

Recruitment is not just about having enough volunteers in your program. Your volunteers need to be the right fit for your organisation and they need to have meaningful roles. You should start planning before you start advertising for volunteers.

Start at the beginning

Write down why you want to have volunteers in your organisation and what you want them to do. A position description helps to make sure the volunteer program meets its goals. It also protects the rights of the volunteer and can help them with their role.

A position description doesn't need to be long. It should include:

- a description of the position
- skills and qualifications needed
- list of duties
- key relationships, for example who the supervisors are
- conditions of the role, for example hours
- training and support provided

Advertising volunteer opportunities

Once you have things like a position description, location and hours in place, you are ready to share the exciting opportunity with others. The best way to build your volunteer program is through word of mouth. When you ask people to participate, you need to be ready to give them the right information.

Not sure where to start?

To make sure that potential volunteers have the best possible impression of your organisation:

- Tell staff in your organisation you are recruiting volunteers and what selection processes you have. This way, they are prepared and can be ready to provide the right information.
- » Make sure all your documentation, information packs, policies and procedures are up to date. See our Guide [Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures for](#) more information.
- Think about what you will do if you get too many or unsuitable applicants. Prepare your response.

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 stand a better chance of attracting attention.

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

- Ask your current volunteers to spread the word among friends and relatives.
- Consider interest groups that may relate to your cause and contact local branches.
- Ask your volunteers for suggestions.
- Ask your volunteers to post on social media or distribute flyers within their networks.

Mass media campaigns

You can ask your local paper to write an article, distribute flyers and posters and make radio announcements. You can also run paid and unpaid advertising in print and online.

Very few people start volunteering in response to a media campaign. But such campaigns can increase awareness of your organisation. While they are general, media campaigns can also be targeted. Think about social groups who may be attracted to your activity, as well as the places and media they use.

Online recruitment

Did you know that you can advertise for volunteers online, like you do for paid staff? Go Volunteer allows you to find volunteers and for volunteers to find you. Any advertisements placed on Go Volunteer will also appear on Seek Volunteer. This means your advertisement will be featured on both sites but you only need to submit it once! Go to govolunteer.com.au or see the Volunteering Victoria website for more ideas: [Recruiting volunteers - Volunteering Victoria](#)

Some local Councils and regional areas have information and tools for volunteers. 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 asking to volunteer. Your staff and volunteers should know what to do. They should know who to contact and what process to follow.

You can give walk-in volunteers information and tell them who they can speak to. Sometimes, a quick 5-minute conversation is all that you need. You can also ask the volunteer to come back at another time, give them materials or direct them to a website to go through a recruitment process.

You should think about how walk-in volunteers might feel when they come to your organisation. You want to make that a positive experience.

Interviews

It is good practice to interview potential volunteers. It shows that the role is viewed seriously within the organisation. Recruitment interviews for volunteers are similar to standard job interviews. They are usually less formal but they work best with some structure.

Put some time into planning the interview and think about:

- venue and timing – will it be in-person or online?
- questions and points for discussion
- will the interviews be conducted in groups or one-on-one?
- how many people will be conducting the interview – will it be one person or a panel?

During an interview, you can learn what the volunteer is hoping to gain. You can also find out about any hidden skills and talents they may have. Check if the applicant is looking to gain skills that may not be possible, for example new skills or experience in areas that are not suitable for volunteers. Be clear about the role of a volunteer within the organisation or group. This will help you select the right volunteer. Be prepared to be flexible and ask about any accessibility requirements.

A great volunteer can make a volunteer program better. An unsuitable volunteer can be time-consuming for the leader of volunteers, could damage the program and the reputation of your organisation. Be prepared to make the right selection and tell all applicants of the outcome.

Selection

Selecting the right volunteers for your program is important. Recruiting volunteers from different backgrounds can bring a wide range of skills in. Matching each person to a meaningful role that uses their skills will make your relationship stronger.

Selecting the right volunteer also helps manage risk in your program. There is the risk that they lack the interest or skills for the role. There is also the serious risk that they may cause harm or be harmed through the role. A good selection process is the best way to manage these risks.

[National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#)

Standard 4: Recruitment is equitable and diversity is valued.

Use Standard 4 of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement as a best practice guide for your volunteer recruitment. This will help you to make sure that your recruitment and selection process is planned, consistent and meets everyone's needs.

1. Organisations and groups work with 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 the process is consistent with anti-discrimination law.
4. Diversity, inclusivity and accessibility are built into the recruitment. They reflect and promote respect for diversity and inclusion and the value this brings to the organisation.
5. Screening processes is safe and secure to service recipients, employees, volunteers and the organisation. This is in line with legal requirements and regulations.

Screening Checks

Most organisations do background or screening checks on volunteers because of their duty of care to their clients or service recipients. They should plan to do:

- Proof of identity checks
- Reference checks – only ask questions that are necessary to the role
- Qualification or licence checks

Figuring out what background checks are needed to keep the volunteers and the community safe can be difficult. Keeping up with legislation and regulations is essential if your volunteers work with children or vulnerable people as part of their role. In many cases formal checks may not be needed. To reduce barriers, organisations should carefully think about what is right for the role.

In Victoria, there are formal checks that may be need, depending on the program or activity and also the clients that are receiving the support. Asking people to get checks may be a barrier to them becoming a volunteer. Having identification to go through the process can be a challenge. Each organisation or group should consider the role of the volunteer when making the decision. They should determine the requirements. They should document them in their policies and procedures to manage the risks and meet legal requirements.

Check if the background checks listed below may be needed by your organisation or group. Current information can be found on websites below.

National Police Check

Some employers and organisations ask for a National Police Check for employment or volunteering purposes. This is a document that is current at the time of issue. Some organisations may need a particular time frame for a police check, for example within the last 6 months. A police check may show offences which can impact the recruitment process. Check if the offence poses a risk for the role, the place they are volunteering and their clients or service recipients.

An organisation may apply for a Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) number. If you give this number to volunteers or students, they pay less for the application processing fee.

You can find more information on these 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) assesses or re-assesses people who work with or care for children in Victoria. It helps to protect children from sexual and physical harm. An organisation or person is breaking the law if they start child-related work without applying for a check first.

In Victoria, volunteers do not need to pay for their Working With Children Check. To apply, the employer must have their 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: [The Working with Children Check application process | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#). You can find a list of [job categories](#) here.

NDIS Worker Screening Check

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

All people starting work for registered NDIS providers in some roles need a NDIS clearance before they can start work. This is called a risk assessed role and includes volunteers. A volunteer must be in a risk assessed role to get the volunteer fee waiver. You can find more information here: [NDIS Worker Screening Check | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

More information

You can always come to us for resources and advice. Below are some helpful links and resources to help you understand how to recruit volunteers. The [Volunteering Victoria website](#) has information about 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 with your question



Volunteering Victoria website

 <p>Guides for Leading Volunteers</p>	 <p>National Standards for Volunteer Involvement</p>	 <p>Training & Workshops <i>(Some offered free of charge)</i></p>
 <p>National Knowledge Base for Volunteer Managers</p>	 <p>Service Victoria Service.vic.gov.au</p>	 <p>Volunteer Management Guide for Non-profits</p>