



Volunteer Handbook

March 2025



Welcome!

The BRIDGES Board of Directors and Staff would like to welcome you to our organization!

Volunteering with us is a social activity! It is our aim to provide you with opportunities to use your talents, develop desired skills and make meaningful connections with others in our community. We hope you will see the valuable impact your contribution to our work will have on our clients, guests, and the whole community.

As a non-profit society, we rely on volunteers for guidance and governance of our organization, to select and support the right staff to run the organization's day-to-day operations and deliver our mission, and to support that staff with human and financial resources that make our work possible. We have many kinds of volunteer roles available for a diverse and inclusive volunteer pool, and we're excited to have the chance to help you find your place with us.

Thank you sincerely for supporting Mental Health in Hinton, and for choosing to invest your time, talents, and energy into the work we do. We hope that you will find your work with BRIDGES to be enjoyable, meaningful, and rewarding!



Janice Baxter
Executive Director
info@bridgeshinton.org
780-865-4464

About The BRIDGES Society

Our Mission: The BRIDGES Society cultivates mental wellness with various programs, in a safe environment for everyone.

Our Vision: BRIDGES upholds excellence in mental health and wellness for the Hinton community.

How do we deliver our mission?

1. **Outreach & Referrals Program** (improve capacity and resilience for clients & community, support access to mental health supports and education, promote wellness programs and initiatives, reduce stigma surrounding mental illness, further our mission through community engagement, collaborate with partner agencies for asset-based projects and referrals, foster organizational relationships with the business community)
2. **Community Meal Program** (positive social engagement and community building, relief of food scarcity, building resources for clients with life skills & nutrition needs)
3. **Social Recreation Program** (positive social engagement & development of peer connections for mutual support, safe & free access to physical activities and development of healthy practices)
4. **Social Arts Program** (positive social engagement & development of peer connections for mutual support, exploring creative self expression and reflection through arts-related activities)
5. **Peer Supports Program** (positive social engagement & development of peer connections for mutual support, building resilience and capacity to support mental health)

Our History:

- B.R.I.D.G.E.S. the Hinton Housing and Employment Society (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Goals and Employment Society) was initiated by a small group of concerned parents and Alberta Mental Health staff to address the lack of support services for adults with mental illnesses.
- A Board of Directors was elected, a proposal for service funding submitted, and funding through the Alberta Mental Health Board was secured in 1996, all within months of the initial idea.
- B.R.I.D.G.E.S. became a Registered Charity in 1997 and established its Policies and Procedures, Bylaws, and core service plans, which included support groups, life skills development and housing and employment supports.
- The initial estimates were that 6-10 individuals would be served by the program.
- Over the years, responding to community needs and resources has meant a shift in the kinds of programs and services we offer at BRIDGES. We now focus on mental health support and promotion.
- Currently, we provide social outreach and supported referrals, recreation for overall wellness and food support for anyone who has a desire to connect with others for their mental wellness.
- **In 2023, we facilitated 120 arts activities, 196 recreation activities and 337 peer support activities and 103 hot lunches (excluding our BBQs in July), through which we recorded 7600 instances of participation (by 400 unique individuals.)**

The Role of Volunteers in our Work

The Board of Directors

Our board is a group of volunteers who are responsible for our legal obligations, bylaws and policies, human resources (hiring and supporting leadership staff to manage the day-to-day operations) and other governance aspects. The Executive Director reports directly to the Executive members of the board. Board members attend regular meetings, work together and on committees to guide our mission and vision, fundraising and human resources practices, and more. Board members often also volunteer in other roles in the organization; doing so gives them insight to the work and its outcomes for our community.

Boards are:

- A legal requirement for organizations to maintain non-profit status.
- Provides oversight and control, due to the obligations of the organization to internal and external stakeholders.
- Are stewards of organization resources, ensuring that operations are managed effectively, and funds used wisely.
- Provide leadership to the organization, guiding it in developing capacity and long-term viability.

Our Board: (2025)

Eric Rosendahl – President
Brigitte Lacroix – Secretary
Jillian Dobrich – Director
Kate Willis – Director
Benita Smit - Director
Lilith Laughlin - Director

Stephanie Brown – Vice President
Julia Breese – Treasurer
Allan Hunter – Director
Tannis Arsenault – Director
Reg Gauchier – Client Representative

Front line and support Volunteers

Other Volunteers report to the Executive Director and may be additionally supervised or tasked by staff members (Activity Coordinator and/or Cook) according to the job area they are working on. They may be required to get RCMP Background checks (free), have their references checked and of course, sign code of conduct and confidentiality commitment forms.

Volunteers are grouped into one of three categories based on their screened clearance, skills or experience, or personal goals and preferences: *Facilitators*, *Helpers* and *Supports*.

