



THE HUMANIST CANADA CEREMONIES & OFFICIANT PROGRAM

In 1996, the Ontario Office of the Registrar General (ORG) bestowed the Humanist Association of Canada (Humanist Canada, HC) with the authority to appoint officiants capable of solemnizing a marriage in the province of Ontario. Since then, our Humanist Officiants have performed thousands of ceremonies in front of many thousands of people. This achievement is one of the most significant events in the history of our organization. That endorsement recognizes Humanism as equal to religious tradition and that Humanist Officiants are similar to religious leaders to provide rituals in times of joy and in times of need and comfort.

Our officiant program trains people to provide meaningful non-religious ceremonies for weddings, funerals, namings, and other rites of passage. It also provides positive public relations for Humanist Canada, its members, and Humanism.

Here is a short video by the British Humanist Association on what [Humanist ceremonies](#) are.

HUMANIST CANADA CEREMONIES & OFFICIANTS PROGRAM (HCCOP) COMMITTEE

Officiant volunteers manage the Humanist Canada Ceremonies & Officiants Program on the working committee. Officiants also volunteer their time to help interview prospective candidates, train eligible candidates, mentor newly endorsed Humanist Officiants, and the annual officiant conference. Many moving parts are required to maintain our program and ensure we are endorsing the highest quality officiants we can offer back to the public.

PRIORITY BY REGION

To develop a Humanist Canada Officiant presence in under-serviced areas, we may prioritize candidates in those areas. All applications are gratefully received, but if a service area has been deemed saturated, your application may be delayed until an opening occurs.



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HUMANIST OFFICIANT CRITERIA

Below you will find the criteria that Humanist Canada looks for in its Officiants:

Required:

1. Identifies as a Humanist.
2. Member of Humanist Canada in good standing.
3. Engages in courses, workshops, seminars and webinars offered by HC or other Humanist organizations, and proof of their involvement in those activities.
4. Agrees to provide secular officiant services and must abide by Humanist Canada's Officiant Code of Ethics, Charter, and related policies.
5. Engagement in the officiant program by offering their skills and services to the program and the association.
6. Empathetic and respectful toward people of different cultures and lifestyles.
7. Friendly, calm, and approachable.
8. Professional in appearance, speech, manner, and dress.
9. Comfortable speaking in front of large and small groups.
10. Ability to keep accurate records.
11. Clear criminal record.
12. Easy access to transportation.
13. Postsecondary education or equivalent life experience.
14. They shall commit themselves to continued learning about Humanism, its history and its relevance in society.

Preferred:

1. Member of an HC committee and proof of their participation in the Committee's activities.
2. Membership in a local group and evidence of involvement in the group's activities and or leadership.
3. Postsecondary degree, diploma, or certificate.



FIVE KEY STEPS TO BECOMING A HUMANIST OFFICIANT

Our Officiants are ambassadors of Humanist Canada. Accordingly, they must be comfortable identifying as Humanists and upholding the values of Humanism. Our Officiants perform non-religious ceremonies and abide by a Code of Ethics and related policies as determined by Humanist Canada.

Step 1: Membership in Humanist Canada

The first step to becoming a Humanist Officiant is to join HC. If you are already a member, you can go directly to Step 2.

Step 2: One-Year Waiting Period

All members of Humanist Canada must wait one year from the date of membership and renew their membership before applying to become a Humanist Canada Officiant. Waiting is the hardest part, and we have a waiting period to determine your commitment to Humanism and HC. During your first year as a member, you are encouraged to:

- Attend HC events, workshops, webinars, courses, weekly gatherings, and other programs we offer.
- Become a volunteer with Humanist Canada and lend your skills to the Humanist movement in Canada.
- Join a local Humanist group and attend their meetings and other events. If no group exists in your area, you can start a Humanist Canada Chapter, and we will help you with that project.
- Read about Humanism. There are many books of interest to Humanists that span a lot of topics and genres. We also have a Humanist Canada Book Club.
- Watch videos or presentations on Humanism or Humanist-related topics on the HC website or elsewhere.
- Attend other humanist organization events, courses, lectures and webinars.



