

# Best Practice for Volunteer Involvement

Plain English

**When working with volunteers, your organisation needs to know where they can make the most difference. Having the right structure for volunteers can be the key to a successful program.**

The next step is to work out what types of roles are needed and what is involved. It is important to aim to place volunteers in roles that are fulfilling. Your organisation should have clear guidance and support for the volunteers.

Volunteering is a two-way opportunity. Volunteers bring time, skills and experience to an organisation. They can help organisations to meet their aims and goals. They can also improve the reputation of your organisation in the community. Volunteers will thrive in roles that match their needs and interests. Considering these points will help provide a meaningful role for the volunteer.

## The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

**You don't have to do this alone.** The [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) are a best practice framework to guide volunteer involvement. They are a helpful resource for all organisations and groups that engage volunteers.

### What are the National Standards?

Volunteering Victoria made the National Standards. In 1997, they were revised by Volunteering Australia with contributions from Volunteer-involving Organisations (VIOs) and volunteers across Australia. After consultations, the National Standards were refreshed in 2024.

The National Standards are easy to follow. You can adapt them to different forms of volunteering. They help improve the volunteer experience. Their role is to make sure that the wellbeing of volunteers is supported and they feel valued.

The National Standards highlight eight key areas for good volunteer involvement:

**1. Volunteering is embedded in leadership, governance and culture.**

- You support and give clear responsibilities to volunteer leaders. You have good systems, policies and procedures to support volunteers.

**2. Volunteer participation is championed and modelled.**

- Volunteers are part of your organisation's vision, purpose, goals and objectives. Volunteer management and resources are properly allocated.

### **3. Volunteer roles are meaningful and tailored.**

- Volunteers have meaningful roles. They contribute to the organisation's or group's purpose. Roles are designed with volunteers to consider their needs and interests. Roles are reviewed and discussed with volunteers.

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

- Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies attract people with relevant interests, knowledge and skills. Anti-discrimination law is used when selecting volunteers. Screening process is safe and secure for everyone. It follows laws and regulations.

### **5. Volunteers are supported and developed.**

- Your induction, training and supervision supports volunteers to take part safely and effectively. Volunteers understand their roles. They gain the knowledge, skills and feedback needed for their roles.

### **6. Volunteer safety and wellbeing is protected.**

- Volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities. You have processes in place to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers. You have relevant insurances. Volunteers understand and have access to complaints procedures.

### **7. Volunteers are recognised.**

- Volunteer contribution, value and impact are understood, appreciated and recognised. Volunteer acknowledgement is respectful of their culture and perspectives.

### **8. Policies and practices are continuously improved.**

- Policies and procedures are made and put in place to guide volunteer involvement. Volunteers can provide feedback.

The National Standards are not compulsory, but they can greatly benefit organisations and volunteers. They can help plan, set up or make a volunteer program better.

#### **Raise your head**

Many people who manage volunteer programs may not see how others are doing it. The National Standards can help when you are setting up a new program or reviewing an existing one.

The National Standards might give you new ideas and identify gaps in your policies and procedures. They could save you time and effort by streamlining your administrative systems. Involving the team in putting the National Standards in place can be rewarding and motivating.

#### **Make them work for you**

The National Standards are useful to many organisation and program types. Some organisations choose to work through all the National Standards. You can decide which areas are most important to your program right now and focus on those.

## Further information

As Victoria's peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for resources and advice. Below are some helpful links to help you understand the Best Practice for Volunteer Involvement.

- The [Volunteering Victoria website](#) has support, training, resources and 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>National Knowledge Base: Developing Policies and Procedures</p>	 <p>Governance Journeys (Volunteering Queensland)</p>