



# QPIRG-McGill volunteer guide

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# 1. general volunteer guide

This guide is to help you to get to know QPIRG and find ways to get involved. QPIRG helps put on a lot of events, has a variety of working groups and is part of a vast network of activism on campus and in the community. This brief outline will give you a starting place and help you navigate our organization.

For specific information about volunteering for our library, please see below.

## volunteer registration form

If you have made an informed decision, please fill out the volunteer registration form here: [https://linktr.ee/qpirg\\_m](https://linktr.ee/qpirg_m).

For other inquiries, please reach out to us at [info@qiprgmcgill.org](mailto:info@qiprgmcgill.org).

## QPIRG in context

QPIRG stands for Quebec Public Interest Research Group. QPIRG McGill is one of over 200 PIRGs across North America, which originated in the model developed by Ralph Nader. Initially, PIRGs set out to use research and working “within the system” to bring about social change. Since the founding of QPIRG McGill in the 1980s, it has undergone many changes that built on this structure and changed it in significant ways. One of the most obvious characteristics of the current shape of QPIRG is its orientation toward grassroots activism, demonstrations and political action “outside of the system.”

As well, since 2001, QPIRG has adopted an anti-oppression framework, seeking to oppose all forms of oppression as they play out within society at large as well as within our organizing work. Oppression can be defined as the institutionalized, systemic, pervasive, day-in, day-out, mistreatment of a person or group of individuals based solely on their race, their sexual orientation, their gender, their age, their class, or other difference. The adoption of an anti-oppression framework has marked a radical change in our local implementation of the philosophy of the PIRG movement.

Each PIRG organizes autonomously with no central authority. Nevertheless, QPIRG McGill shares a common history with some of the other Canadian PIRGs, especially QPIRG Concordia, which has developed along similar lines. We are



also connected to and lend support to many social and environmental initiatives on campus and beyond. Together, we share a field of grassroots political organizing, which we can help introduce you to, based on your own personal and political interests.

## structure

QPIRG's activities, such as research, education, and activism, are accomplished with the participation of a range of people involved in different aspects of the organization. Because QPIRG values the contribution of everyone involved, the organization is structured non-hierarchically and around collective work.

The organization is made up of four groups: volunteers, staff, working groups and the board.

**Staff** are hired to run the daily operations and work on special projects under the direction of the board. Currently, QPIRG has three full time coordinators: a Finance and Administration coordinator, an Outreach and Promotions coordinator, and a Working Groups and Community Research coordinator. In addition, QPIRG has three part-time staff – the Library/Resource Centre Coordinator, the CURE Coordinator, and the Campus Outreach Coordinator. QPIRG also hires summer staff to coordinate Rad Frosh and the School Schmool agenda every year.

**The Board** is elected through an Annual General Meeting and meets regularly to make decisions about the broader scope, vision and involvement of QPIRG. They are the main decision-making body of the organization and make collective decisions based on consensus.

**Working Groups** are made up of both students and community members and operate autonomously. These groups are supported by QPIRG in their various initiatives through funding, resources and promotion, as well as collaborating on certain events. We also direct like minded volunteers to working groups that fit their interests.

**Volunteers** can get involved at QPIRG at any time and are often recruited for specific projects. As a volunteer, you will be invited to meetings where you can



take on tasks, help come up with ideas, and help us promote and run events. Other volunteers choose to join working groups.

## volunteer engagement

Here are some of the main ways that volunteers get involved in QPIRG-McGill.

**The Board of Directors** is responsible for management, budgets, project development, employees, working groups, and the development of QPIRG's political vision. Every April, student and community members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which welcomes all QPIRG members. Additionally, one representative from the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) and one representative from the Post-Graduate Student Society (PGSS) sit on the board. The board makes all decisions by consensus. Board members have the opportunity to:

- Learn more about and/or support important social and environmental issues in Montreal
- Make QPIRG-McGill a more active and effective organization
- Work within a collective
- Develop skills like problem-solving, supervision, financial management and event planning

Our projects in 2023/2024 will include organizing an event series, planning accessibility upgrades for our new office space, and hiring new staff members. Our board of directors plays a key role in making sure all of this can happen!

