

**Recruitment is not just about attracting enough volunteers to your program; you need the right people, and you want them to have meaningful roles. This starts with careful planning and administration – well before you start advertising.**

### **Start at the beginning**

First, write down why you want to include volunteers in your organisation and what you want them to do. A carefully constructed position description helps ensure that the aims and objectives of the volunteer program are being met. It also protects the rights of the volunteer and can help them negotiate the demands of a busy role.

A position description doesn't need to be long or complex, but should include:

- » a description of the position – what the position will do
- » skills and/or qualifications required – both mandatory and desirable
- » key areas of responsibility or a list of duties
- » key relationships, such as supervision
- » conditions of the role, such as attendance times, and length of commitment
- » training and support provided to carry out the role

### **Advertising volunteer opportunities**

Once you have the foundations in place such as a position description, location and hours required, you are ready to share the exciting opportunity with others. The best and most common way to build your volunteer program is through word of mouth. Once people are asked to participate and are interested, you need to be ready to provide them with all the information they need.

### **Not sure where to start?**

Ensure that the first point of contact for potential volunteers gives the best possible impression of your organisation.

- » Inform all relevant people of the recruitment campaign and selection processes, from those who will take calls to those who will supervise volunteers.
- » Make sure your documentation (position description, information packs, policies, and procedures) is up to date – see our Guide [Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#) for more information.
- » Think ahead to how you might deal with the possibility of too many volunteer applicants, or unsuitable volunteer applicants. Prepare your response so you are not caught out if applicants call to check the status of their application.

### **Targeted recruitment**

When it comes to attracting volunteers, it helps to understand why and how people come to offer their time. A recruitment campaign that highlights the impact a volunteer's contribution will have on your community or cause will appeal to this motivation—and stand a better chance of attracting attention.

Many volunteers first get involved through someone they know or because they are asked. The lesson? Think local connections first. For example:

- » Tap into word-of-mouth: ask your current volunteers to spread the word among friends and relatives.
- » Target your recruitment: consider interest groups that may relate to your cause and contact local branches.
- » Listen to your volunteers: ask your volunteers for suggestions.
- » Spread the word: ask your volunteers to post on social media or distribute flyers within their networks, such as local clubs or groups in which they are affiliated.

## Mass campaigns

Common mass publicity methods may include arranging an article in the local paper, distributing flyers and posters, radio announcements, as well as paid and unpaid advertising in print and online.

Only a small number of people commence volunteering in response to a media campaign. But such campaigns can serve to increase awareness of your brand or organisation and make people more receptive to other recruitment approaches. While they are by nature general, media campaigns can also be targeted: think about the social groups who may be attracted to your activity, as well as the places and media they frequent, and spend your resources accordingly.

## Online recruitment

Did you know that you can advertise for volunteers online, much like you do for paid staff? Go Volunteer is just one platform of many which allows you to find volunteers, and for volunteers to find you. Any advertisements placed on Go Volunteer will also appear on Seek Volunteer, providing a two-in-one solution. This means your advertisement will be featured on both sites but you only need to submit one set of details! It's easy to use, just visit: [govolunteer.com.au](http://govolunteer.com.au) or see the Volunteering Victoria website for more suggestions: [Recruiting volunteers - Volunteering Victoria](#)

Some local Councils and regional areas have also invested in resources to enable volunteering. Check if your local [Volunteer Support Service](#) helps recruit for local volunteer roles.

## Walk-in volunteers

Plan for how your organisation manages people who come to you randomly asking to volunteer. The most important thing is for your front of house staff, volunteers, and/or temporary workers to know how to manage this situation: who to contact and/or what process to follow.

Depending on the type of work, you may be able to accommodate them straight away. Sometimes a quick 5-minute conversation is all that is needed in the first instance. It is reasonable to ask the volunteer to come back at an arranged time, to give them materials, or to direct them to a website to go through a recruitment process.

Of course, like customers or clients, you should consider the experience of walk-in volunteers and how their experience could reflect positively or negatively on your organisation's reputation.

## Interviews

It is good practice to interview perspective volunteers, as it indicates that the role is viewed seriously within the organisation. Recruitment interviews for volunteers are like standard interviews. Though they tend to be much less formal, they work best with some structure.

Put some time into planning the interview, considering the following items:

- » Venue – in-person or online
- » Timing – consider travel needs
- » Questions and points for discussion
- » Will the interviews be conducted in groups or one-on-one?
- » How many people will be conducting the interview – one person or a panel?

An interview provides the opportunity to find out what the volunteer is hoping to gain, as well as any hidden skills and talents they may have. Consider if the applicant is looking to gain something that may not be possible such as new skills or experience in areas that are not suitable for volunteers. It is important to be clear about the role of a volunteer within the organisation or group. This discussion will assist you selecting the right volunteer to ensure a meaningful and purposeful role. Be prepared to be flexible in volunteering arrangements to accommodate each individual and ask about any accessibility requirements.

A great volunteer can enhance a volunteer program and support staff delivering a service or activity. An unsuitable volunteer can be time-consuming for the leader of volunteers and can damage the program, and potentially the reputation of your organisation. Be prepared to make the right selection and advise all applicants of the outcome.

