



# Volunteer Handbook

Psychologists' Association of Alberta

## We want to begin with thanks

Welcome to the Volunteer Program of the Psychologists' Association of Alberta (PAA).

You are a valued contributor. PAA volunteers help shape the future of our association and promote the value of the psychology profession in Alberta. We encourage all volunteers to become familiar with this manual, which is designed to support you in your role. PAA strives to help you be productive and to make your volunteer experience rewarding.

Thank you for joining our Volunteer Program. Your time, effort and leadership abilities are the heart of our association.

## We are the PAA

### PAA

PAA is the voice of, and for, psychology in Alberta. We are the voluntary body that advocates for psychology in Alberta, informs the public and the media, and advocates for consumers of psychotherapy, psychological, and mental health services.

### Mission

The Mission of the PAA is to advance the science-based profession of psychology and to promote the well-being and potential of all Albertans.

## Getting started

### Training

You will be provided with a description of your role before your commitment begins.

Some of our volunteer opportunities will provide role-specific training. Occasionally, large events may require pre-training in the form of an orientation or email prior to the event. All volunteer opportunities will have a staff contact available for questions.

### Commitment

The volunteer commitment varies depending on the position. For events such as Career Fairs, Teachers' Conventions and Science Fairs, various shifts are available through the Administrative Officer. The PAA Board and Committees meet throughout the year, and regular attendance is required of members.

In appreciation of your time and efforts, we'll do our best to provide you with an exciting and rewarding volunteer experience. In return we ask that you please honour your volunteer commitment, or if not, to provide 48 hours' notice so that alternative arrangements can be made.

## How you're contributing

PAA contributor opportunities include:

### Volunteer Pool

Quality volunteers are the bricks that hold non-profit organizations together. We couldn't survive without you!

PAA has several exciting opportunities that arise at different times of the year. To meet these requests, PAA needs a team of volunteers we can contact.

Typical requests include:

- **School Presentations:** Various presentations at high schools and universities occur throughout the year on a variety of topics including the psychology profession, PAA, careers, and mental health.
- **Public Presentations:** Public speaking presentations occur throughout the year to a variety of audiences on various topics. Examples of past presentations include: mental health awareness, organizational psychology, and psychology disorders.
- **Career Fairs:** Contributors man the PAA display booth and may answer inquiries regarding careers in psychology and the psychology profession.
- **Teachers' Conventions:** Contributors man the PAA display booth and may answer general inquiries regarding PAA and the psychology profession.

What will  
your role  
be?

### Exhibit Booth Protocol

- **Be Professional:** When volunteering at a PAA booth you are not just representing yourself, but professional psychologists all over Alberta.
- **Be Approachable:** Some people will readily come up to you with questions or comments, while others may be a bit shy, or worried about the perceived stigma of speaking with a psychologist. Smile and welcome everyone who makes eye contact.
- **Be Informed:** There are wonderful resources at your fingertips through PAA, such as our Position Statements (available on our website) which outline considerations for Albertans and the profession.
- **Be Prepared:**
  - Review your information package, which will provide you with specific details for your event (date, location, booth number, volunteer schedule, map and any additional instructions).
  - Arrive 15 minutes earlier than your scheduled volunteer time.
  - If possible, take photos of yourself working at the event or the exhibit booth at the event to be published in our newsletter or social media.
- **Handling Materials:**
  - Try to provide educational materials when handing out PAA pens.
  - Make sure the exhibit display table is tidy and well-stocked with PAA materials.
  - Help prevent damage to PAA materials during set-up/tear-down/transporting.

- PAA staff are available to assist you by phone (780) 424-0294 or 1-888-424-0297 or by e-mail [paa@paa-ab.ca](mailto:paa@paa-ab.ca).
- Personal Business Cards: Only provide a personal business card if specifically requested. Please do not display or offer without request.

### **PAA Communities of Practice**

Communities of Practice (CoP), Board Committees, and Task Forces, play a pivotal role in supporting the PAA's mission by supporting our work in many areas.

For policies relevant to CoP's, board committees and task forces, please refer to the PAA Policy Manual (section IV: CoP's, Board Committees and Task Forces.) All mentioned have Terms of Reference according to the association's objectives.

### **PAA Engagement Executives**

PAA Communities of Practice collaborate

- Are open for all members to join in the areas of their interest.
- Have a set of mandatory executives (chair, vice chair, & moderator) and additional executives (public engagement officer, publications officer, & professional learning officer)  
[Read more about CoP executive roles](#)
- Function independently on [PAA Collaborate](#)
- Uphold the objectives of PAA
- Coordinate efforts and information with other elements of the PAA organization

## Practice Advisors

The PAA Practice Advisor program, founded in 1995, is an award-winning peer-support program for professional assistance and advice that enhances professional practice.

Practice Advisors are exemplar senior psychologists with diverse areas of expertise and an abundance of experience. Our Practice Advisors provides full and life members with collegial, confidential expert advice on specific professional practice issues. PAA matches practice advisors from diverse areas of expertise to assist psychologists working through clinical/practice situations.

## Need to know

### Communication

Details about your volunteer role will be emailed to you before your shift. After some roles, we may send out brief surveys asking for feedback about your volunteer experience.

We encourage volunteers to contact us with any issues, concerns and/or feedback via phone or email.

### Meetings and Events

Committee, task force and Council meetings usually take place at the PAA Office or via Zoom. Other events may take place at various local facilities.

