

Policy & Procedure Manuals...

Why is it important?

Developing a Policy & Procedure Manual

All registered organizations have Objects and Bylaws, known as governance documents. The missing piece for many organizations is the Policies & Procedures Manual that supports the effective operation of the Board of Directors and management of the assets. It is a myth that Board makes policy and the staff implements. In reality, only boards of grassroots, non staff organizations ever really write or make policies. In all other organizations the senior staff identifies the need for policies and drafts them. The board reviews, questions, amends and ultimately approves the policies.

Benefits of a policy & procedures manual:

It saves time and effort - Process are outlined, sources of information and materials are identified and it provides a new volunteer guidance.

Volunteer recruitment – When a volunteer is considering a Board or committee position, taking on a task that has been done before, or planning an event the guiding policies and procedures are valuable.

Avoiding conflict & misunderstanding – If expectations are clearly defined and others have the same information misunderstandings are less frequent and when they arise more quickly resolved.

Set direction – Clear policy plans for the organization and the service areas provides direction for committees and the Board in taking the organization forward.

Decision making – Approved plans set direction for good decision making by voluntary board members and staff. It avoids quick decisions being made without sufficient consideration.

Orientation for new volunteers – Whether the person is new to the organization or assuming a new task, policies and procedures provide direction for the undertaking

Often the terms policies & procedures are linked together. For clarity remember

POLICIES answer the questions “why” and “what” must or must not happen, and are the broad direction required to put your goals into action.

PROCEDURES answer the question “how” and are the details that take policies to action. The individual tasks required for the “how” are left to the individual or group implementing the “how”.

Areas of Policy Development:

1. Framework policies

Including bylaws, purpose, mission, core beliefs, values, mandate are the responsibility of the board and/or the membership. Framework and some governance policies are approved by the membership. If the changes affect the organizational Objects or Bylaws, the amendments require filing with Alberta Registry, and changes are not effective until filing is approved by Societies Registry.

2. Governance Policies

How the board will manage itself. Examples are; the type of governance structure, recruitment, orientation, code of conduct, conflict of interest. These policies are about the board and for the board.

3. Operational policies

These policies relate to service, finances, and human resources and administration of the organization.

Types of policy and procedure to consider:

Here are four general categories and suggested topics. There will be many more as day to day business will dictate where there is need to develop a policy and the procedure to ensure the “how.”

Human Resources

Volunteer & staff management
Confidentiality
Code of conduct/ethics
Nepotism
Membership

Facility & Equipment

Rental operations
Hours of operation
Equipment purchase, maintenance & disposal
Safety
Office Management

Financial Management

Conflict of interest
Financial planning and management
Budgeting and record access
Fund raising
Insurance & staff benefits

Programs & Services

Program development & delivery
Program evaluation
Complaints
Privacy/security/safety
Finance & management