

# Volunteer Guide

Your Path to Making an Impact

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# 01

## Welcome to the Emerging Leaders Placement Project

## 1.1 Message from the WIL Founder & President

Thank you so much for volunteering! I am so excited that you are here, and even more excited for what lies ahead.

In 2001, I started the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation because, as a young woman starting my career, fresh out of university, I was searching for my life purpose. I wanted to do work that uplifted others and make a positive difference. While I had different hurdles to overcome from my anxiety to my inexperience in a leadership role, I always believed in myself and knew that I could achieve anything that I set my mind to, and I am grateful to have had amazing mentors early on in my career who supported my vision and dream. And these two keys made all the difference in my success and in life.

This is what the Emerging Leaders Placement Project is all about: believing in the leadership potential of youth, and giving you the tools, support, and opportunities to use your skills and make a difference in your community. The Emerging Leaders Placement Project connects youth across Canada with meaningful volunteer placements in nonprofit organizations doing incredible work. This project will help the next generation of leaders grow, learn and discover leadership skills. You are also part of a national movement, joining hundreds of other youth leaders throughout Canada who are creating positive change together. Whether you are supporting a community event, working behind the scenes, designing content, or helping on an environmental initiative, you are part of something important. Your voice, time, and energy matter!

At WIL, we believe in inclusive leadership, and, through this project, we have further expanded our mission to empower women and youth through leadership initiatives. We celebrate your background, your lived experience, and your uniqueness. This guide will help you understand what to expect from your volunteer placement, how to stay connected, and where to turn if you have questions or need support. Our Emerging Leaders Project team is here to support you.

Your leadership journey starts now, and we are honoured to be part of it. I can't wait to see what you will accomplish through volunteering. This is just the beginning. Together, we are rising leaders creating lasting change.

With gratitude,

*Maya Kanigan*

Maya Kanigan  
Maya Kanigan, BComm.  
Project Manager, Emerging Leaders Placement Project  
Founder & President, Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation



# 1.2 About the Emerging Leaders Placement Project



The Emerging Leaders Placement Project, led by the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation and funded by Canada Service Corps, is a national initiative that connects youth aged 14–30 across Canada with meaningful volunteer placements. This project helps youth gain workplace-relevant experience and build important skills while giving back to their communities. The Emerging Leaders Placement Project empowers youth from all backgrounds to lead with purpose, volunteer with organizations that reflect their interests and passions, and support their communities.

This project will see over 240 youth volunteers throughout Canada contribute more than 28,800 hours of service with 20+ nonprofit organizations, including volunteer opportunities at WIL and its 10 chapters across Canada (Vancouver, Victoria, Okanagan, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal). We are especially committed to supporting emerging leaders from Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. Your lived experiences, identities, and perspectives are welcomed, respected, and considered central to building a stronger, more inclusive Canada.

The project will equip young Canadians with skills, experiences, and opportunities to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Volunteer placements will focus on critical themes such as reconciliation, inclusivity, environmental preservation, civic engagement, and resilience.

Through orientation, workshops, mentorship, and collaborative volunteer placements, you will build confidence, contribute meaningfully, and join a national network of young changemakers. Together, you are helping to build stronger, more inclusive communities while developing your leadership skills and ability to create positive impact.

## ***Rising Leaders, Lasting Change***

## 1.3 Mission, Vision, and Values



### Mission

We empower youth across Canada through meaningful volunteer placements that build leadership, foster mentorship, and promote personal and professional growth, in partnership with nonprofit organizations to strengthen communities.



### Vision

Empowered youth across Canada – unlocking their leadership potential, contributing meaningfully to their communities, and shaping an inclusive, equitable future through volunteer service.

## Values



### Equity & Inclusion

Creating volunteer opportunities that celebrate diverse voices, foster a sense of belonging, and empower youth to make meaningful contributions to their communities.



### Mentorship

Fostering resilience, cultivating future leaders, and accelerating personal and professional growth — building a generation equipped to lead with confidence, compassion, and impact.