### **Community Research Committee**

The Community Research Committee aims to support QPIRG-McGill's community-driven research programming. Among its activities include participating in our research projects, supporting our working groups, and organizing research workshops. Above all, the committee believes in research as a tool for social transformation- one that is accountable to communities and accessible to all.



**The Library Collective** is a group of volunteers, who, along with the Librarian, help run our resource center. They help users check out books, file returns, decide what new books or resources we might want, and attend book fairs to help grow our collection. In some years, the collective has run a regular book club and held workshops—for example, on making your own zine— in the space. This year, we are looking to increase the accessibility of the library—so this could include helping us develop a mail-order system for users who can't use the stairs, or making a mobile lending library that we could bring to events, as well getting materials in large type, buying screen readers, or finding resource in braille, among other ideas!

#### **Outreach Committee**

The Outreach Committee makes decisions about QPIRG's outreach and promotion. They help spread awareness about events and opportunities to get involved with QPIRG. They may work with other committees and working groups to spread the word about events that QPIRG is organizing.

**The Popular Education Committee** is made up of volunteers, Board, and staff at QPIRG-McGill. It is this committee that plans Culture Shock, Spring into Action, and, well, basically every other event QPIRG puts on. It's a great way to get familiar with the kind of work that we do, meet new people, help put on great events, learn about other community organizations in the city—it's really where the action is at!

**The School Schmoool Committee** is another great option for those of you who love editing, but also developing a great resource guide! This committee is also active over the summer.

**The Rad Frosh Committee** is a key part of making our biggest event of the year happen. With everything from party planning to designing workshops, to running tours or helping book indie bands - volunteering with Rad Frosh is a blast. This committee is also active over the summer.

These are just some of the options, so make sure to talk to us about where you see yourself, and what kinds of things you're excited about!



# how to talk about QPIRG

## Tips for tabling

- You don't have to know everything about QPIRG to table for us! (I actually don't think there's anyone who knows everything about QPIRG.) You can give a general description of what we do or talk about a favourite program of yours.
- It is important to bring the tabling material as our flyers and info sheets clearly break down what we do. There may be a lot of new information, so it can help to send them home with a written summary of our programming.
- If someone asks a question you don't know how to answer, that's okay! You can be honest and say QPIRG has so much going on it can be hard to keep track. They can email [info@qiprgmcgill.org](mailto:info@qiprgmcgill.org) with any questions they still have after speaking with you. You can also redirect them to our Instagram (@qiprgmcgill) or Facebook page (@QPIRG.GRIP.McGill)
- When tabling, prioritize getting people to sign up for the newsletter and/or following us on social media, so they can keep up with everything that's happening at QPIRG.
- Tell them if they want to volunteer, they should come to a volunteer training. If they already know they won't have time to volunteer, there are lots of other ways to be involved. We have tons of resources to offer students and community members working toward social change.

## ideas for short summaries:

“QPIRG is an independent student group on campus that organizes around a variety of social and environmental justice issues. We do this through education, research, and direct action.”

→ then ask if they want to hear more about specific programming in any of these categories



“We’re a social justice organization that helps students get involved in local activism by hosting educational events, producing, funding, and encouraging student research, and providing financial and administrative support to student initiatives that fit our mandate.”

“QPIRG is a non-profit, student-led organization on campus that helps connect McGill students to the broader Montreal community by providing a hub and a support centre for anyone looking to get involved in local social and environmental justice work.”

“One of our goals as an organization is to facilitate students getting involved in local activism and connecting students to the broader Montreal community through social justice. Whether you’re looking for ways to get involved, you just want to learn, or you already have a specific project in mind, we’re here to support all kinds of activism that fall in line with our anti-oppression mandate.”

## **some programs to highlight for newcomers:**

### Volunteering

Volunteers at QPIRG plan educational events and skillshares, organize and order new books for the library, curate and edit the Convergence journal, and help out with Rad Frosh. There are many different committees to sit on and the involvement/commitment is whatever you can handle. Sitting on a committee of volunteers is a great way to introduce yourself to QPIRG and learn valuable skills.

