

# Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Alberta



## Policies and Procedures Manual for Volunteers

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# 1. ABOUT THE AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

## 1.1 Background

When the ALS Society of Alberta was first incorporated in 1986, it was driven purely by volunteer efforts. As the organization's scope of activities and budget grew, paid staff positions were gradually introduced. This transition did not diminish the importance of the role of the volunteers. It is difficult for the current staff to be able to accurately gauge the impact of volunteers for the first decade of the organization's existence as records pertaining to these impacts are elusive. However, we do know that it was the passion of volunteers that brought the organization into existence and it is this continued passion which bolsters its success today.

Traditionally the ALS Society of Alberta has attracted people with a wide range of backgrounds and skills and a shared passion to help the Society achieve its mission to make "everyday the best possible day for people with ALS by providing support, facilitating the provision of care, promoting awareness and helping find a cure". This variety in backgrounds and skills is testament to the indiscriminate nature of this disease; every race, social class and gender is susceptible.

## 1.2 Volunteer Philosophy

The ALS Society of Alberta values the contribution made by volunteers and seeks to recognize that by:

- Acknowledging that the relationship between volunteers and the Society as a reciprocal one;
- Acknowledging that volunteers exercise free choice in committing to the Society;
- Acknowledging that volunteers deserve the same treatment and respect as paid employees and that the Society can expect the same standards of its volunteers as it expects of its paid employees;
- Ensuring volunteers are not used to replace paid staff positions;
- Ensuring that volunteers are only expected to carry out work to which they have agreed;
- Acknowledging the contribution of volunteers in Society records and keeping track of the volunteer hours worked;
- Providing an opportunity for volunteers to develop skills and experience;
- Providing support in the form of clear policy guidelines, training, recognition and the provision of references if requested and applicable.

## 1.3 Mission, Vision, Value Statements

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The ALS Society of Alberta is dedicated to making everyday the best possible day for people with ALS by providing support, facilitating the provision of care, promoting awareness and helping find a cure.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL VISION:**

Through increased, province-wide awareness, provide hope and access to equitable levels of support for people affected by ALS.

## **VALUES STATEMENTS:**

The purpose of values statements is that they assist in achieving the mission of the ALS Society of Alberta. All volunteers and staff of the ALS Society of Alberta will adopt the shared values while conducting their day-to-day duties.

**RESPECT** - We treat everyone as people first and foremost and respect their rights and responsibilities.

**CARING** - We show compassion. We help those in need and avoid harming others.

**SERVICE** - We are involved in efforts to serve the needs of people affected by ALS without the motive of personal gain. We provide services in a fair and equitable manner.

**ACCOUNTABILITY** – We are responsible for our decisions and actions on behalf of the society. We demonstrate due diligence in fulfilling our commitments to our members, their families, and friends, volunteers, funders, and all others who provide support to our members. We are committed to the continuous improvement of our Society for the betterment of our members.

**PASSION** - We demonstrate a strong, emotional enthusiasm in our endeavours to make a positive difference in the lives of people affected by ALS. We communicate this enthusiasm to others in an attempt to encourage others to share in our vision.

**QUALITY OF LIFE** - We endeavour to ensure that all people in Alberta with ALS are afforded the highest level of support and services.

## **2. ALS SOCIETY OF ALBERTA'S COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The safety, welfare, and health of employees, volunteers and clients are a high priority in all of the ALS Society of Alberta's operations.

The ALS Society of Alberta's Volunteer Program Staff will ensure a risk management process is in place and maintained that is consistent with the overall risk management policy of the ALS Society of Alberta. This process will involve assessing and managing risk in the following areas:

- Volunteer program planning
- Job design
- Recruitment and intake screening of volunteers
- Orientation and training
- Supervision and performance management
- Evaluation of programs and services

Risk management ensures the overall viability of the organization through:

- Enhancing the quality of the service delivered;
- Promoting accountability to clients and funders;
- Enhancing the safety of clients, caregivers and paid staff/volunteers
- Identifying and reducing or eliminating potentially harmful situations;
- Avoiding liability situations that could impact significantly on the organization's financial stability and reputation;
- Making paid staff and volunteers more aware of risk during work related activities;
- Instilling clients' confidence in the organization and its services.