### Empowerment

Empowering youth to lead with purpose and confidence. Together, we're building stronger, more inclusive communities.



### Reconciliation

Advancing truth, justice, and healing in building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



### Growth

Developing adaptability and pursuing learning opportunities for continuous improvement and leadership skill-building.



### Engagement

Working together with youth and not-for-profit partners to ensure meaningful volunteer placements that create positive community impact.

## 1.4 Overview of the Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation

### *Building a Community of Leadership*

The **Women in Leadership (WIL) Foundation** is a national non-profit organization that has been championing equity in leadership since 2001. WIL helps women — including those from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and underrepresented communities — build confidence, gain access to opportunities, and further develop their leadership skills.

With over 200,000 community members and local chapters in Vancouver, Victoria, Okanagan, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, WIL offers mentorship programs, leadership forums, and skills development resources and events. WIL highlights diverse role models, celebrates women's achievements, and brings together a wide network of passionate changemakers.

WIL is proud to lead the **Emerging Leaders Placement Project**, which you are now part of as a youth volunteer! This initiative helps young people like you explore leadership, gain hands-on experience, and build meaningful connections in your community and beyond.

Each of us has the power to make a difference. WIL is about working together to get there.

WIL is a welcoming and inclusive space for women of all identities, non-binary individuals, youth, and allies of all genders who share the vision of creating more diverse leadership in Canada and promoting equitable, diverse, and inclusive environments. By getting involved, you are supporting others — and growing as a leader too.



Join our network of 200,000+ women and allies! Get leadership content, event invites, and opportunities sent to your inbox. Email [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com) to join our free newsletter.



Learn more about WIL at [www.womeninleadership.ca](http://www.womeninleadership.ca)



Connect with us:  
Instagram | LinkedIn | X | Facebook



# 02

## Your Volunteer Experience



## 2.1 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

You Have the Right To...	You Are Expected To...
A welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment	Treat everyone with kindness, professionalism, and respect
Receive training, support, and guidance	Follow through on your volunteer responsibilities
Be safe and feel safe	Report injuries, concerns, or incidents immediately
Share your thoughts and feedback	Listen actively and keep an open mind
Be accommodated for accessibility or personal needs	Ask for help when you need it
Learn, grow, and develop skills	Respect confidentiality and privacy

## 2.2 What to Expect from Your Volunteer Placement

As a volunteer with the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, you will be joining a community of youth across Canada who care about making a difference. Every volunteer placement is unique, but you can expect:

- ◉ A welcoming, inclusive environment where your ideas are respected and valued;
- ◉ A role that reflects your interests and what you care about;
- ◉ Support from your Placement Coordinator;
- ◉ A safe volunteer environment;
- ◉ Flexibility;
- ◉ The chance to co-create your role; and
- ◉ Opportunities to give feedback.

Your volunteer placement is more than a task. You will be given a chance to grow, lead, and help your community.



## 2.3 Types of Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer service for the Emerging Leaders Placement Project will focus on themes such as reconciliation, inclusion, civic and community engagement, environmental action, and community resilience. Volunteer placements are vast and varied. Opportunities may include BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- **Help plan or support a community event or gala;**
- **Work on social media or online content;**
- **Support an environmental project (e.g., cleanups, awareness campaigns); and**
- **Assist with events and programs promoting reconciliation or equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.**

Many of the volunteer roles are co-created, meaning they are shaped by the volunteers themselves. You will have a chance to work with your Placement Coordinator and nonprofit organizations to shape your role based on your interests, lived experience, and goals. Volunteer input can help improve existing programs and inspire new ones.

Being open-minded and proactive will help volunteers to get the most out of this experience. If you see a way your skills could be better used, speak up. Your voice and perspectives matter!



