Storage and Security

Volunteers must acknowledge that the contents of any storage devices (CD's, USB's, Floppy Discs, Hard Drives, etc), which are property of CCOL and used by volunteers, are property of CCOL. Furthermore, it should be understood by volunteers, that CCOL equipment should be used for CCOL business only during normal working hours. Downloading of personal materials on CCOL equipment can be harmful to said equipment and should not be done.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

CCOL, including its staff and volunteers, must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the workplace is safe. The organization complies with all requirements for creating a healthy and safe workplace in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario.

Employees who have health and safety concerns or identify potential hazards should contact Volunteer Coordinator or President immediately.

Alcohol consumption and illegal drug use is not permitted during work hours on the premises. From time to time, with the President's permission, alcohol may be used to celebrate an occasion/event.

## AIR QUALITY

Indoor air quality can lead to many health issues. CCOL recognizes this and attempts to minimize the risks associated with indoor air quality and the effects on its employees, members, and volunteers. Issues pertaining to air quality should be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator or President.

## Smoke Free Environment

Effective May 31, 2006, the province of Ontario banned smoking in workplaces. As such, smoking in the offices, library branch locations, or events of CCOL is not permitted at any time. An 'enclosed workplace' is defined as the inside of any place, building or structure or conveyance or a part of any of them that a) is covered by a roof or b) employees work in or frequent during the course of their employment whether or not they are acting in the course of their employment at the time, and c) is not primarily a private dwelling

## Scents

CCOL is aware that some persons may have allergies or sensitivities to perfumes, lotions, colognes and / or chemical smells. As a result, we discourage the use of these products, and welcome fragrance-free alternatives.

## Pets

CCOL may operate in animal friendly work or event spaces. All volunteers should disclose animal allergies which may conflict with any particular location.

## Renovations

As odours from building materials and noise levels for tools can cause discomfort to volunteers, renovations will be scheduled to have a minimum impact on volunteers. This may include renovating during non work hours (evenings & weekends) and ensuring direct ventilation to control fumes. Volunteers also reserve the right to avoid such situations and may contact the Volunteer Coordinator to move or cancel their volunteer commitments.

# HARASSMENT

CCOL wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its staff, volunteers, members, and community. CCOL takes harassment and the protection of victims (both proactively and in response to) very seriously. No form of harassment within, by, or to CCOL staff, volunteers, members, or community will be tolerated. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between staff, volunteers, members, and community. CCOL will neither tolerate nor condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

There are several forms of harassment but all can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates, insults, or degrades. “Unwelcome”, for the purposes of this policy, refers to any action which is not desired by the victim of the harassment.

Specifically, racial harassment is defined as any unwelcome comments, racist statements, slurs, jokes, media, and actions which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person on the basis of race.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention or action of a sexual nature. It must be made clear that no case of sexual harassment is too minor to report. All reported cases of sexual harassment are presumed to be legitimate unless proven otherwise. Sexual harassment here includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- remarks about appearance or personal life
- offensive written or visual media
- physical contact of any kind
- the invasion of personal space
- sexual demands
- stalking and/or intimidation
- persuasion and / or flirtation

## Complaint Policy

### Complaint Process for Volunteers.

1. **Complaint Filing.** Any complaint by a volunteer should be brought to the attention of any member of the executive council (ideally by email, or in person and written) who will forward the complaint to the President. Alternatively, the complaint may be brought directly to the President or Volunteer Coordinator. If the complaint is minor then the Volunteer Coordinator or another director might rectify the situation by conflict resolution and mediation if the parties involved agree to this form of resolution.
2. **Complaint Process.** Each serious complaint will be examined by the President and executive council. It will be brought up in a closed executive council meeting for discussion of remedial actions. If the President the cause of the complaint then it will be presented to the Secretary or Treasurer and brought up in a closed executive council meeting.
3. **Complaint Response.** CCOL has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment. If volunteers are found guilty of an offense, they will be unable to participate as

volunteers with CCOL, and may be banned from visiting the library and participating in events. We aim to create a safe space for all. Prior to any remedial actions, the accused will be given a fair opportunity to defend themselves.

4. **Complainant Anonymity.** Complaints will be treated as anonymous outside of executive council meetings to determine remedial actions, and will not be discussed with other volunteers, unless other volunteers are involved and need to participate in the discussion. Complainants identities will be protected from public knowledge.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence can be defined as a threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury, which arises during the course of work. Further to the definition of violence, is the definition of abuse. Abuse can be verbal, psychological, or sexual in nature. Verbal abuse is the use of unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening, or degrading comments. Psychological abuse is an act which provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem.

CCOL has a zero tolerance limit with regards to harassment and violence. Staff, member, community, or volunteers engaging in either harassing or violent activities will be subject to discipline, which may include termination of their position, removal from Boards or committees and possibly criminal charges.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, CCOL recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- Speak to the person you are having the dispute with. Many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications.
- If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the President. The President will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.
- If the President is unable to resolve a workplace dispute, the parties may be referred to mediation by an outside third party. The resolution of the mediator is binding on both parties of the dispute.