### **2.2 Volunteer Awards and Acknowledgements**

The ALS Society of Alberta is grateful for the efforts of all of our volunteers. When the opportunity and resources exist to be able to recognize one or more of our volunteers, an attempt to have this happen will be made.

### **2.3 Written References**

Volunteers can request that reference letters be provided by the staff person in charge of the volunteer program or their staff supervisor once their probationary term has elapsed. Staff retain the right to turn down such a request for a reference letter on the basis that the staff person does not feel that he/she knows enough about the volunteer's skills and work habits or because the staff person is being asked to make comments with which he/she does not agree.

### **2.4 Written Confirmation of Volunteer Involvement**

Volunteers may also request that a letter confirming their voluntary involvement be provided. Such requests must be accommodated by staff.

## **2.5 Confidentiality**

Personal information regarding the ALS Society's volunteers will be subject to the standards set forth in the ALS Society of Alberta's confidentiality agreement and in the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA).

All volunteer files contain confidential information and must be kept in a locked file cabinet.

Volunteers may request access to their personal file in the presence of the Volunteer Program Coordinator at any time.

## **2.6 Reimbursement**

Volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of pre-approved expenses incurred while fulfilling assigned duties. All expenses must be pre-approved by the Volunteer Program Coordinator or by a permanent, full-time staff member. Items that typically may be expensed are mileage (\$0.40 per kilometre) and event related supplies. Under special circumstances, items parking fees and meals consumed while in the role of a volunteer may be expensed.

To receive reimbursement, an Expense Claim form must be completed and submitted with the related receipts attached within 30 days of the incurred expense.

## **2.7 Photo Release**

Volunteers are asked to fill out a photo release form that gives permission to the Society to use photographs that may be taken of the volunteer while participating in ALS Society of Alberta activities for the purposes of awareness, advocacy or fundraising. The pictures may be used in either print format or on the ALS Society of Alberta's website. Volunteers are not required to give such consent in order to volunteer with the organization.

## 3. RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, SUPERVISION, POLICIES

### 3.1 Recruitment Policy

The ALS Society of Alberta's recruitment policy is to fulfill the needs of the organization as well as to provide a beneficial experience for volunteers.

The ALS Society of Alberta applies the principles of equal opportunity to its volunteer recruitment processes and will not withhold a volunteer job on the basis of race, age, gender or religion. The qualifications for volunteer recruitment, promotion or advancement will be the individual's ability and suitability to perform the positions required tasks on behalf of the ALS Society of Alberta.

### 3.2 Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who by choice and without financial compensation contributes time and service to assist an organization in fulfilling its mission.

Examples of the impacts of ALS Society of Alberta volunteer efforts:

**INFORMATION BOOTHS:** Throughout the year there are many opportunities to create public awareness that are extended by other not-for-profit organizations, government offices, corporations, post secondary institutions, festivals and community groups. Volunteer commitments to host such booths allow the staff to tend to their work responsibilities while ensuring that efforts are made to educate the public about ALS. These opportunities provide added exposure to the disease, the organization and upcoming special events.

**WALK FOR ALS:** Several Walks for ALS are held annually in various locations across Alberta. These are primarily volunteer-driven with some coaching from ALS Society of Alberta and ALS Society of Canada staff. The largest Walk for ALS in Alberta takes place in Edmonton. Several of the smaller Walks for ALS are enjoying the achievement of progressively more successful fundraising benchmarks from year to year.

**BETTY'S RUN FOR ALS:** In 1997 volunteers in Calgary drew together to organize a fundraising run called "This One's For Betty" in honour of Betty Norman who would pass away from ALS just weeks after the inaugural event. Each year since, there has been a Betty's Run for ALS fundraiser organized by volunteers with very little staff involvement. As of 2006, this event has raised nearly \$2 million to support the ALS Society of Alberta as well as to go toward funding research initiatives by the ALS Society of Canada.

**OFFICE ADMINISTRATION:** Every year the North Region office relies on hundreds of donated hours to keep administration costs low and to relieve the workload of the office's staff. There are only two staff members who work out of this office so having extra help makes a big difference. Hundreds of volunteer hours are donated in the Calgary office performing administrative duties as all donation receipts are managed from this office and this process requires that all receipts are checked over carefully for verification of the information before being mailed.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The very important governance function of the organization is the responsibility of the group of volunteers that comprise the Board of Directors. These individuals are legally and financially responsible for the organization.

