

Chapter 1

Introduction



ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual provides a template of potential policies and procedures. All of the policies are directly linked to the Service Quality Management Requirements found in the LBS Program Guidelines and are also cross-referenced to the Core Quality Standards and the features of the Core Quality Standards. A disk copy of the manual is enclosed. A template is meant to be a guide or a pattern that can be used to “shape” your work. These policy templates can be used as the starting point for drafting policy in your agency.

STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPLATES

Each policy/procedure template includes four segments with the following headings:

- ◆ Policy Statement
- ◆ Why? (reasons for the policy)
- ◆ Procedures
- ◆ Key core quality standards and features

A checkbox bullet precedes each policy statement. This will allow you to use the manual as a checklist when determining what areas of policy and procedure that you have and what areas you agency needs to work on.

In the section of the template entitled “Procedure”, there may be a bracketed discussion of what the potential elements of the procedure could be as opposed to a sample procedure. Wherever possible the policies and procedures have been cross-referenced to the Core Quality Standards. The Core Quality Standards are shaded in gray.

TIMEFRAMES

Timeframes are used in several of the policy statements. The timeframe used is meant for illustration purposes only. Your organization must adapt the templates to meet your independent needs as well as complying with MET requirements and all relevant provincial and federal legislation.

TERMINOLOGY

Several terms are used interchangeably in the templates. The term you would use depends on how your agency is structured and who performs the procedures described. The following are terms that are used interchangeably:

- ◆ executive director/program coordinator/personnel committee
- ◆ agency/program/organization
- ◆ learner/student
- ◆ tutor/instructor/practitioner

The acronym “MET” is used throughout the manual. This refers to the “Ministry of Education and Training”.

WHY DOES YOUR AGENCY NEED TO HAVE FORMALIZED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES?

Literacy providers funded by MET are expected to have WRITTEN policies and procedures in place in order to ensure the provision of quality service.

(LBS Program Guidelines June 1998: Part 2, Section 1, page 9)

Every agency that receives funding from MET signs a contract. Schedule A of that contract contains “Terms of Reference” which state:

Delivery Agency’s Responsibilities

- 1. The Delivery Agency will comply with the Guidelines in the delivery of the Program.**
- 2. The Delivery Agency will have comprehensive policies and procedures in place to ensure the delivery of quality services.**

(LBS Program Guidelines June 1998: Part 3, Appendix 2, page 8)

This is a contract that your agency has made with MET. By not complying with the contract, you are not holding up your end of the bargain and this could put your funding at risk!

Formalized policies and procedures provide staff members with limits, boundaries and guidelines for making decisions. When clear policies and procedures are in place the agency can be managed with minimal intervention from a governing board of directors. Policies and procedures will help to reduce individual subjective decisions in recurring situations in the day to day operations of an agency. Only exceptional or unusual circumstances that are not specifically dealt with by a policy require special attention. Once the agency has established a process for developing policies and procedures and has adopted a common format to frame policy statements and accompanying procedures it will be easier to develop new policies and procedures as the need arises.

WHAT IS A POLICY/WHAT IS A PROCEDURE?

At first glance many people think that a policy and a procedure are one in the same. In actuality the terms “policy” and “procedure” refer to very specific and distinct concepts. When writing policies and procedures it is important to understand the difference between a “policy” and a “procedure” and their relationship.

POLICY

The term policy comes from the Greek word “policie” meaning “citizenship”. The origin of this term could lead to the interpretation that policy should be a reflection of the greater good, or the larger population. The dictionary definition of policy is “wise management, a principle, plan, etc.” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary* © 1979) or “the aims or ideals of a person or group; a plan of action.” (*Oxford Intermediate Dictionary*, © 1982).