### Expenses

Some volunteer contributions incur special expenses, ie) parking downtown. We don't want that to be a burden. Pre-approved expenses, consistent with PAA policies, will be reimbursed. As always, ask! Contact us at [paa@paa-ab.ca](mailto:paa@paa-ab.ca).

### Code of Conduct

As a volunteer, you aren't just a key contributor to the profession, but you are also an ambassador of the association. As such, we expect our volunteers to:

- Conduct PAA business with honesty, integrity and fairness
- Behave in an appropriate and professional manner
- Treat everyone, including staff, fellow volunteers and event guests, with dignity and respect
- Communicate openly on all matters

Failure to do so may be grounds for volunteer dismissal.

### Conflict of Interest

As a volunteer, you are responsible for disclosing to PAA any situations in which personal interests may conflict with volunteer duties. PAA will then determine whether a conflict exists and take steps to resolve it. If PAA determines that a volunteer has failed to declare and resolve a conflict of interest situation, PAA will assess whether the obligation of service has been breached. Breaches deemed to be severe could result in the termination of the volunteer's role.

### Healthy Workplace

PAA is committed to providing a work environment where all stakeholders are treated equitably and where members of diverse groups are welcomed and valued. PAA will not tolerate harassment and/or discrimination based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, religion, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family status, pardoned criminal offenses or any other legally-protected characteristic.

## Dress Code

Dress code is typically business casual but varies from event to event. Specific dress codes will be communicated in email confirmations prior to your role. You may be asked to wear a name tag, which will be provided by us.

## Resignation & Dismissal

Volunteers are free to resign from their role with the PAA at any time, preferably within 48 hours of an event so that PAA can find a replacement. Please notify us via email if you are no longer interested in volunteering.

Dismissal of a volunteer will occur only as a last resort and will generally take place following progressive disciplinary actions, where possible.

Grounds for volunteer dismissal may include but are not limited to: missing more than one volunteer shift without notice; illegal, violent or unsafe acts; failure to abide by PAA policies and procedures; gross misconduct; theft or misuse of property or funds, equipment or materials; being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while performing volunteer duties. Immediate dismissal of a volunteer may occur in extreme cases.

## Grievance

Volunteers have the right to raise grievances about any matter related to their volunteering. The grievance procedure is in place to ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in a fair manner. If a volunteer has a complaint, please first discuss this with the Administrative Officer. If the volunteer does not feel comfortable bringing up their complaint with the Administrative Officer, then the matter should be referred to the CEO. If the matter is not resolved at this point, the complaint should be made in writing to the President of PAA's Board of Directors. In all cases, the matter will be dealt with in a timely manner and treated confidentially.

## Confidentiality

All PAA volunteers are required to receive and treat all information confidentially. In certain situations, volunteers may have access to personal information (for example, a sign-in sheet at an event). Volunteers may also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement form before their shift. PAA Board Members will complete an updated oath of confidentiality yearly at the May new board meeting.

## Safety

At meetings and events, please take the time to brief yourself on the nearest fire exits, muster point and what to do in case of an emergency. In case of an emergency, please phone 911 and inform the nearest staff member as soon as possible. Some events may require further safety procedures which will be detailed onsite at your shift.

## What's in it for you?

Volunteering with PAA offers many personal benefits, such as:

- Sharing knowledge, expertise and experience with others
- Promoting the profession of psychology and reaching out to local communities
- Liaising with other organizations and associations
- Learning and refining leadership skills
- Developing new skills and discovering new experiences
- Enjoying the support and recognition of your peers
- Can boost your CV
- You receive an EXP+ certificate

### Why be a member

As a PAA volunteer and member, you are entitled to many benefits, including special rates for professional liability insurance, discounts for goods & services, access to practice advisors, and awards. You can also access discounted, accredited, & responsive continuing professional development opportunities.

### Networking

Volunteering with PAA can help you advance your professional identity and network with other professionals, psychologists, students, and affiliates.

### Volunteer Recognition

- Awards: Each year, PAA recognizes companies, psychologists and other individuals through a series of awards. Volunteers may be nominated for applicable awards. Award recipients are honoured at our Awards & Welcome to the Profession Banquet. Volunteers receive an invitation to the event.
- Letters of Recommendation: Upon request, we can provide letters of recommendation for long-term volunteers and can provide confirmation letters of volunteer commitment for all other volunteers.
- Symposium: Volunteers may be recognized in PAA's newsletter or social media.

## Help us get the word out!

As our valued contributor, PAA is committed to staying connected with you.

### Feedback

PAA is committed to ongoing improvements of our Volunteer Program. Contact our Administrative Officer anytime to let us know how your volunteering experience went. Tell us what went well, and how we can improve.

### Testimonials

Want to share your story? Help PAA share the benefits of being an engaged contributor. Email our Communications Officer a picture and caption of your volunteer experience (25 words or less) so we can share it in our communications.

### Social Media

A full listing of our social media accounts is available on our website. Be sure to connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#). And Instagram

### Website

Visit the PAA website regularly for current volunteer postings.

### Word of mouth

We need more people like you! As a current volunteer, you play a key role in the future of our volunteer program by helping us recruit and engage new volunteers. You can get the word out by sharing your volunteer experiences with your peers and colleagues.

**Thank you for contributing to PAA!**

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