**OTHER VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:** Volunteer activities at the ALS Society of Alberta can range from taking pictures at special events to researching a topic on behalf of a staff member to organizing volunteers for upcoming casinos. Volunteer opportunities are becoming more varied as the volunteer program is further developed.

The ALS Society of Alberta's Volunteer Program seeks to bring substantial benefit to:

- People with ALS
- The families of people with ALS
- Volunteers
- The organization as a whole
- Staff
- The wider community

The contribution of volunteers is recognized as being vital to the ALS Society of Alberta's operations. The ALS Society of Alberta and its staff recognize and value the reciprocal nature of the beneficial relationship between the organization and the individual volunteer and is committed to providing a volunteer program which both supports the work of the Society and meets the expectations and needs of individual volunteers.

### **3.3 Rights of Volunteers**

ALS Society of Alberta volunteers have a RIGHT to:

- receive information about the organization's purpose, work, values and volunteer related policy
- a clearly written description of the work he/she will undertake and of assigned tasks within the organization
- have their personal information stored in a private and confidential manner
- be seen as a valued part of the organization through inclusion at training sessions, meeting, social functions, etc.
- receive appropriate training
- have job supervision provided by a staff member or designate
- know who to turn to with problems and difficulties
- be recognized and have his/her work valued by the organization
- make mistakes and learn from them
- express his/her views and opinions on a subject
- be listened to and taken seriously by staff members
- receive regular and constructive feedback on performance
- work in a safe environment
- be covered by insurance
- have choices and be able to negotiate on those choices

- be able to say no
- carry out voluntary work without being exploited
- be reimbursed for any agreed travel expenses
- be consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect work
- be free from discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, race, sexuality, religion and disability
- be provided with suitable tools and materials to fulfill responsibilities.

### **3.4 Responsibilities of Volunteers**

Volunteer at the ALS Society of Alberta have the RESPONSIBILITY to:

- be reliable
- except in the direst emergency, notify the ALS Society of Alberta two hours before the volunteer's scheduled start time, if the volunteer is unable to work or anticipates being tardy
- carry out work to the best of his/her ability and do so in a way that corresponds to the aims and values of the organization
- attend the place of work at the times agreed
- agree to the organization's volunteer policy
- respect confidentiality
- respect the rights for users and other workers within the organization
- be honest if there are problems
- attend training sessions and/or support meetings if these are agreed as part of the volunteering role
- give feedback, communicating relevant and important information to an appropriate staff member
- be committed to the work but also to recognize that there are personal and external limitations on time commitment
- acknowledge decisions made by others
- ask for help or support when needed
- record hours volunteered in the Volunteer Hour Log Book.

Volunteers must record the volunteer hours that they work in the office Volunteer Hour Log Book. If the volunteer is performing his/her responsibilities outside of the office, these hours can be emailed, telephoned or mailed to his/her volunteer program contact. Clear volunteer records can be very helpful when pursuing funding grants and are also required for demonstrating accountability to funders and stakeholders, planning and evaluation purposes, demonstrating adherence to policies, recognition of volunteers and keeping track of human resources.

### **3.5 Probation**

Volunteers and their positions will be evaluated after 3 months and annually thereafter until the volunteer has changed positions, left the ALS Society of Alberta or has been terminated by the Society. Board volunteers and their positions will be evaluated after 6 months and annually thereafter. Individuals who are short-term or event volunteers may not receive an evaluation. Evaluations will be conducted by the volunteer's supervisor or, in the case of Board volunteers, by the President and Vice-president. A written record of

evaluations will be kept in the volunteer's file and a copy of the evaluation will be given to the volunteer for their records.

When a volunteer changes positions they will be re-evaluated in their new position after 1 month and annually thereafter.

### **3.6 Training and Support**

Staff members who are supervising volunteers are expected to provide adequate training and support to enable these volunteers to properly carry out their prescribed duties. Volunteers are encouraged to develop and expand their personal skills to maintain and enhance the ALS Society of Alberta's effectiveness. Personal and professional development opportunities for volunteers will arise and may be offered as optional training to select volunteers where appropriate and financially feasible.

