

Role Creation & Position Description Development

Purpose:

This is a MY MS FAMILY staff policy intended to inform role creation & position description preparation by MY MS FAMILYM board members. It is provided for volunteers for informational purposes.

To ensure the creation of meaningful, effective volunteer roles to support MY MS FAMILY activities by following a formal standardized process that will ensure appropriate representation and volunteer assignments.

Policy Statement:

MY MS FAMILY will create volunteer roles following the appropriate procedure, ensuring that all roles are assessed for risks, determined necessary for project work and will provide fulfilling opportunities for volunteers to help MY MS FAMILY achieve the mission. Position descriptions will be developed following a standard template that will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure clarity and consistency.

Definitions:

“Role creation” is the first step in determining the need for a volunteer, and should always be considered before writing the position description.

“Position description” is the written declaration of the volunteer’s activities (responsibilities), qualifications (skills, experience needed) and requirements (abilities, time, screening, etc.). This position description can also be used as the position posting for recruitment purposes.

Responsibilities:

Volunteer Responsibilities All volunteers should address the position description as written compared to the reality of their roles during or after their engagement to ensure the accuracy of the role creation process. Volunteers should be asked for thoughts on the role creation process and can contribute ideas for future revisions of the process.

Board members Responsibilities Any board member looking to engage volunteers must follow the role creation and position description development process (see: Procedures section). It is their responsibility to determine the need for the role, perform the risk assessment and prepare the position description.

It is the responsibility of MY MS FAMILY Board members to determine and oversee the steps of role creation and the position description template, to be reviewed yearly.

The role planning process should include considerations for volunteer screening as stated in the Volunteer Screening Process. This will encompass risk assessment, determining screening requirements and necessary follow-up.

Failure to follow this policy and position description template prescribed herein will result in inconsistent volunteer recruitment and selection and a dilution of MY MS FAMILY mission in recruiting volunteers.

Procedures:

The Role Creation Process is as follows:

- Planning the role (page 2)
- Risk assessment (page 3)
- Hierarchy management (page 3)
- Position description (page 4)

Planning the Role When determining the need for a volunteer, the volunteer supervisor will answer the following five questions:

1. What will the volunteer do? – What are the tasks, activities, functions and duties of the role? Are they clear and concise, or more flexible and fluid? Are these tasks those that a volunteer should be doing as opposed to a BOARD member? Who will review these tasks?
2. When will the volunteer do it? – How often will the volunteer be needed? When will they volunteer and how frequently? How long will they be engaged with the organization? Is their schedule flexible and/or unfixed?
3. Where will the volunteer do it? – Does the role take place in the office? Can it be done from home or a separate location? Is there a satellite or partner location? Is the workspace accessible?
4. How will the volunteer do it? – Will the volunteer be using a computer (and is a computer/desk available)? Will there be any special technology or materials that are unique to the role? Will there be special skills training for the volunteer to successfully fulfill the role?
5. Why will the volunteer do it? – Is the need for this volunteer specific, or do they not have enough work to keep them busy? It is the supervisor's discretion to ensure that the volunteer's role will be meaningful and have an impact on the organization and its work.

Risk Assessment:

Once a clear picture of the volunteer work and purpose has coalesced, the supervisor must determine the potential risk of the volunteer role. Risk refers to the potential for a role – or the volunteer in the role – to bring harm (whether intentional or not) to MY MS FAMILY, its members and volunteers. A risk assessment should be reviewed by senior management.

To determine risks: the volunteer board member will answer the following questions:

- Who are the people involved? – Determine whether the member, volunteer, community member or board member involved with the role will be at risk; this includes members who are vulnerable such as children, seniors or members with disabilities.
- Who of these individuals may be in a position to harm the organization and its reputation?
- What is the activity and how does it affect potential risk? – Certain activities and tasks may have higher risk than others (for example, being a spokesperson for the organization or providing driving services); be aware of the ways the activity may affect the risk or bring harm.
- Where does the activity take place? – The location itself may have obvious, physical risks, primarily if work will take place outside of the office. Some volunteer roles may involve client interactions that may not be supervised, and the planning of the role should take this risk into consideration.
- How often will someone oversee the activity?

Consider the frequency of supervision (and level of supervision) according to the level of risk in the volunteer's activities. Consider as many risks and potential challenges as possible to ensure that volunteer roles will not bring harm to the organization, volunteers, members or community members.

Hierarchy Management:

Any board member may determine the need for a volunteer to assist in program or project work. Appropriate management for the volunteer must be ensured. In some cases, volunteers may be managed by the volunteer board member for scheduling, assignment of work space and/or timekeeping. In other cases, the board member may be responsible for all of these, as well as any other engagement and supervision requirements. Determine the individual(s) responsible: supervision, evaluation, and scheduling, timekeeping & disciplinary action.

General Position Planning Tips:

- It is important to note that MY MS FAMILY does not recruit “interns” unless an internship is paid (and therefore not a volunteer role) or is considered a learning opportunity accredited by an appropriate post-secondary institution.
- No positions can be created to exclusively work with other organizations, such as volunteers recruited, screened and selected by MY MS FAMILY to then do their volunteer work with a different organization
- Volunteer roles must adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code (see Discrimination Policy)

Position Descriptions:

Position descriptions may include the position title, purpose, activities, qualifications, requirements, screening steps, location, time commitment, training & orientation and benefits. Per recommendations provided to MY MS FAMILY subscribers, position descriptions should be broken down as follows:

Title & Purpose/Objective Activities: (Tasks/Responsibilities/Duties)

Qualifications: (Skills/Abilities/Experience)

Time Commitment, Start Date, Length:

Location:

Screening:

Orientation & Training:

Dress Code:

Benefits:

Tips for effective descriptions:

- Link in the mission & information about MY MS FAMILY
- Be detailed and concise
- Acknowledge any pre-requisites alongside qualifications

BOARD MEMBER SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____