## Selection

Selecting the right volunteers for your program is important. Recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds can bring a wide range of skills to build your volunteer base. Matching each person to a meaningful role that utilises their skills will strengthen your relationship and their commitment to the program.

Selecting the right volunteer is also an important part of managing risk in your program. There is the risk that they lack the interest or skills for the role, or the serious risk that they may cause harm or be harmed through the role. A well thought-through selection process is the best way to manage these risks.

### National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

#### **Standard 4: Recruitment is equitable and diversity is valued.**

Volunteering Victoria recommends that Standard 4 of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement be used as a best practice guide for your volunteer recruitment and selection strategies. This ensures that your recruitment and selection process is planned, consistent, and meets the needs of the organisation and volunteers.

1. Organisations and groups engage volunteers using planned and innovative approaches to attract volunteers with relevant interests, knowledge, and skills.
2. Potential volunteers are provided with information about the organisation, how volunteers contribute to its purpose and vision, available opportunities, and the selection process.
3. Volunteers are selected based on interests, knowledge, skills, and suitability for the role, and consistent with anti-discrimination law.
4. Diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility principles are built into the recruitment activities, reflecting and promoting awareness of, and respect for, diversity and inclusion and the inherent value this brings to the organisation.
5. Screening processes maintain the safety and security of service recipients, employees, volunteers, and the organisation, in line with legal requirements and regulations.

## Screening Checks

Most organisations also conduct background or screening checks on volunteers in recognition of their duty of care to the organisation's clients or service recipients.

Most organisations should plan to conduct:

- » Proof of identity checks
- » Reference checks – only ask questions that are relevant and necessary to the role
- » Qualification or licence checks (where applicable)

Navigating what background checks are required to maintain the safety of your volunteers and the community can be a difficult task. Complying with legislation and regulations is essential if your volunteers engage with children and / or vulnerable people as part of their role. In many cases formal checks may not be required. In order to reduce barriers to volunteer involvement, organisations should carefully consider the aspects of the particular role.

In Victoria, there are a number of formal checks that may be required, dependent on the program or activity and also the clients that are receiving the support. Remember that asking people to obtain checks may be a barrier to them participating as a volunteer. Establishing enough identification to go through the process itself can be a challenge. Consider the role of the volunteer when making the decision. Each organisation or group should determine the requirements and document them in their policies and procedures to manage the risks and meet legislative requirements.

Consider if the background checks listed below may be required by your organisation or group.

## National Police Check

A National Police Check is usually requested by employers or organisations at their discretion, for employment or volunteering purposes. This is a document that is current at the time of issue. Some organisations may require a particular time frame to accept this, for example within the last 6 months. Outcomes of a check may disclose offences which can influence the recruitment process. Consideration should be given to the role and if the conviction would pose a relevant risk in that environment.

An organisation may apply for a Community Volunteer Fee (CFV) number. This number could be provided to volunteers to enable them to qualify for a reduced application processing fee if they are applying for the purpose of volunteer work or student placement.

More information can be found on the following websites:

- » [Apply for a National Police Check - Victoria Police](#)
- » [Information sheet – Procedure for obtaining a National Police Check](#)
- » [Application Form for a Community Volunteer Fee Number](#)
- » [National police check fees and charges - Victoria Police](#)

## Working With Children Check

The Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria. It assists in protecting children from sexual and physical harm by ensuring that people who work with or care for them are subject to a screening process. An organisation or person is breaking the law if they start child-related work without applying for a check first.

There is no cost for a ‘Volunteer’ Working With Children Check in Victoria. To apply for this check, it is required that the employer has their contact details listed with the Victorian Worker Screening Unit. The employer will be notified if an offence has been committed, even after the Working With Children Check has been obtained.

More information can be found on the following website:

[The Working with Children Check application process | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au)

A list of [job categories](#) can also be found here.

## NDIS Worker Screening Check

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Worker Screening Check (NDIS Check) is a higher level of screening to ensure that people who work with NDIS participants do not present an unacceptable risk to participants.

All individuals starting work for registered NDIS providers in certain types of roles – called risk assessed roles – will need a NDIS clearance before they can start work. This includes volunteers. A volunteer must be in a risk assessed role to be eligible for the volunteer fee waiver.

Further information can be found here: [NDIS Worker Screening Check | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au)

## Further information

As Victoria’s peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for reliable resources and advice. Below are some helpful links and resources to continue your understanding of *Recruiting Volunteers*.


The [Volunteering Victoria website](#) is your go-to resource for all things volunteering, with timely and reliable support, training, resources, and expert advice.

### Can’t find what you’re looking for?

Contact the Volunteering Victoria team at [info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au](mailto:info@volunteeringvictoria.org.au) anytime with your questions.



**Volunteering Victoria website**

 <p>Guides for Leading Volunteers</p>	 <p>National Standards for Volunteer Involvement</p>	 <p>Training &amp; Workshops <i>(Some offered <b>free of charge</b>)</i></p>
 <p>National Knowledge Base for Volunteer Managers</p>	 <p>Service Victoria <a href="https://www.service.vic.gov.au">Service.vic.gov.au</a></p>	 <p>Volunteer Management Guide for Non-profits</p>