INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

What is volunteering?

Volunteer Australia has defined formal volunteering as an activity which takes place through not-for-profit community organisations and is considered to be;

- Of benefit to both the community and the volunteer
- Of the volunteer's own free will
- For no financial payment
- In a position not designated as paid
- In accordance with the 'Principles of Volunteering'

Principles of Volunteering

The Principles of Volunteering are a set of guidelines developed to protect volunteers.

Volunteering:
- Benefits the community and the volunteer
- Is always a matter of choice
- Is unpaid and not undertaken for the receipt of salary, pension or government allowance
- Is a legitimate way to address human, environmental and social needs in your community
- Is an activity performed in the not for profit sector only
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers nor are they a threat to the job security of paid workers
- Respects the rights, dignity and culture of others
- Promotes human rights and equality

Why do people volunteer?

- To make a difference in their community
- Learn more and maintain an active involvement in their community
- Gain personal satisfaction from helping others
- Build social networks and to meet new people/make friends
- Improve communication skills & build self confidence
- Enjoyment and fun
- Learn new skills
- Gain work experience employment

As someone who wants to volunteer, what should you consider?

When thinking about becoming a volunteer, you should ask yourself these questions:

- Why do I want to volunteer?
- How much time do I have?
- What length of time can I commit to?
- What are my interests?
- What are my skills, both professionally and socially?

Process to becoming a volunteer

- Inquiry – role description
- Application form
- Interview/informal chat
- Referee Check
- Police Check & Working With Children Check if appropriate
- Induction/Orientation
- Training

VOLUNTEER WEST

Australian Multicultural Community Services

1800 123 VOL | 1800 123 865
volunteerwest@amcservices.org.au
volunteerwest.org.au

Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by awards or workplace agreements. Volunteers however do have rights, some of which are included in legislation and others could be considered the moral obligations of an organisation involving volunteers.

Volunteers also have responsibilities, which are the obligations of the volunteer.

Volunteer rights

As a volunteer you have a right to:

- Have a volunteer position description with agreed volunteering hours
- Be given information about the organisation and an orientation
- Be supported and supervised in your volunteering role
- Be given a volunteer policy and other policies that affect your volunteering
- Be recognised as a valued team member
- Be made aware of the grievance procedure within the organisation
- Adequate insurance cover
- A safe & healthy work environment
- Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses
- Freedom of choice (i.e. the right to say 'no')

Volunteer responsibilities

All volunteers are expected to:

- Carry out the duties listed in your volunteer position description
- Be punctual and reliable
- Respect the rights and privacy of others
- Be prepared to follow the organisation's volunteer policies and procedures
- Be committed to the organisation and accountable for the volunteer work that you do
- Undertake training as requested
- Value and support other team members and ask for support when needed
- Give advance notice in regards to changes in your availability or before leaving the organisation

What do volunteers do?

Below are some examples of volunteer roles.

Administrative

- data entry
- filing/ record keeping
- reception/ telephoning

Aged Care

- social visits
- music
- gardening

Animals

- animal care
- fundraising for animal organisations
- advocacy

Art & Culture

- theatre
- organising events
- community radio
- craft groups

Children

- homework help
- reading
- child-minding

Customer Service

- op shops/sales
- information desks
- museum guides

Disability

- social outings
- recreational activities

Driving

- transporting
- people/goods bus driving
- Instructing

Emergency

- CFA
- SES
- Red Cross

Environment

- land care
- conservation
- tree planting

Food

- preparing and serving
- sorting and delivering

Fundraising

- administration
- telephone support
- collecting money

Hospitals

- orientation
- visiting patients
- activity support

Information Technology

- computer tutoring
- technical support

Justice

- information centres
- supporting young people

Leadership

- committee roles
- program leaders

Library

- book sales
- home book deliveries

Mentoring

- youth
- new arrivals

Refugees

- settlement support
- homework help/tutoring

Sport

- umpiring/refereeing
- coaching/teaching

Telephone Counselling

- information
- support services

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How to find volunteer opportunities

The choices for volunteer opportunities are varied. Volunteer roles are available during the day time, after hours, weekdays, weekends and for single events. Most roles are for 1-2 hours each week. You can search for them in a variety of ways. This may include online, enquiring through your local council or speaking directly with a volunteer resource centre such as Volunteer West that can link you to volunteer work or have volunteer roles available.

You can use a volunteer matching website to search for opportunities by topic, interest, location, organisation or availability. Alternatively, many volunteer organisations also advertise positions on their websites.

Volunteer West is the local volunteer resource centre that services the Western Region of Melbourne. The Volunteer West team can refer you to volunteer roles within our local community organisations that match your particular skills, interests or availability.

Volunteer Resource Centre

Volunteer West
Tel: 1800 123 VOL/1800 123 865
Web: www.volunteerwest.org.au
Email: volunteerwest@amcservices.org.au

Volunteer Matching Sites

Volunteer matching sites are just like job search websites. You can search for opportunities using criteria like locality, availability, area of interest or organisation:

- www.volunteer.com.au
- www.govolunteer.com.au

Local Council

Visit your local councils website and search under volunteering

For more information contact Volunteer West on volunteerwest@amcservices.org.au or call 1800 123 VOL / 1800 123 865.

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