## 2.4 Time Commitment, Scheduling, and Attendance

We will work with you to make sure your volunteer placement fits your schedule. You will talk with the nonprofit about timing during onboarding, and we will help you find an opportunity that works with your availability. Volunteer placements are flexible, but we ask that you:

- **Stick to the schedule you agree on with your placement nonprofit organization;**
- **Let the nonprofit organization know early if something changes;**
- **Show up on time and ready to participate; and**
- **Communicate if you ever need help.**

# 03

## Leading with Respect and Inclusion



## 3.1 Creating Inclusive Spaces

At Women in Leadership (WIL) and the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, we believe that everyone belongs and everyone is valued. You are joining a project that values equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. You bring your own lived experiences, skills, and ideas. We want all volunteers to feel supported, respected, and celebrated. Our diversity is a strength. This includes differences among individuals and groups, including age, culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

Your volunteer service is not just about giving back. It is about building stronger, more inclusive communities together. That means showing kindness, learning from each other, and creating spaces where everyone feels safe and valued.

What this means for you:

- Celebrate differences. Everyone's story and experiences matter.
- Be welcoming. Always make others feel included.
- If something does not feel right or you see a way to make things more inclusive, speak up. Your voice matters, and we are here to support you.





## 3.2 Communication, Reliability, and Professionalism

Your volunteerism is a key part of a nonprofit team. Your communication, attitude, and participation make a difference!

That's why we ask you to:

- Show up on time and be ready to contribute.
- Communicate early if you cannot make a shift or if something changes in your schedule or availability.
- Be professional.
- Be polite, respectful, and ready to work with people from all walks of life.
- Follow the guidelines of both WIL and the nonprofit that you are placed with.

We value your time, your energy, and your impact. Let's make the most of it together!



## 3.3 Leading with Empathy and Integrity

Every volunteer role you take on should be grounded in empathy and integrity. Leading with empathy means treating others the way that you would like to be treated (i.e., thoughtfully, fairly, and with compassion). Leading with integrity involves being honest, respectful, and responsible. As a volunteer, represent yourself and WIL by upholding these values by being kind, maintaining confidentiality, and creating a safe, inclusive environment for everyone.

# 04

## Orientation and Training





## 4.1 Orientation Overview

You will receive orientation and training to prepare you for your volunteer role, and you will always have someone to talk to if you need help.

You may be required to attend site-specific orientation from your assigned nonprofit before your first volunteer shift. You will be notified in advance of any additional requirements from that organization. Clear information will be relayed about your specific volunteer role(s) and responsibilities. If you are ever unsure or uncertain, ask.

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## 4.2 Training Modules

Before starting your volunteer placement, you will need to complete a set of mandatory online training modules. These short, easy-to-follow training modules are designed to give you key information to feel confident and prepared for your volunteer placement. They cover what to expect from your volunteer experience, how to stay safe and supported, and how to grow your leadership skills with a focus on inclusion, empathy, and collaboration. While they won't take long to complete, these training modules are packed with practical insights to help you get the most out of your volunteer experience and build skills you can carry into school, work, and life.

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## 4.3 Indigenous Reconciliation and Cultural Safety Training

As part of the Leadership Development Workshop Webinar Series, you will have the chance to learn about reconciliation and the history, culture, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Indigenous Connector Groups will also provide mentorship opportunities for Indigenous youth participants.

Our project team includes an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper that provides advice on how to incorporate reconciliation into your volunteer experience and plays a key role in ensuring that this project reflects a commitment to advancing reconciliation and fostering inclusivity. The project team will guide everyone on how to engage respectfully with Indigenous communities and perspectives.

By learning from Indigenous voices and perspectives, you will gain valuable insights to support your growth as a leader, and contribute to building stronger, more inclusive communities.

# 05

## Your Safety and Well-Being

Volunteering can be a meaningful and empowering experience, and your safety is a top priority at the Emerging Leaders Placement Project. Whether you're volunteering in person, remotely, or in your community, we work with nonprofits that provide respectful and supportive environments. You are never expected to handle safety concerns alone, and support is always available.