No volunteer will be placed in a position for which he/she is not qualified or for which the ALS Society of Alberta can not provide adequate training. Volunteers will be fully and honestly informed of the expectations and responsibilities of their volunteer position along with any risk or liability.

### **3.7 Supervision and Line of Authority**

All volunteers will be informed as to who is their direct staff supervisor. Volunteers are encouraged to approach their supervisor with any concerns or questions that relate to their responsibilities. Volunteers are encouraged to seek counsel from the Volunteer Program Coordinator with any organizational or general volunteer related questions or concerns.

### **3.8 Insurance Coverage for Volunteers**

The Executive Director of the ALS Society of Alberta will be responsible for ensuring that the organization's insurance coverage for volunteers is up-to-date and provides a reasonable level of coverage.

Volunteers will be covered for general liability during the course of their volunteer work. This includes Directors' and Officers' liability insurance. Volunteers are insured only when performing their duties as outlined in their volunteer job description and only when they have recorded their hours.

### **3.9 Confidentiality Agreement**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they have access while serving as a volunteer.

All information concerning clients, clients' families, staff members and other volunteers will be held in the strictest confidence and shared only within the ALS Society of Alberta to the degree necessary to offer appropriate services.

No files or records can be removed from the ALS Society of Alberta offices without written consent of the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Volunteers are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. Compliance with this agreement is a condition of their involvement with the ALS Society of Alberta. Failure to maintain confidentiality is cause for immediate dismissal.

### **3.10 Conflict of Interest**

All volunteers must disclose any conflict of interest with any activity or program of the Society, whether personal, philosophical, business, or financial; where such interests might be perceived as being in real, potential or apparent conflict with their duties for the Society.

Continued involvement of the volunteer with the ALS Society of Alberta after such a conflict is noted will depend on the nature of the conflict and be at the discretion of the ALS Society of Alberta Board of Directors and/or the Executive Director.

While not exhaustive, disclosures of potential conflicts of interest include:

- any position or financial interest held in any concern from which the Society purchases goods or services;
- any position or financial interest held in any concern that is in competition with the Society;
- any direct or indirect competition with the Society in the purchase or sale of services, goods, interests, property or rights of property;
- any governing body, memberships, managerial or consultative relations with any outside concern that competes or does business with the Society;
- any gifts, excessive entertainment or funds received from any outside concern that provides goods or services to the Society, seeks to provide the same, competes with the Society or does business with the Society.

### **3.11 Crisis Communication**

The ALS Society of Alberta has strict policy in place regarding communication during times of crisis. Crisis communication refers to communications regarding sensitive or unusual matters which are:

- escalating in intensity;
- under close scrutiny of the media or government;
- interfering with normal operations of business;
- jeopardizing the positive public image of the organization;
- potentially damaging to the organization's bottom line.

If a volunteer is contacted by the media for an opinion or comment on any issue relevant to the ALS Society of Alberta, the media should be directed to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be the spokesperson for the Society, acting in accordance with the decisions and discussion of the board of directors. Board members, staff and volunteers who are implementing a planned promotional or fund development activity may communicate with the media regarding that specific event and the basic purpose of the Society. However, if a question arises regarding the opinion, positions on issues or philosophy of the Society, the media should be directed to speak with the Executive Director.

### **3.12 Occupational Health and Safety**

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in such a way that their personal safety and the safety of individuals around them are preserved. If an unsafe practice by either staff or another volunteer is observed, the volunteer should report this activity to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

### **3.13 Harassment**

The ALS Society of Alberta is committed to a healthy, harassment-free environment for its entire staff, volunteers and clients. The ALS Society of Alberta has developed policies to prevent harassment of any type and to deal quickly and effectively with any incident that might occur.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, language, citizenship, religious beliefs, gender, mental or physical disability, marital status, family status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or source of income.

Sexual harassment, being discrimination on the grounds of gender, is a violation of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act. Unwanted sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favours, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment. This conduct can include such things as pinching, patting, rubbing or leering, “dirty” jokes, pictures or pornographic materials, comments, suggestions, innuendoes, requests or demands of a sexual nature. The behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered sexual harassment.