### Community University Research Exchange (CURE)

The CURE program is generally more relevant to upper year or grad students, but it may be of interest to some first-year students as well. With CURE, students can do a research project that a community organization needs as a final project or term paper for a class, with their professor’s permission. Students look through the database of projects that need to be done, choose



one that is relevant to their field of study, and approach their professor with a proposal to use this research project for the class. This way, students get to see their research go to practical use in the real world and local non-profits get important research done at low or no cost.

*Example of a project that has been done in the past:*

Projet Bleu is a community organization that provides workshops and trainings to childcare workers on how to incorporate anti-oppressive practices into their work. This organization wanted research on teaching principles of consent to kids from an early age to incorporate into their trainings. A women's studies student compiled and summarized some of the existing research on learning about consent in childhood. This paper was submitted as the student's final paper for a Feminist Research Methods class and used by Projet Bleu to inform their trainings.

It should be noted that students and non-students may also choose to take on a CURE project and not use it for class credit. The full database of CURE projects can be found at [curemontreal.org](http://curemontreal.org).

### Library

Any QPIRG member (any student who has not opted out of the fee is a member) is welcome to use the QPIRG library, located in our office, during our open hours (Monday-Thursday, noon-6pm). It's a nice cozy space for working, reading, eating, naps, etc.. They can also find all kinds of books and zines on a wide range of social justice topics.

### Events

QPIRG organizes tons of workshops and skillshares, introductory and advanced levels, about all kinds of social and environmental justice topics. Our events are generally free or by donation and aim to make education about social justice issues accessible to as many people as possible. To be informed about our upcoming events, people can sign up for the newsletter and/or follow our Facebook page.

### Resources





Groupe québécois de recherche  
d'intérêt public à McGill  
Quebec Public Interest Research  
Group at McGill

3516 avenue du Parc,  
Montreal, QC H2X 2H7  
Telephone: (514) 284-2664  
Fax: (514) 842-0245  
info@qiprgmcgill.org

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For people doing their own organizing around a social justice issue they're passionate about, QPIRG can offer resources such as funding, promotional and administrative support, and connections to other groups with similar goals. If people are looking for support on a project that fits QPIRG's mandate, they can call, email, or drop by the office to discuss their options with the QPIRG staff.

## communication methods

Primary: Email

Secondary: Text/Call (in emergency cases).

A Slack group chat is available to access after you register to volunteer.

If you have made an informed decision, please fill out the volunteer registration form here: [https://linktr.ee/qpirg\\_m](https://linktr.ee/qpirg_m)

For other inquiries, please reach out to the Outreach and Promotions Coordinator.

## contact

Nelly Wat

### **Outreach and Promotions Coordinator**

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group - McGill University (QPIRG-McGill)

Le Groupe Québécois de Recherche d'Intérêt Public - Université McGill  
(GRIPQ-McGill)

3516 Avenue du Parc, Tiohtià:ke (Montréal), Québec, H2X 2H7.

Office opening hours: Monday to Thursday, 12pm-6pm or by appointment

Email: [nelly@qiprgmcgill.org](mailto:nelly@qiprgmcgill.org)

Tel. (Office | Bureau): 514-284-2664



## 2. library volunteer guide

### volunteer registration form

If you have made an informed decision, please fill out the volunteer registration form here: [https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill\\_library](https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill_library)  
For other inquiries, please reach out to the Resource Centre Coordinator.

### about QPIRG-McGill Alternative Library

Part of QPIRG-McGill, the Alternative Library is run by a Resource Centre Coordinator and volunteers in a non-hierarchical structure. Mainly focused on social and environmental justice, it holds a variety of books, periodicals, media, and zines that are rare, independently published, formally unconventional, and/or intellectually marginalized. The library also organizes justice-based activities, from workshops and talks to reading clubs and community projects. Library membership is free to everyone upon registration, and members have access to resources and events free of charge. If you are a McGill University tuition-paying student, please consider paying our opt-out-able fee billed every semester in your student account. This source of funding ensures we can continue our justice-based work. You are automatically our members if you have paid this fee, although you still need to register to have a library account. If you are not a McGill tuition-paying student or could not pay the opt-out-able fee, please consider volunteering with us within your capacity. Register for library membership and to volunteer at this link: [https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill\\_library](https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill_library)

### accessibility

Located at 3516 Park Avenue which is opposite Galeries du Parc and on a relatively level street, our library is on the ground floor, and our office is on the second floor. We are in the process of building a wheelchair ramp. Our librarian (Resource Centre Coordinator) always offers to meet people elsewhere to deliver books upon request. We have a gender-neutral bathroom and foster a space that is non-discriminatory, queer- and trans-friendly.