## 5.1 Staying Safe: Who to Contact, What to Do

If you ever feel unsafe or something does not feel right to you, we want you to speak up. Your safety and well-being matters, and we are here to help.

### In an emergency

Immediately call 911 if you feel you are in danger or need urgent assistance.

### If a concern or safety matter happens while at your volunteer placement

Immediately speak with your volunteer supervisor or coordinator as they are there to support you and help you navigate the situation in a positive manner. If you are unable to locate your volunteer supervisor or coordinator, speak directly with a member of the management team at your assigned nonprofit for assistance.

### If you are volunteering remotely

It is important to note that online environments can also present risks. If you experience any inappropriate behaviour, harassment, or something that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, immediately report it to your volunteer supervisor or coordinator.

### Escalating a concern or safety matter

If your concern is not resolved satisfactorily by your assigned nonprofit organization or you would prefer to speak directly with someone from the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team, reach out to us. Your message will always be handled seriously with care, confidentiality, and respect.



## 5.2 Reporting a Concern or Unsafe Situation

If you experience or witness a situation that feels unsafe or goes against the values of respect, inclusion, or integrity, please report it as soon as possible to your assigned nonprofit. All reports of a concern or unsafe situation will be taken seriously and handled with care, confidentiality, and respect. You will never face any negative consequences for raising a concern or unsafe situation.



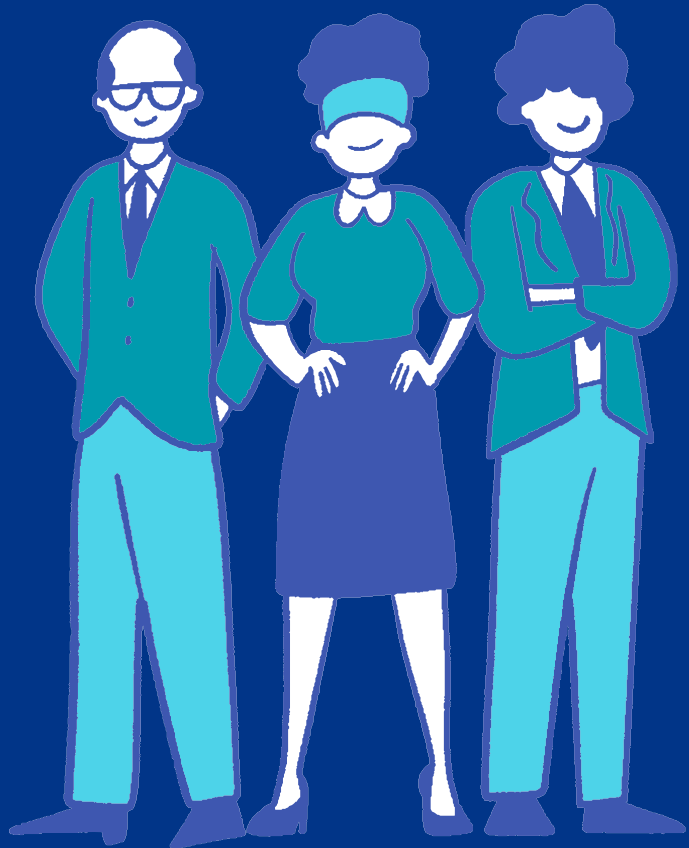
## 5.3 Mental Health and Well-Being

Taking care of your mental health and well-being is just as important as your physical safety and well-being. If you are struggling, you are not alone. Your mental health and well-being matters to us, so reach out to us if you need support. We will ensure safe spaces for you to share concerns or ask for help. The Emerging Leaders Placement Project team has a culture of care and understanding. If you need to adjust your volunteer placement to meet your needs, we are here for you and happy to chat through options.

# 06

## Support Throughout Your Volunteer Placement

At the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, your experience matters, and we are here to support you every step of the way.





## 6.1 Project and Placement Coordinator Contact Information

You may be contacted by a member of our project team, especially a Placement Coordinator, to check in on how your volunteer placement is going. Our whole team is dedicated to making sure your experience is positive, meaningful, and safe.

