



MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Volunteer Handbook



Dear MFRC Volunteer:

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at the Edmonton Garrison Military Family Resource Centre.

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities from which to choose. We want to ensure that your experience with us is a good match for both you and the MFRC. That is why we have asked you to attend an orientation session, and why we are providing you with this handbook.

You will find useful information that you can apply right from the start. Volunteers who are informed tend to enjoy their volunteer experience more. Please let us know if you have any questions about your needs as a volunteer, how your skills could assist our organization or how we can make your time with us more enjoyable.

The MFRC values the contributions of our volunteers. Thank you for helping military families be the strength behind the uniform.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Woodford".

Donna Woodford
Community Development Coordinator

EDMONTON GARRISON MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Vision

The Edmonton Garrison Military Family Resource Centre will be the recognised leader in military family support.

Mission

The Edmonton Garrison Military Family Resource Centre provides exemplary support, resources, programs and services that enhance the strength and resilience of military families to meet the unique challenges of military life.

More than ever, the Canadian Forces are being called on to provide support both nationally and internationally: frequent relocations, long family separations during training, domestic operations and international deployments are realities for military families.

The well-being and the strength of military families are contributing factors to the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces.

Core Values

Strong families are the foundation/cornerstone of the Canadian Forces. In serving military families we commit to provide:

1. **Accountability:** We will be diligent, reliable, fair and consistent in all our actions and efficient and effective stewards of the resources entrusted to us.
2. **Integrity:** Honesty, transparency and the highest standards of conduct and moral behaviour are the hallmarks of the way we conduct our business.
3. **Accessibility:** We commit, without discrimination, to the delivery of affordable, quality programs and services, which foster diversity, respect and equity.
4. **Ethical Conduct:** All members of the Centre will maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct, without limiting their resourcefulness and independent thinking, through honourable actions and behaviour which uphold the values of the Centre, supported by an awareness of and compliance with Centre policies and procedures, government legislation and relevant professional standards.
5. **Innovation:** We seek to create and maintain an entrepreneurial environment, which elicits diverse, progressive, creative and challenging programs and services to meet the future needs of military families.

MFRC Volunteer Opportunities

Administrative Support Volunteer – Provide administrative support to program coordinators and other staff members.

Board of Directors – Govern and direct the vision and mission of the MFRC.

Books for Babies Helper – Supervise the children so that parents can fully participate in the program.

Christmas Gift Wrap Volunteer – Assist the MFRC with our Christmas Gift Wrap fundraiser, by wrapping Christmas gifts for customers at Londonderry Mall.

Daycare Assistant – Assist the daycare staff with activities, snacks and general duties.

Deployment Event Volunteers – Provide a warm welcome and assist and support families attending deployment events, such as Pizza & Movie Nights, Brunches, etc.

EDGE Youth Centre Adult Mentor – Be a positive role model for the youth within the MFRC and the EDGE Youth Centre. Chaperoning at dances.

French Homework Club Volunteers – To assist elementary aged children with developing their French skills by helping them with their homework.

Grandparents in the House – Give children and their parents the opportunity to interact with grandparent-aged people.

Parents & Tots Childcare Assistant – Provide childcare when parents are participating in the educational component of Parents and Tots.

Parents & Tots Facilitator – Lead the adult education components of Parents and Tots program.

Playgroup Assistant – Assist the Playgroup Supervisor and support parents and children participating in the Playgroup.

Playschool/Terrific Twos Volunteer: To provide an opportunity for parents to be actively involved in their child's playschool education, while assisting in the classroom and on field trips.

Rhythm & Rhyme Assistant – Supervise children so that parents can fully participate in the program.

Special Events Volunteer – Provide assistance with a variety of special events including community events like Canada Day, fundraisers like our Annual Golf Tournament, Chalks, public relations opportunities, etc.

Volunteer Advisory Committee member -- Emphasizes the enhancement of the volunteer program while empowering individuals to become active members of their community.

Warmline Volunteer – Support families of deployed soldiers with regular phone contact.