All harassment is offensive and in many cases it intimidates others. It will not be tolerated within the ALS Society of Alberta.

### **3.14 Internal Complaint Procedure**

Any volunteer who feels that he/she is experiencing any form of harassment or discrimination must:

1. Tell the harasser that his/her behaviour is unwelcome and ask him/her to stop.
2. Keep a record of incidents including date, time, location, possible witnesses, what happened, and your response.
3. Report the incident to his/her immediate supervisor or, if the supervisor is the cause of the problem, to the next level of uninvolved management.

Every reported incident of discrimination or harassment will be thoroughly investigated by the supervisor or manager receiving the report. Under no circumstances should a complaint be dismissed or downplayed nor should a complainant be told to deal with it personally.

If the investigation reveals evidence to support the complaint of harassment, the harasser will be disciplined appropriately. Discipline may include suspension or dismissal and the incident will be documented in the harasser’s file. If the

complaint is not upheld then no documentation concerning the complaint is placed in the file of the alleged harasser.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, the ALS Society of Alberta will inform the complainant and the alleged harasser of the results of the investigation.

The ALS Society of Alberta will respect the confidences and identity of the volunteer and the circumstances of the complaint, except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigating or taking disciplinary action in relation to the complaint or where such disclosure is required by law.

### **3.15 Dismissal**

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the ALS Society of Alberta or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal.

Dismissal of volunteers will normally follow a progressive discipline process:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Disciplinary suspension
4. Dismissal

### **3.16 Immediate Dismissal**

Volunteers may be discharged without warning for just cause.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to maintain the ALS Society's confidentiality agreement
2. Gross misconduct or insubordination
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
4. Theft of property or misuse of the ALS Society of Alberta's funds, equipment or materials
5. Abuse of clients or co-workers
6. Failure to abide by the Society's policies or procedures
7. Unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of the ALS Society of Alberta and/or its objectives

### **3.17 Exit Interviews**

All resigning volunteers are offered the opportunity to complete an exit interview with their staff supervisor and the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Exit interviews are an important source of valuable information for continuing to develop and improve the volunteer program in the future.

## **4. MANUAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Implementation of the Volunteer Manual**

The information contained in this manual is consistent with the overall governance and operation policies and procedures of the ALS Society of Alberta. Volunteer manual policies and procedures should be followed consistently and equitably. These policies and procedures are consistent with national and provincial Human Rights Codes, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and provincial employment standards legislation.

Volunteer manual policies and procedures are to be communicated to all staff and volunteers. The ALS Society of Alberta's Manual for Volunteers is available on the ALS Alberta website at [www.alsab.ca/volunteers/](http://www.alsab.ca/volunteers/).

### **4.2 Manual Revisions**

The board's HR Committee, staff, clients or volunteers may propose policy revisions to this manual by preparing a draft revision. The Volunteer Manual is a document which will be subject to change as circumstances require. The Manual will be reviewed annually by the HR Committee.

### **4.3 Contact Information**

Contact the ALS Society of Alberta for more information about the manual or about volunteering opportunities at the ALS Society of Alberta.

Coordinator of Volunteer Programs  
info@alsab.ca  
Provincial ALS Office  
Suite 400, 320 – 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW  
Calgary, AB T2S 0J2  
(403) 228-3857  
Or Toll Free 1-888-309-1111  
Fax: (403) 228-7752

#### **Phyllis Javorsky**

Administration & Volunteer Services  
phyllis@alsab.ca  
North Region ALS Office  
Suite 410, 11456 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 0M1  
(780) 487-0754  
Or Toll Free 1-866-447-0754  
Fax: (780) 486-3604

### **4.4 Sources of More Information**

The ALS Society of Alberta website ([www.alsab.ca](http://www.alsab.ca)) is a good resource to find more information about ALS, the ALS Society of Alberta and its activities. The organization's financial reports and activities are included in the Society's Annual Reports which are available electronically and can be accessed at <http://www.alsab.ca/annualreport.aspx>. To be mailed the hard copy of one or more of these reports, contact the Office Administrator at 403-228-3857 or toll free outside of the Calgary area at 1-888-309-1111. The ALS Society of Alberta is affiliated with the ALS Society of Canada; a separate incorporated entity which has its own website at [www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca).

## 4.5 Organizational Chart