We have partnered with nonprofit organizations that share our commitment to creating welcoming, inclusive environments. Every partnership has been carefully reviewed to prioritize your health, safety, and well-being.

If you have questions or concerns about your volunteer role or placement, speak first with the volunteer supervisor or coordinator at your nonprofit. If you would like to share feedback about the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, suggest improvements, or explore more ways to get involved, contact [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com).



## 6.2 Conflict Resolution and Ongoing Check-ins

Respect is key to a great volunteer experience. If a disagreement or issue comes up, try to stay calm and open-minded. Do not hesitate to ask your nonprofit's volunteer supervisor or coordinator for help if you're unsure how to handle a situation.

Each nonprofit may also have its own expectations for checking in with your volunteer supervisor or coordinator. Be sure to follow their guidance to keep your volunteer placement safe, positive, and productive.

The Emerging Leaders Placement Project team will also be reaching out from time to time to hear how things are going. Your feedback helps us improve the volunteer experience for you and others. Need more support or want to escalate an issue? Our team is here for you.



## 6.3 Accessing Help and Peer Support

This volunteer guide is here to provide assistance to you, so keep it nearby for quick reference in case any questions come up.

If you would like extra support, whether from a team member or a fellow volunteer, just ask. We believe in the power of connection and collaboration. Throughout your volunteer placement, you will have chances to meet and network with other Emerging Leaders volunteers during events and meetups.

# 07

## Recognition and What You Will Gain

Volunteering with the Emerging Leaders Placement Project isn't just about giving back to your community; it is also about growing, learning, and gaining recognition for your efforts! We plan to celebrate you and your volunteer journey.





## 7.1 How We Recognize You: Milestone Certificates, Spotlight Stories, Events

Throughout your volunteer experience, we will be taking time to celebrate the achievements of our volunteers. We will be issuing certificates to recognize key moments of volunteer growth and accomplishment. We will also be highlighting volunteer contributions and impact through Spotlight Stories via social media, electronic newsletters, and during events. You may even get featured in one of our recognition events. All of these recognition activities are designed to show off the wonderful service being done by our volunteers and to celebrate you with our community!

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## 7.2 Skills Development and Growth

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, build your skills, and get noticed by future employers. You will gain and develop valuable skills like leadership, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication that will help you in school, work, and life in general. Whether you are learning new things or enhancing existing skills, this experience will help you stand out when pursuing and conquering your future goals.

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## 7.3 Mentorship and Leadership Opportunities

