

## Why Does Your Group Exist?

Most groups get their start because an individual, or a number of people, saw a need that was not being met within the community. As important as this is, it is not enough to ensure success. Just like you might need a map to keep from getting lost on a trip, effective organizations need a map to stay on track and avoid losing their sense of direction.

Your group's vision is its destination and the mission is its map.

*Vision* describes where you want to go, while *mission* is the route that you will follow to get there.

### WRITING A VISION OR MISSION STATEMENT - STEP BY STEP

#### What is a Vision Statement?

A vision statement should reflect the end goal: a dream of future success that inspires people to get and stay involved

Example:

*Our Soccer Club envisions that all youth between the ages of 4 and 18 will have the opportunity to play soccer in a safe and healthy environment.*

*The Winter Carnival Committee envisions that every family in our community has the opportunity to enjoy a weekend of fun during the winter months, while raising funds to support healthy community projects.*

#### What is a Mission Statement?

A mission statement is a brief, clear statement of the purpose of the group. It answers the questions: what, who, how and why, and guides the development and design of the group's programs and services.

Example:

*Our Soccer Club offers the opportunity for young people between the ages of 4 and 18 to play organized soccer. We recognize the importance of fair play and safety for all involved.*

*The Winter Carnival Committee is a not-for-profit group that, along with community partners and sponsors, organizes a weekend of family-oriented activities to raise funds for worthy community causes.*

Writing a vision or mission statement is just a couple of steps away.

More...

## Writing a Vision or Mission Statement

Writing a vision or mission statement is a group effort. Here are some suggestions of how to go about it...

1. Ask each group member to answer the key questions “Why does our group exist?” and “Twenty years from now, what will people say about our group?”
2. List all the answers on a single sheet.
3. Ask members to circle their top three choice words or “phrases” that best represent their view of the group’s purpose.
4. Bring the group’s list down to a few words.
5. Start writing your statement...
6. Take a break – a day, a week, a month – before adopting your mission or vision statement and review it one last time.
7. Review these statements regularly (yearly or every second year) to make sure they are still relevant to your group.

It goes without saying that groups that clearly define their vision and mission are more likely to attract committed volunteers and members because they will be able to answer these important questions:

- What do we do?
- Who do we serve?
- Why do we exist?
- Who would be interested in joining and why?

**If you can be clear about the purpose of your group and be consistent about the direction it is following, people will be able to see how they can be involved. Your volunteers will not only understand and appreciate the significance of their involvement, but will become more dedicated and passionate about their work.**

There is an approach to finding, involving and keeping dedicated volunteers. It’s called **Volunteer Development** and it is made up of five stages. This **Fact Sheet** (no. 3 of 14) addresses the importance of **planning for volunteer involvement**.

For more information on the Volunteer Development Cycle or Volunteer Involvement, contact your local Volunteer Centre ([www.volunteer.ca/volunteercentres](http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteercentres)).

## Volunteer Development Cycle



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