Please let us know if there are accessibility needs we might be able to help you with. We are always happy to accommodate them within our financial and physical capacity.

## volunteer benefits & responsibilities

### your rights

- Accessibility accommodations
  - Volunteers have the rights to demand accessibility accommodations without being interrogated.
  - Volunteers are encouraged to voice their concerns regarding any inaccessible aspects while working with us.
- Inclusive, safe, and supportive environment
  - Volunteers are entitled to a non-discriminatory and anti-oppressive work environment, protected by QPIRG-McGill's governing policies.
  - Volunteers can receive constructive criticism of their work and performance evaluations upon request.
- Access to our office and library
  - Volunteers can work at and come by our office space, including the library, upon request, via appointment, or during opening hours, depending on QPIRG-McGill's operations as well as public health guidelines at the time.
- Access to orientation, training, and guidance
  - Volunteers are encouraged to attend any orientation and training session. If none available, they can either request or wait until one is scheduled.
  - Volunteers can ask for guidance whenever they find such a need.
- Reimbursement and snack
  - QPIRG-McGill is obliged to reimburse work-related costs that volunteer bear, upon mutual agreement on a case-by-case basis.
  - QPIRG-McGill is sorry to inform we cannot monetarily compensate for the work of volunteers at the moment. However, we provide snacks during volunteering sessions and meetings.
- Recognition for your work



- Volunteers' work is credited duly wherever appropriate and upon their consensus of publicizing such information.
- Protection of personal information
- Personal information of volunteers, including names, demographic information, etc., remains inside QPIRG-McGill's internal operation, unless volunteers request or consent otherwise.
- Volunteers are not obliged to inform QPIRG-McGill of information that does not pertain to work or aid the efficiency of communication.

### **your benefits**

- Co-designing our library
- As an integral part of our operation, volunteers are encouraged to voice their concerns and proposals regarding every aspect of the library.
- Every concern, feedback, suggestion, or ideation of volunteers is taken into consideration with utmost respect and care.
- Volunteers and the Resource Centre Coordinator work side by side to create an inclusive, accessible, and innovative library experience for the community at large.
- Access to our interlibrary network
- QPIRG-McGill Library's resource catalogue is hosted on an online database shared with other resource centers of our sister community organizations around Tiohtià:ke (Montréal), collectively known as "Alternative Libraries."
- Volunteers have access to interlibrary collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community building.
- Access to initiatives and working groups of QPIRG-McGill
- Many initiatives and working groups of different orientations and interests are affiliated with QPIRG-McGill.
- Volunteers are free to move beyond their initial function to other volunteering positions that these initiatives and groups host
- Receiving recommendation letters
- Volunteers can receive recommendation letters from the Resource Centre Coordinator upon request.
- Receiving certificate of recognition



- Volunteers can receive certificates of recognition for volunteering at the library upon request.
- Eligibility: at least 20 hours of volunteering in total (20 hours in a semester OR a flexible combination of hours throughout the year)
- Self-recorded hour log: Please use the timesheet template provided by the librarian -> Make a copy and save it in your drive folder -> Fill in with your own hours and name

## **your responsibilities**

- Personal ethics
  - To foster an inclusive and safe environment, we seek volunteers who are respectful of our mandates, our staff and other volunteers, as well as the community at large.
  - People make mistakes, and we fully acknowledge that no one is perfect and completely knowledgeable about social and environmental justice. We believe that everyone is a work in process, in terms of personal development and sociocultural consciousness. We welcome individuals who are open-minded and eager to learn the unknown or yet-to-be-known.
  - However, we do not tolerate harmful, oppressive remarks and behaviors under any circumstances, such as hate crime, assault, harassment, discrimination, bullying, aggression, and violence. Therefore, we will strictly implement necessary procedures if need be. Please refer to Our Policies section, especially Conflict Resolution and Complaints Policy, for more details.
  - Under our mandate, respect comes in many forms, including but not limited to:
    - Respecting and acknowledging Indigenous Peoples' ongoing decolonizing struggles, sovereignty, self-determination, and custodianship of unceded territories, one of which is the Island of Tiohtià:ke or Montréal on which QPIRG-McGill is located.
    - Respecting a person's pronoun(s), preferred name(s), identity/identities, disability/disabilities and accessibility needs, physical condition(s) and mental health, sexual orientation(s), political