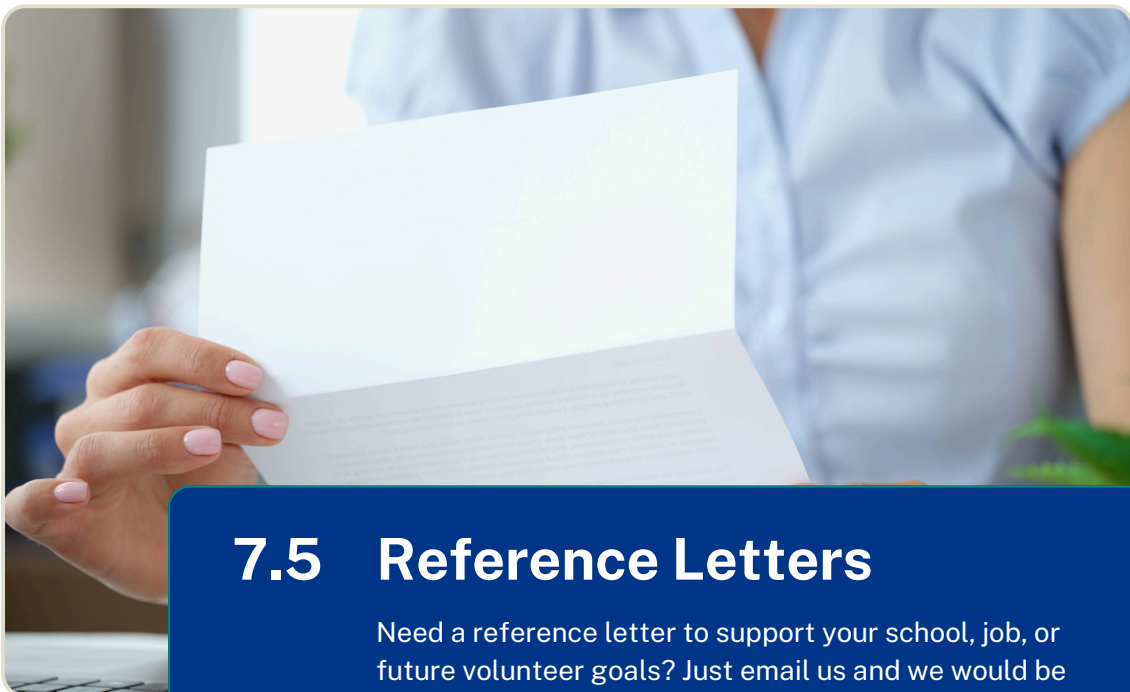
As a volunteer, you will be supported by both the WIL team and staff from your assigned nonprofit. They are here to guide you, provide constructive feedback, and help you grow throughout your volunteer experience. Their support will be focused on helping you build confidence, develop your skills, and reach your goals. Formal and informal mentorship opportunities will help you build confidence, focus on your personal growth, and give you the tools needed to reach your goals. It's all about learning from others, building meaningful relationships, and discovering your leadership potential.

As an Emerging Leaders participant, you will have access to the extremely helpful Leadership Development Workshop Webinar Series, designed specifically for leaders like you! These webinars will cover key leadership skills, from communication and collaboration, and help you grow in your volunteer role and beyond.



## 7.4 Recognition Events

We will be hosting events that celebrate your contributions and create an opportunity for you to connect with other volunteers, mentors, and partner organizations. These recognition events will allow you to reflect on your growth and celebrate how far you have come in your volunteer journey.



## 7.5 Reference Letters

Need a reference letter to support your school, job, or future volunteer goals? Just email us and we would be happy to recognize your efforts and the amazing contributions you have made through volunteering.



# 08

## Logging and Reflecting on Your Volunteer Hours



## 8.1 How to Log Your Volunteer Hours

To ensure we accurately record your volunteer hours, please follow the steps below to submit your time:

1. Visit the Website
2. Go to: [www.leaderscanada.ca](http://www.leaderscanada.ca)
3. Navigate to the Time Tracking Page
  - Hover over or click on the “Volunteer” menu at the top of the page.
  - Select “Time Tracking” from the dropdown options.
4. Access the Secure Time Tracking Page
  - You will be prompted to enter a password.
  - Enter: TIME (in all capital letters).
5. Submit Your Hours
  - Complete the time tracking form with accurate details for the period you’re reporting.
  - Be sure to submit your hours bi-monthly, on the 1st and 15th of each month.
6. Need Help?
7. If you experience any issues accessing the page or submitting your hours, please reach out to:
8. ✉ [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com)
9. ☎ Contact your Placement Coordinator for support.



## 8.2 Why Tracking Volunteer Hours Matters: Recognition, Impact, and Your Resume

Tracking your volunteer hours might seem like a small thing, but it is actually a powerful tool for you, the nonprofit(s) you support, and the Emerging Leaders Placement Project. Keeping an accurate record of your hours helps us all to understand the bigger picture of the impact of your volunteer service.



### Recognition

When you track your volunteer hours, it is easier for others to recognize your commitment both formally and informally. That could be your school, your community, or even future employers. Whether it is a formal certificate or a simple shout-out for your dedication and achievements, logging your volunteer hours helps you get recognized and acknowledged for the energy that you have given.