Facilitators:

- Are tasked with leading, teaching or facilitating activities based on their special skills or experience, and can do so independently. They report to the Executive Director and may work without direct supervision.
- Have submitted a volunteer application and RCMP background check and/or been screened in other ways
- Have expressed an interest in working with clients/guests
- May have been selected for specific activities based on their interests/skills or may choose other activities as available
- May lead/work with clients/guests in groups or one-to-one
- May select jobs meant for *Facilitators*, *Helpers* or *Support* categories

Helpers (Admin Helpers, Kitchen Helpers, Activity Helpers)

- Have submitted a volunteer application and RCMP background check and/or been screened in other ways
- Have expressed an interest in working with clients/guests
- May have been selected for specific activities based on their interests/skills or may choose other activities if appropriate
- May work with clients/guests in groups or one-to-one, under staff or other leader supervision
- May select jobs meant for *Helpers* or *Support* categories
- Report to the Executive Director and are additionally supervised or tasked by staff members according to their job areas or tasks.
 - Admin Helpers -> Executive Director and/or Board members
 - Kitchen Helpers -> Cook
 - Activity Helpers -> Activity Coordinator

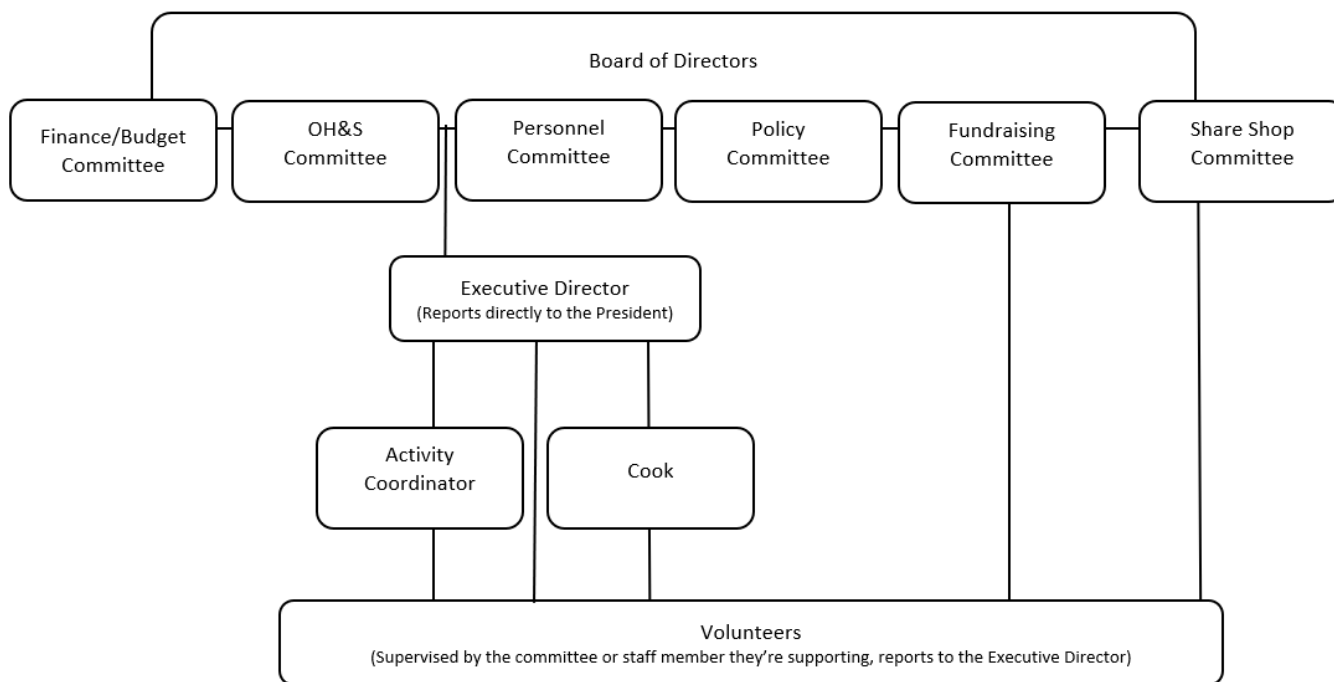
Supports: [Fundraising, Events, Offsite Pickup/Delivery (requires voluntary use and care of own vehicle), Share Shop*]

- May/may not have submitted a volunteer application and RCMP background check and/or been screened in other ways
- Have expressed an interest in working independently, without clients or outside the facility
- May have been selected for specific activities based on their interests/skills or may choose other activities if appropriate
- Does not work with clients in a volunteer capacity
- May only select jobs meant for *Support* category
- Report to the Executive Director or Board/Committee member and may be additionally supervised or tasked by staff members according to the job area they're working on.