Policies:

- Tell the organization **WHAT** is to be done
- Are generally set by a Board of Directors
- Are statements based on collective values, judgement, and fundamental principles of management experience in the governance and organization of all members of the Board
- Generally provide both vision and inspiration to the organization
- Permeate all aspects of an organization

(Source: Marketing and Management Consultation, Brockville, Ontario www.cybertap.com/tdc/policy/htm)

Characteristics of a “Good” Policy

- ◆ It is philosophically based and reflects values. It states what is believed, valued and desired
- ◆ It is a general statement of a Board’s beliefs on a certain matter
- ◆ It tells why certain things are wanted
- ◆ It constitutes a clear basis for the development and implementation of regulations and procedures
- ◆ It provides positive direction to the Board and staff, but does not, and should not, prescribe the methods for arriving at the result
- ◆ It permits Board and staff to interpret in such a way as to adjust for changing conditions without making any basic changes in policy
- ◆ It provides a standard for evaluating the performance of Board and staff

(Source: Adapted from National Capital Freenet Statement of Values)

When writing policy statements the language used should be plain, clear, explicit and concise. The present tense should be used whenever possible although the future tense is acceptable. It is better to use “active” words in an imperative or directive tone.

PROCEDURES

A procedure gives you the descriptive narrative on the policy that it applies to. It is the “how to” of the policy. A procedure is defined as “the act or method of proceeding in an action.” (*Webster’s New World Dictionary* © 1979) or “an orderly way of doing something.” (*Oxford Intermediate Dictionary*, © 1982)

Procedures:

- Tell the organization **HOW** a policy is to be carried out
- Are generally defined and carried out by the administrators
- Are tools used to assemble, create and operate the organization responding to the Board’s policies
- Can be and are often specific to certain aspects of an organization

(Source: Marketing and Management Consultation, Brockville, Ontario www.cybertap.com/tdc/policy/htm)

GOVERNANCE POLICY STATEMENTS

The agency will need to have some mechanism for adopting policies. How you do this is based on the organizational structure and the governance policies in place. Below are some examples of policy statements that deal with the governance of an agency.

- ☐ **ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE:** Under the bylaws and constitution, an executive board of directors composed of 7-15 members administers the agency. The executive operates under Robert's Rules of Order and is charged with the development of policies that will meet the goals and objectives of the agency.
- ☐ **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** The board of directors appoints the executive director. The executive director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency.*
- ☐ **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The overall operation of the agency is managed under the direction of a board of directors. The board of directors refrains from involvement in the day-to-day running of the agency. The responsibility for the management of the day-to-day operations of the agency is delegated to the executive director.*
- ☐ **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:** The executive director is assisted in the day to day operation of the organization by the management committee*
- ☐ **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE:** Under normal circumstances staff, communicate to the board of directors through the existing supervisory system. In extraordinary circumstances, where the supervisory process does not work, an ad hoc communications committee will be available to facilitate communication with the board of directors*
- ☐ **PUBLIC REFERRAL:** Employees of the agency direct any member of the public wishing to contact the board of directors to the executive director. The executive director may arrange communication with the board of directors, as appropriate*

*Source of "Governance Policy Statements" marked with an *: Adapted from Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria*

It is generally the responsibility of the board of directors to draft and adopt policy. The following template is an example of a policy for establishing a personnel committee that would be responsible for personnel policies.

❑ PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: The personnel committee is responsible for drafting and adopting personnel policies and procedures.

Procedures:

1. COMPOSITION: The personnel committee will consist of not less than three members.

- The Chairperson of the Personnel Committee will be appointed from the Board of Directors.
- The Executive Director will be the executive officer related to the committee.
- The President will be an ex official member of the committee.

The President (after consultation with the Chairperson and the Executive Director) will appoint not less than two additional members to the committee, having in mind the desirability of recruiting some persons knowledgeable in modern personnel practices, including those from both the public and private sector, with experience in the area of fringe benefits, salary and wage scales, labour negotiations, job classification, and staff development.