### Impact

Keeping track of your volunteer hours helps you and others to see just how much time and effort you have given to support a nonprofit(s). It is easy to forget the big picture when you are focused on the day-to-day of volunteering, but logging your time shows how far you have come. Keeping track of your volunteer hours also helps the nonprofit(s) you volunteer with as they will use this information to plan programs, report on their work, and show how volunteers like you are making things happen. Your time, energy, and skills help nonprofits grow and improve the programs and services that they provide.



### Your Resume

Tracking your volunteer hours can really strengthen your resume, job applications, and/or scholarship forms. Volunteering can help demonstrate that you are responsible, motivated, and dedicated to community service. Looking back on your volunteer experience, you will see how much confidence you have gained and how many valuable skills you have developed. These are skills you can carry with you into school, work, and other environments.

## 8.3 Reflection and Feedback Suveys

Your voice matters!

As a volunteer, your experiences are important to you, the nonprofit(s) you support, and the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team. Reflecting during and after your volunteer placement helps you recognize your growth and the impact you are making.

You will receive electronic links to reflect and supply feedback through surveys at the beginning, during, and after your volunteer journey. We also welcome your thoughts anytime. What is going well? What could be better? Your feedback helps us improve the experience for you and for future volunteers.





# 09

## Communication Guidelines

Clear and respectful communication is expected of all participants of the Emerging Leaders Placement Project.



## 9.1 Email, Social Media, and Digital Etiquette

Use respectful and inclusive language in all of your written and digital communications. Be clear and polite in all of your communications. Respond to emails and messages regarding your volunteer placement and/or project staff in a timely manner (i.e., within 1-2 business days where possible).

If you wish to post on social media about your volunteer experience and this project, always be respectful and avoid sharing confidential information.

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## 9.2 Representing Yourself, WIL, and Your Volunteer Placement Organization

Always remember that as a volunteer, you are representing yourself, your assigned nonprofit organization, and the Emerging Leaders Placement Project.

We expect you to:

- Be respectful, inclusive, and professional in all interactions;
- Uphold the values of equity, empathy, and leadership; and
- Avoid speaking on behalf of your assigned nonprofit or the Emerging Leaders Placement Project unless you have been given permission to do so.

Reach out to the Emerging Leaders Placement Project team if you are unsure whether something is appropriate to share publicly.



## 9.3 Media Inquiries

If you are contacted by a journalist, blogger, or other media outlet about your participation in the Emerging Leaders Placement Project, please immediately direct all inquiries to the team at [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com).

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## 9.4 Confidentiality and Consent for Photos/Videos

You may have access to sensitive or confidential information during your volunteer placement. This could include personal data, organizational materials, or internal communications. Do not share or disclose confidential information. Your obligation to keep this information private continues even after your volunteer placement with the Emerging Leaders Placement Project ends.

As part of this guide, you have the option to sign a voluntary Youth Volunteer Media Release Form to allow the project team to use photos, videos, testimonials, or other media featuring or provided by you. Choosing not to sign this Media Release Form will not affect your participation in this project.

Additionally, always ask for consent before taking or sharing photos or videos of others, including your fellow volunteers or staff.

# 10

## Volunteer Participation & Consent Agreement



# 11

## Partner Non-Profit Organizations



## 11.1 Non-Profit Partners Directory



# 12

## Contact & Resources





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## 12.1 Contact Information

**Website** [www.womeninleadership.ca](http://www.womeninleadership.ca)

**Instagram** [@womeninleadershipcanada](https://www.instagram.com/womeninleadershipcanada)

**Email** [leaders.wil@gmail.com](mailto:leaders.wil@gmail.com)

**LinkedIn** [Women in Leadership Foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-in-leadership-foundation)

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## 12.2 Additional Resources

Here are a few helpful links to support your volunteer journey:

- [Volunteer Canada](#)
- [Canada Service Corps](#)
- [Mental Health Support](#)
- [WIL Blog](#)
- [WIL Events](#)