** Share Shop Volunteers are a special group, and report directly to BRIDGES' Share Shop Coordinators, The Coordinators are responsible for training and supporting Share Shop volunteers, as well as maintaining records of hours worked, as these operations happen outside the BRIDGES facility.*

Volunteers who work in the BRIDGES Facility are given orientation of the facility and any relevant training for their work. A checklist is at the end of this handbook.

The BRIDGES Society – Organizational Chart



The organizational chart represents our organization's reporting relationships. Volunteers who work in direct contact with the facility (Helpers and Support who transport donations) are managed by the Executive Director, but are also supervised by staff directly related to the work being done. Volunteers may also work directly with and report to either the Fundraising or Share Shop Committees.

Volunteer Jobs:

1. Drop-In Centre Host: (Activity Helper)

- Prepare coffee/tea/snacks; guests will serve themselves.
- Socializing with guests
- Tidying and sanitizing tables between guests
- Receiving, recording and stocking donated food and items.
- Assisting with dishwashing and cleanup as needed.
- Sweeping and/or mopping (if needed)
- Sweep or shovel outside the front door (if needed)
- Dusting the shelves and lounge area
- Organizing library materials

2. Programs: (Activity Helper)

- Assist the Activity Coordinator in the delivery of arts and recreational or other programming, including set-up and clean-up.
- Provide clients with one-on-one or group assistance or social support during group activities (starting conversations, playing board games/puzzles, provide non-judgmental, supportive listening, buddy-up during outings for clients with anxiety or ability related barriers, and general support for client participation)

3. Programs: (Facilitators)

- Mentor, teach or facilitate workshop events for individuals or groups in areas of the Facilitator's expertise (yoga, meditation, peer support groups, art, journaling, and other wellness activities)
- Collect related forms, surveys or other data collection related to their program and participants, for program evaluation and reporting purposes.

3. Kitchen: (Kitchen Helper, Recycler)

- Sweeping and/or mopping (as needed)
- Collect/sort recycling bins and take recycling to Rowan Street Recycling Depot (vehicle required)
- Helping Kitchen Staff with preparing food and beverages for service
- Helping Kitchen Staff with dishes/table/floor cleanup after lunches Tuesdays & Thursdays or events

4. Office Support: (Admin Helper)

- Shredding, filing, phone reception, organizing literature, making posters, editing website, creating and scheduling social media content, etc. (according to volunteer's skills)
- Distribution of posters for events (vehicle required)
- Cleaning/dusting/sweeping offices
- Organizing the library
- Researching Grant funders/grant writing
- Computer systems: Data Entry, form-building, etc.

5. Food Support Pickups: (Support)

- Picking up food from Hill or Valley Freson Bros. and bringing it back to BRIDGES
 - Sundays and Mondays, 12:00 (Coordinate shared duties with Jasper Food Recovery)
- Picking up day-old bread on behalf of Food Bank from SAFEWAY and delivering it to BRIDGES
 - Sundays 3:00-3:30 PM
 - Wednesdays 3:00-3:30 PM

6. Special Events: (Activity Helper and Support) Assisting staff and leaders with various event preparation and operations, such as

- Preparing food and beverages for service

- Setting up chairs, tables, displays, presentation equipment (flip chart, screen/projector/laptop, etc)
- Serving guests (may include exchanging goods for money, such as a cash bar, selling society memberships, or fundraising activities like selling 50/50 tickets or raffle tickets)
- Representing BRIDGES at an information table at a community event
- Event set-up and clean-up

7. Committee Work: (*Support, Board*)

- Sit on the board of Directors, help guide the organization's mission and strategic planning, provide financial oversight, approve policy
- Assist the Board of Directors/Committee Leaders with specific committee work, such as policy development, fundraising, fund development, Occupational Health & Safety program management, Strategic Planning, and other board/governance projects.
- May include administrative tasks like typing, printing, collating, filing, or special skills like financial expertise or grant writing

All facility Volunteers must log their hours using the Volunteer Logbook, located in the main hallway.

8. Share Shop: (*Support*) At the Share Shop (224 Pembina Avenue) - Reporting directly to the BRIDGES Share Shop Coordinators or designates. BRIDGES participates in a two-week rotation with 6 other agencies (2 or 3 days, every 2 weeks.)

- Emptying donation bins
- Sorting donations
- Tidying and cleaning space
- Assist with recycling
- Cashier duties
- On an ad hoc basis, extra volunteers are needed to load the truck that takes surplus donations to Edmonton

BRIDGES has 2 volunteer coordinators – Dianne Robertson (780-223-0783) and Marge White (780-817-1028). They provide orientation for new volunteers and coordinate volunteers to ensure all duties are completed.