- belief, religion, ethnicity, sociocultural and educational background, as well as other lived experiences.
- Respecting a person's boundaries.
  - Respecting a person's personal belongings and intellectual properties.
  - Respecting a person's extenuating circumstances.
  - Respecting our mandates and collective decisions.
  - Respecting our shared office space and properties.
  - Respecting the community members and students we serve.
  - Respecting one's co-workers.
- Scope of work and specialized duties
    - Scope of work: general aspects of running the library that volunteers can help us with. This includes:
      - Operation and management
        - Opening and closing the library in volunteering shifts.
        - Welcoming and assisting library users.
        - Sorting, cataloguing, and organizing materials.
        - Keeping track of check-in and check-out records.
        - Keeping track of membership issues: registration, forms, etc..
        - Helping to manage and improve our resource database.
        - Helping to clean and organize the space.
        - Helping to assess the accessibility of the library and its activities.
      - Promotion and communications
        - Helping with social media plans and content.
        - Helping with promotion through on-campus and off-campus outreach.
        - Liaising and planning collaborations with other groups and initiatives.
    - Resource development
      - Suggesting new additions to the library.
      - Helping to plan activities, i.e. book club, zine sessions, film screenings, etc.
      - Helping to plan internal and external workshops.
      - Helping to build an alternative libraries and bookstores database.
      - Helping to build a justice-themed knowledge sharing resource.
    - Brainstorm
      - Attending brainstorm sessions to improve the library.
      - Propose improvements and give feedback on current operations.



- Seasonal projects
  - Helping with office move-in and move-out.
  - Helping with summer-specific activities.
  - Planning and coordinating personal or collective projects using the library's resources.
- Specialized duties: particular tasks within the scope of work that require certain expertise. These skills are welcome, but not mandatory requirements whatsoever. These duties are paid on a case-by-case basis.
  - Interpretation: For events, workshops and other projects
  - French
  - Indigenous languages, specifically Kanien'kéha/Kanyen'kéha, also known as the Mohawk language.
  - Langue des signes québécoise/Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ) (Québec Sign Language)
  - American Sign Language (ASL)
  - Graphic design and/or Illustrations

## **time and scheduling**

Time: No minimum or maximum volunteering hours requirement. However, preferably 1-3 hours per week if volunteers can afford it. If you want to receive a certificate of recognition at the end of the year, you must volunteer at least 20 hours in total.

Schedule: Most of the time, volunteers work individually. Team meetings with the Resource Centre Coordinator and all volunteers occur roughly once to twice a month. Scheduling of collective gatherings is subject to everyone's availability.

## **communication methods**

Primary: Email / Library-specific, opt-outable newsletter via Mailchimp.

Secondary: Text/Call (in emergency cases).

A Slack group chat is available to access after you register to volunteer.



Groupe québécois de recherche  
d'intérêt public à McGill  
Quebec Public Interest Research  
Group at McGill

3516 avenue du Parc,  
Montreal, QC H2X 2H7  
Telephone: (514) 284-2664  
Fax: (514) 842-0245  
info@qiprgmcgill.org

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If you have made an informed decision, please fill out the volunteer registration form here: [https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill\\_library](https://linktr.ee/qpirgmcgill_library)  
For other inquiries, please reach out to the Resource Centre Coordinator.

## **contact**

Ha Nhuan Dong (he/him)

**Resource Centre Coordinator | Coordonnateur du centre de ressources**

The Quebec Public Interest Research Group - McGill University (QPIRG-McGill)

Le Groupe Québécois de Recherche d'Intérêt Public - Université McGill  
(GRIPQ-McGill)

3516 Avenue du Parc, Tiohtià:ke (Montréal), Québec, H2X 2H7.

Library opening hours: Regularly updated on social media & open to appointment.