Step 3: The Application & Screening Process

Once you have completed your waiting period and renewed your membership, we will send you an application form. This form includes questions about your interest in Humanism, education, employment, and volunteer work. You must also write an essay on Humanism.

We initiate a criminal reference check and personal character references when you have submitted your application. Humanist Canada has contracted with Charity Village to complete the criminal reference checks. Once we receive the report from Charity Village, and the character references, we send your completed application to the Humanist Canada Ceremonies & Officiant Program (HCCOP) Committee for their review of your application. Our HCCOP Interview Committee will contact you for an interview if your application is deemed suitable. The interview is a video interview, and you must have video and audio capabilities. Two endorsed Humanist Officiants will interview you. Our officiants volunteer their time as part of their obligation to the program.

The HCCOP Committee considers all documentation and interviewer feedback. If the HCCOP Committee deems that you meet all the criteria for moving forward as a Humanist Officiant candidate, you are invited to attend an Officiant training session.

We have limits on the number of candidates in each training session. Limitations on the number of students allow for collegiality to build among candidates and provide a better learning experience for students and instructors alike.

Step 4: Officiant Training

During the COVID pandemic, we transitioned to online training. We found that offering our training online allowed candidates from all over the province to attend without the expense of hotels and travel. We provide two training sessions per year.

Training sessions are held on six Sunday mornings. Our Humanist Officiants provide their time to train new candidates.

- The first session begins in late January and runs until early March.
- The second session begins in late October and runs until early December.

The Humanist Officiant training cycle, from receipt of your application, reference checks and interviews, to training, may take several months.



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NOTE: We cannot accommodate requests to expedite training for any reason. (For example, having promised a family member or friend that you would officiate their wedding).

Step 5: Endorsement as a Humanist Canada Officiant

When candidates successfully complete all the above, the instructors send their recommendations to the HCCOP Committee for final approval. This happens at the next committee meeting after the training session and grading of final assignments.

When the HCCOP Committee has endorsed candidates as a Humanist Canada Officiant, Humanist Canada's Governing Official will provide them with their appointment package. Candidates will learn more about this process in officiant training.

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE OFFICIANT PROGRAM

Mentorship

When endorsed by Humanist Canada as an Officiant, you can start putting together your officiant practice. To help you get started in your first year, you will be assigned a mentor to work with for a year. Your mentor will be an experienced Humanist Officiant who has volunteered their time to help and guide you in your officiating journey.

Officiant Fees and Other Requirements

Below are the financial obligations associated with becoming and being a Humanist Canada officiant. Fees are subject to change without notice.

- Humanist Canada Membership (individual or household membership) Membership must be maintained, at all times.
- Officiant program application fee - \$150 one-time fee, non-refundable.
- Officiant training fee - \$750 (*after meeting eligibility criteria*) Paid to attend training. Any missed modules in the training cohort are subject to a \$100 additional fee per missed module.
- Annual Officiant Professional Dues - \$350 paid annually.



After being appointed as a Humanist Canada Officiant, the following costs and requirements are applicable.

- Renewal of Humanist Canada membership annually.
- Annual Professional Officiant Dues: currently \$350 and subject to change from time to time.
- Attendance at the Annual Officiant Conference: The Annual Conference is part of our ongoing commitment to professional development and helps foster collegiality with Officiant colleagues. There are costs associated with attendance at the conference, and candidates will learn more about this in officiant training.
- Every five years, after endorsement, all officiants must submit to a criminal reference check.
- Humanist Canada Officiants are required to contribute to the program as they gain experience. Officiants provide time for the program to interview, train and support the program. They may also give back to the organization by engaging with committees or consider sitting on the Board to foster the continued development of the organization.

Thank you for being interested in the Humanist Canada Ceremonies and Officiants Program. We look forward to working with people who are excited about being Humanist Officiants and will be ambassadors of Humanism and Humanist Canada.

If you have questions, or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can send emails to the following addresses:

HCCOP – hccop@humanistcanada.ca

The Humanist Canada Ceremonies & Officiants Program Committee