Yellow Ribbon Volunteer – Assist with our Yellow Ribbon fundraising campaign by selling Yellow Ribbon Merchandise at various venues and locations throughout the year.

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) – This is for youth who want to volunteer to help give leadership to the Edge teen centre.

Becoming a Volunteer

- When you begin volunteering at our Centre, you will need to complete our volunteer intake procedure. This involves:
 - A completed volunteer application form
 - A clear Police Information Check
 - A clear Child Intervention Check
 - Providing us with 2 Character References
- To ensure that all volunteers meet the highest standards, references will be checked on all potential volunteers.
- Volunteers will be provided a position description prior to beginning their assignment(s).
- Volunteers will be recruited without regard to rank, gender, physical or mental handicap, age, race, or sexual orientation. Military rank plays no role in the Volunteer Services program at the MFRC.
- Special needs volunteering (youth, seniors, ethnocultural populations, individuals who are physically or developmentally disabled) is encouraged at the MFRC.

Administrative Details

- Volunteers will receive a telephone call, from the Community Development Coordinator, at the end of their first month with the MFRC. A written appraisal will be provided at the end of six months, and annually thereafter. Special Event volunteers will receive a telephone call, from the Community Development Coordinator, after the special event in order to provide 2-way feedback between the volunteer and the Community Development Coordinator.
- Volunteers should wear nametags while performing their duties in the MFRC.
- Parking is available in our parking lot. Bus service to the MFRC is extremely limited.
- A dress code is in effect for all volunteers of the MFRC:
 - Jeans are acceptable, provided that they are clean and in good repair.
 - Undergarments must not be visible.
 - Items that should not be worn include sweat pants, short-shorts, spandex and other form fitting pants, revealing tops, shirts printed with objectionable material, strapless dresses, mini-skirts, beach sandals, slippers, hats and baseball caps.
 - Hats and baseball caps are entirely appropriate if the volunteer work is taking place out of doors.
 - Volunteers should maintain well-kept hair, good personal hygiene and general neat grooming.
- The MFRC strives to be a **scents-free environment**. Volunteers should refrain from wearing scented products.
- Volunteers will not wear any eyebrow, mouth or tongue piercing.
- Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Volunteers may be viewed as agents of the MFRC, even when not on official MFRC duty.
- When making calls on behalf of the MFRC, volunteers should speak in a courteous and professional manner.
- The MFRC provides liability insurance coverage for volunteers. That said, volunteers are encouraged to check with their own insurance provider regarding insurance needs as they relate to their volunteer work.
- If a volunteer is approached by the media, the volunteer will seek the counsel of the Marketing & Promotions Coordinator, the Executive Director or the Community Development Coordinator.
- Volunteers of the MFRC have the opportunity to contribute to our future success and growth by submitting suggestions for improvement or cost savings ideas.

- Personal use of the MFRC telephones for long-distance and toll calls is not permitted. The mail is reserved for business purposes only.
- When using MFRC property, volunteers are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, or tools appear to be damaged, defective or in need of repair.
- Volunteers are not to use passwords, access files or retrieve any stored information without prior authorization.
- Volunteers are not to use MFRC computers in ways that are disruptive, offensive or harmful.
- Volunteers will not be involved in any business, commercial or financial interest which might be construed as being in real, potential or apparent conflict with their official duties with the MFRC.
- The MFRC will keep a record of the number of hours volunteers contribute to the MFRC.
- Volunteers are expected to sign in and out at the Front Office whenever they are volunteering in the MFRC building.
- Volunteers, who work off-site, must call or email their hours to their supervisor or the Community Development Coordinator.
- In order to provide reliable service, volunteers are expected to be dependable and punctual. Volunteers are to inform their supervisor or the Community Development Coordinator if they are unable to work at their scheduled time by 9:00 a.m. for morning duties, and by 12:30 p.m. for afternoon duties.
- If a volunteer is going on holidays or will be absent for a lengthy period of time, it is important that the volunteer notify their immediate supervisor or the Community Development Coordinator in advance of the absence.
- Volunteers who are assigned to work at special events, will be asked to sign a waiver at the beginning of the volunteer shift.
- Volunteers may apply to the Community Development Coordinator for a Leave of Absence (for example, during an overseas tour, after having a baby, etc.). Volunteers should give their supervisor at least two weeks notice prior to their leave so that, if needed, a replacement can be scheduled to cover their assignment.
- Smoking is not permitted in any DND building. Furthermore, smoking is not permitted in the presence of any program participants under the age of 18.