2. FUNCTIONS

- To formulate and recommend written personnel policies to the Board of Directors and to consider matters not falling within the stated personnel policies of the organization, brought to it by the Chairperson of the Committee and the Executive Director.
- To review personnel policies, job classifications and salary scales, taking into account salaries and working condition in related fields of employment from time to time. Changes should, whenever possible, be discussed in advance with the employees they will affect and be completed in time to be implemented in the annual budget.
- To ensure that there is a current job description for each position reviewed on a regular basis with the employee.
- To keep informed on municipal, provincial and federal legislation affecting employment and working conditions.
- To receive reports at each Personnel Committee meeting on the appointments, promotions, resignation and retirement of staff and on staff development programs.

Source: Adapted from Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria

A large number of policies and procedures will deal specifically with personnel issues. Usually a personnel committee will be formed to be responsible for this area of policy drafting.

There are several other areas of policy that an agency will need to draft. The workload is often divided between board members by setting up separate committees, such as the one above, to deal with each area.

PREPARING A POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

Once you have developed a set of policies and procedures for your agency it is usually wise to prepare a formalized “Policy and Procedure” manual. Several manuals may be prepared to deal with different stakeholders in the agency. For example, you may have a Volunteer Tutor Policy and Procedure Manual, a Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual and a Learner Policy and Procedure Manual. Prior to creating a formalized manual the policies and procedures will go through an approval, amendment and review process. The following template sets out a sample policy statement and procedures for this process.

☐ **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL:** The agency will institute and maintain a “Policy and Procedure Manual” which will:

- **Codify the policies and procedures of the agency**
- **Document these policies and procedures in an accessible, readable, and amendable manner.**

All agency employees and volunteers will take their direction from, and comply with, the policies and guidelines contained in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

All agency employees will be able to suggest new policies and/or procedures or revisions to the existing policies and procedures using the “Manual Update” form provided in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

WHY?

A “Policy and Procedure Manual”, developed, implemented, and maintained properly, becomes the foundation of consistency and professionalism. It is important for employees of the agency to have input into the decision making process of the agency. Many of the policies and procedures are directed towards the employee and since the employee is in a position, on a day to day basis, to assess the impact, validity and practicality of agency policies and procedures it will be beneficial for the employee to have the opportunity to make suggestions regarding these policies and guidelines.

Procedures:

1. *APPROVAL PROCESS [describe the process for your agency]*
2. *AMENDMENT PROCESS [describe the process for your agency]*
3. *REVIEW PROCESS [describe the process for your agency]*
4. *Suggestions from employees will be incorporated into the Approval Process for Consideration and will be incorporated into the manual if they are approved.*

Key Core Quality Standard:

16. Program Accountability: A quality literacy program does what it says it will do. It is accountable to its learners, sponsoring organizations, partners, community and funders. All stakeholders, not only program staff, are accountable for the success of the program.

Feature:

The program meets the requirements of its funders.

- ◆ The program carries out the activities it has agreed to so and collects the information requested by its funders.

Source: Adapted from Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria

A policy and procedure manual written for your agency should be prefaced by a well-written “foreword”. A “Policy and Procedure Manual” template for a “Foreword” follows:

FOREWORD

This manual is for all staff, learners, board members and volunteers of the agency. This manual outlines all the policies and procedures of the agency. The following pages contain an explanation of the benefits and responsibilities of all employees, learners and volunteers at the agency. All employees, learners and volunteers must familiarize themselves with this document.

The board of directors has ultimate authority and final responsibility for the adoption of personnel policies as recommended by the personnel committee. As the employing body, the board engages the chief operating officer, herein referred to as the executive director, and obligates to the executive director the final responsibility for all aspects of personnel administration, according to policies approved by the board of directors.

The Policies and Procedures contain general statements of agency policy and should not be read as including the fine details of each policy, nor as forming an express of implied contract, nor as promising that the policies discussed in it will be applied in all cases. The agency reserves the right to add, revoke or modify policies.

As used in this manual the words “shall” or “will” are to be construed as mandatory and the word “may” as permissive and the feminine gender shall be construed to include the masculine gender.

Employees, learners and volunteers having questions about the Policies and Procedures shall consult with their immediate supervisor.