Volunteers will be contacted by email to remind them of the date for our upcoming week. We are grateful for any time you're able to devote to this! If you are volunteering during the lunch hour, bring your lunch or snacks as this is not provided by the group.

Documents:

Volunteers working with clients at our facility must sign **Commitment to Confidentiality** and **Code of Conduct** documents. Board members sign an additional **Code of Conduct** specific to their responsibilities.

Board Members Code of Conduct

The purpose of this document is to require certain standards of behaviour of all Board members.

Members of the BRIDGES' Board are committed to teamwork and effective decision-making. Towards this end Board members will:

- Support BRIDGES' mission, purpose, goals and activities by attendance, participation and preparation, and by speaking positively about the organization both within and outside its walls.
- Treat each other and staff with respect at all times.
- Use their expertise, skill and experience to benefit the organization.
- Refrain from trying to influence other Board members outside of Board meetings that might have the effect of creating factions and limiting free and open discussion.
- Support the decisions of the Board, even if one's own view is a minority one. The Board must communicate externally with "one voice."
- Bring concerns forward directly to the President/Chairperson as soon as an issue arises.
- Respect the confidentiality of information gained, unless specific permission is given to release the information, or unless the information is public knowledge.
- Refrain from giving direction, as an individual Board member, to BRIDGES' staff.
- Disclose one's involvement with other organizations, businesses or individuals where such a relationship might be viewed as a conflict of interest.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Code of Conduct

BRIDGES is committed to ethical, business-like, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting on behalf of BRIDGES. This Code of Conduct is regarded as minimum expectations for performance. Failure to comply with these expectations will be considered a violation of the agreement and may result in disciplinary action.

Your signature below indicates that you have reviewed the Code of Conduct, understand, and agree to abide by its' terms and conditions.

BRIDGES employees and volunteers are expected to:

1. Adhere to ethical standards and practices.
2. Demonstrate behavior and attitude that is respectful of others.
3. Attend work, meetings, or any representation of BRIDGES, free of the influence of alcohol and drugs (other than those prescribed by a physician to treat a health condition).
4. Maintain confidentiality of privileged information.
5. Maintain confidentiality of any condition or personal situation unless a person chooses to disclose it.
6. Any use, by staff or volunteers, of Artificial Intelligence tools (AI) to generate content or handle organizational data within or related to BRIDGES must be avoided unless instructed or cleared through the Executive Director.
7. Maintain effective communication with the Executive Director and with each other.
8. Dress appropriately for the type of work conducted.
9. Ask questions to eliminate doubt or misunderstandings.
10. Respect the workspace of others and leave the area as it was found.
11. Avoid any situations that involve a conflict, potential conflict, or appearance of a conflict of interest between their personal interest and the interest of BRIDGES.
12. Employees and volunteers shall not discriminate against others by reason of race, religious belief, colour, gender/gender identity, mental or physical disability, marital status, ancestry, age, place of origin, family status, source of income or sexual orientation.
13. Harassment, interpreted as unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, contact, or intimidating and offensive behaviour likely to cause offence or humiliation, will not be tolerated.
14. Avoid offering or accepting gifts, gratuities, excessive favours or personal rewards intended to influence the decisions or activities of the organization.
15. Employees may hold other employment outside BRIDGES. That employment must not interfere with their work or work hours or involve the use of BRIDGES property or information. (Volunteer hours are flexible and should not conflict with other commitments. Arrange schedules with the Executive Director to avoid conflicts.)

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Confidentiality Agreement

During participation with BRIDGES, members and others who use our services, you may acquire information that while voluntarily shared, is privileged information and should therefore be treated as such.

Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff and volunteers and of the BRIDGES Society itself is a basic value. Personal and financial information is confidential and should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without permission or appropriate authorization. This information must be kept confidential both during and after employment or volunteer service.

The underlying principle for maintaining confidentiality is that all personal and health information related to an identified individual must be treated as confidential. This follows provincial legislation (PIPA).

I agree to treat as confidential, all information about BRIDGES' members that I learn during my participation as a volunteer, and I understand that it would be a violation of policy to disclose such information to anyone without appropriate authorization.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

FILE COPY

Orientation

Name: _____ Date: _____

			Initials	
	Orientation Checklist	Date	Sup.	Vol
1	Job Description including volunteer log procedure			
2	Code of Conduct - Signed			
3	Confidentiality Agreement - Signed			
4	HR Policies			
5	RCMP Criminal Background/Vulnerable people check within 6 mo.			
6	Keys (if required)			
7	Phone Use / voicemail etc.			
8	Printer/copier			
9	Facility Protocols			
10	Certificates Held: (specify, include expiry date if possible)			
11	Occupational Health & Safety equipment, manuals, and procedures			
12	Kitchen Orientation			
13	Community Helpers Program Training			