- Volunteers should inform the Community Development Coordinator of any change of address, phone number, email address or name as soon as possible
- Volunteers are entitled to appropriate rest and meal breaks, depending on the length of their volunteer commitment.
 - Volunteers are entitled to one 15-minute rest period for each 2 hours worked.
 - Volunteers are entitled to a half-hour meal break for each 4 hours worked.
 - Complimentary coffee and tea are available for volunteers in the lounge.
 - Volunteer break periods are flexible and should be taken in consultation with the program supervisor.
 - Volunteers are welcome to bring a lunch/dinner with them and keep it in the refrigerator in the lounge. Volunteers are also welcome to purchase their meals off-site. Meals are not usually provided for volunteers who are working in the MFRC.
 - At some special events, volunteers may be provided with a meal.
- Volunteers acting in an “Adult Mentor” capacity to youth at the MFRC must behave in a manner that is above reproach. Volunteers are to avoid any behaviour with youth that may be or may appear to be inappropriate. Volunteers are not permitted to meet with youth clients away from the MFRC and/or outside of their role as an Adult Mentor. Volunteers are not permitted to smoke in the presence of anyone under 18 years of age.
- Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual’s sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or other legally protected characteristic will be considered inappropriate. The behaviour need not be intentional in order to be considered harassment.
- The MFRC reserves the right to administer corrective action for unsatisfactory conduct or performance from volunteers.
- Volunteers are asked to give as much notice as possible when terminating their volunteer relationship.
- Volunteers may request a letter of recommendation from the Community Development Coordinator. The volunteer will be required to sign a waiver authorizing us to release information for the provision of a reference.
- If possible, an exit interview will be conducted to receive feedback from the volunteer on their experience with the MFRC
- Volunteers, who are volunteering during Casual Care hours, may be eligible for free childcare. If a volunteer requires childcare in order to volunteer, the Program Coordinator in charge of the volunteer will attempt to book a space in Casual Care. Only Coordinators may book this type of childcare – volunteers may not book this type of childcare themselves. If a volunteer is not able to make their volunteer shift, it is their responsibility to cancel their childcare spot.

Confidentiality

- Volunteers will be expected to maintain the strictest confidentiality of all information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer with the MFRC, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, clients or overall Agency business.
- Confidentiality refers to the protection or safeguarding of all personal information provided by a staff member or a volunteer or a client who chooses to access services.
- The Edmonton Garrison MFRC complies with the standards laid out in the *Privacy Code for the Military Family Services Program* which is a tailored version of the *Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information*.
- All files containing personal information are kept in locked filing cabinets.
- Documents containing personal information are never left lying around.
- We will gain your authorization before releasing information to a third party. For example, you will need to sign a waiver if you want us to provide a reference for you.
- Respect the privacy of others – and use the golden rule. Ask yourself how you would feel if that information was made public about you or your family.
- Be careful not to discuss sensitive or confidential information in hallways, or public areas.
- Be careful not to discuss sensitive or confidential information outside of the centre.
- In general, there are four main exceptions where we are unable to ensure confidentiality and these are:
 - **Child Protection** – when staff or volunteers learn of harm, or potential harm, to a child.
 - **Harm to Self** – when staff or volunteers learn of individuals intending to harm themselves.
 - **Harm to Others** – when staff or volunteers learn of harm, or potential harm, to others.
 - **Testimony in Court** – when compelled to do so under the authority of a statute or an order of a court.