Email: [library@qiprgmcgill.org](mailto:library@qiprgmcgill.org)

Tel. (Office | Bureau): 514-284-2664





## 3. library volunteer training manual

This manual provides loose instructions to the workflow of operating and managing our library. Please refer to this manual during your volunteer shift.

### emergency contact

In case of emergency, including major disturbance, physical conflicts, complications involving homeless folks, etc. happening inside the library, please contact, preferably in this order:

1. Jonathan Lebire (Comm-Un, a community organization working with the homeless population in the area):  
**514-998-2792**
2. Urgence Psychosociale-Justice Hotline:  
**514-861-9331 ext. 8163**

or

An intervention worker at The Open Door (across the street, 3535 Avenue du Parc):  
**514-939-1970**

3. Life-threatening emergencies:  
**9-1-1**

In other cases of emergency that are not life-threatening, please text or call any of QPIRG-McGill staff.

### opening the library

- Access the building: When you arrive at 3516 Avenue du Parc, if the door is locked, please ring the bell for someone to come.
- If no one answers the bell:
  - Turn around the block to access the alley/backyard (parallel to Avenue du Parc)
  - Find a black box in the shape of a big lock (usually near the stairs or the back door)
  - Open the cover to reveal the code pad and enter the code you're provided. Please contact any of QPIRG-McGill staff for the code.



- Use the key inside to open the back door.
- IMPORTANT:** always return the key to its box and lock it properly afterwards.
- Turn off the alarm (if it sounds off)
  - Locate the alarm code pad on the wall. There are two alarms, located near the front door and next to the back door.
  - Enter the code you're provided. Please contact any of QPIRG-McGill staff for the code.
- Put the opening sign outside.
- Put the box with free books and School Schmools on the step of the front door.
- Turn on the lights in the hallway and the library room.
- Clean the tables, chairs, sofa, and the floor if necessary. Rearrange the room if messy. Cleaning supplies are in the toilet.

## during your shift

- **Forms:** There are two forms to keep track during your shift, available both in print and online (via the library's linktree): Membership registration & Checkout sheet
  - Make sure all forms are always available in print.
  - Transfer data from the paper form to the respective online form at the end of the day if there are new entries, i.e. people filling out the forms on paper that day.
- Welcome visitors, answer their questions, and accommodate their needs/requests within your capacity. Refer them to our staff (if present) or our email if you can't assist certain requests: [info@qipirgmcgill.org](mailto:info@qipirgmcgill.org) (for general inquiries) and [library@qipirgmcgill.org](mailto:library@qipirgmcgill.org) (for library inquiries).
- Check the Return box for any returned materials and reshel them. **IMPORTANT:** Only reshel books owned by QPIRG-McGill, which can be identified by a call number label along the spine and/or a logo stamp inside the book (check front and back pages). For materials other than books, leave them inside the box or inform the librarian.
- Keep track of new arrivals (i.e. donations of books) or deliveries of library equipment of the day.
- Take note and report any issues you encounter to the librarian.



## closing the library

- **Room:**
  - Turn off the lights.
  - Slide down all the windows.
  - Clean the space and pick up any trash.
  - Return any shifted furniture and stuff to their original positions.
  - Lock the back door using the key inside the library (the key in the lock box should always remain in that box, outside the library)
- Put the opening sign inside.
- Put the free books box inside.
- Turn off the lights in the hallway.
- If there are still people in the building, you can simply leave without locking the front door and turning on the alarm unless instructed otherwise.
- If there is nobody left in the building:
  - Make sure you have all your belongings before locking the outermost front door because you cannot come back in afterwards unless there are people inside to open it.
  - Turn on the alarm:
    - Locate the alarm code pad on the wall. There are two alarms, located near the front door and next to the back door.
    - Enter the code you're provided. Please contact any of QPIRG-McGill staff for the code.
  - Lock the outermost front door:
    - Locate the two circle buttons on the side that you can push in.
    - Push in the upper button.
    - Close the door from the outside.
    - **IMPORTANT:** Always try opening it to see if it's properly locked. If it can still open, please use force.