Safety Issues

- Volunteers will always be supervised by a paid staff member or senior volunteer when volunteering off-site. If for some reason, the supervisor must step away, the volunteer will not be left alone long and will be able to reach the supervisor by cell phone.
- While on the MFRC premises and while conducting MFRC-related activities off the MFRC premises, no volunteer may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Cellular phones do not operate well within the MFRC building. Therefore, volunteers are encouraged to give the MFRC phone number to child care providers or other significant others, so that the volunteer can be reached in the event of an emergency. Volunteers are encouraged to bring a cellular phone with them when volunteering off-site.
- Volunteers must adhere to our policy of being a **nut-free facility**.
- Your supervisor will inform you of the fire procedure in your work area.
- Volunteers must have a current Class "C" First Aid Certificate in order to administer any first aid. In the event of an incident, the preferred course of action is that the first-aid trained staff on duty will administer any first aid that is required. In the unlikely event that this is not possible, or that the first-aid trained staff member requires assistance, volunteers who currently hold a Class "C" first aid certificate from an accredited institution (i.e. St. John's Ambulance) may administer first aid. The common law provinces have no laws making it obligatory for people to help someone in need.
- Volunteers will be shown where first aid supplies are kept at their Orientation Session.
- Volunteers may be eligible for first aid training from time-to-time.
- Any concerns about health or safety shall be reported to the Supervisor. At any time, if volunteers feel there is a potential danger to their health or safety, they are to evacuate the work environment.
- Volunteers will always be matched with a staff member or another volunteer, so that they have "back up" and are not left alone for significant periods of time
- All accidents, significant incidents or "near-misses" shall be reported immediately to the volunteer's supervisor. Serious incidents that should be reported include injury to anyone involved in a program whether client, volunteer or staff; alleged abuse or mistreatment of anyone involved in the program; complaints concerning safety; disasters; acts of violence; acts of terrorism; suspicions of terrorism; or any other occurrence that the reporting person deems to be serious or potentially serious. The Supervisor may require that the volunteer complete a Significant Incident Report or Injury Report
- For those volunteering with children, it is important to respect boys' wanting to use the gender-appropriate washroom. To ensure their safety, confirm that the washroom is empty before boys under the age of 6 years go into it. Knock on the men's room

door and if there is no answer step into the room to ensure it is empty before the boys go in. Once you have confirmed nobody else (adult or child) is using the room the boy(s) may go in and you can monitor the door from the hallway or the women's washroom if you can keep that door open and easily see the men's room door.

- We always accompany girls under the age of 6 into the women's washroom.
- Volunteers must comply with mandatory reporting laws in the area of suspected child abuse and neglect. *The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (2004)* clearly states that every person in Alberta is required under the Act to report his or her belief that a child is or may be in need of protection. In the course of their duties, if a volunteer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected or exposed to family violence, or may be abused, neglected or exposed to family violence, the suspicion and the information upon which it is based must be reported to your local *Child and Family Services Authority* at **1-800-387-5437**.

What is Child Abuse:

Child abuse is any act of maltreatment of a child by a parent or guardian that results in injury or harm. The four main types of abuse are:

- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse

Child abuse may be caused by:

- A lack of parenting skills
- Immature parents
- Parents with negative childhood experiences
- Social isolation
- Alcohol and/or drugs in the home
- Manufacture of drugs, drug trafficking or other forms of illegal drug activity in the home
- Family violence in the home
- Frequent family crisis
- Unrealistic expectations of a child's behaviour and capacities

Indicators of child abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruises, abrasions or cuts, especially in places of the body that children do not normally injure themselves during regular play or movement
- Burns which leave a pattern outlining the object which was used to make the burn, such as a cigarette, an iron, or an electric stove burner; burns on the hands, feet or buttocks caused by scalding water; and rope burns caused by being tied
- A child who is continually hungry, unsuitably dressed for the weather and/or always dirty
- A child with medical or dental problems that will not go away because they are not being treated, such as infected sores, decayed teeth or not having needed glasses
- A young child who is often left alone
- A child who shows unusual knowledge of sexual matters beyond their age of development, who exhibits sexualized behaviour around adults or other children
- A child who hints, or talks out rightly about sexual abuse
- A child or adolescent who repeatedly runs away from home
- A child or adolescent who is extremely withdrawn or aggressive