

# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

## The realities of volunteering for newly arrived migrants



### Volunteering is not a priority for new migrants.



**REALITY:** Newly arrived migrants often face competing demands, such as securing housing, finding employment, and adapting to life in a new country. However, many migrants value the opportunity to give back and connect with their communities through volunteering.



**TIP:** Showcase the achievements of newly arrived migrant volunteers within their communities to challenge this misconception. Recognise and celebrate their contributions to foster inclusivity and build a stronger, more diverse community.



### Volunteering is a rigid and specific commitment.



**REALITY:** Volunteering can be highly flexible, offering opportunities beyond traditional roles. Options can include online, in-person, or hybrid activities, allowing volunteers to contribute based on their schedules, capacity, and interests.



**TIP:** Clearly communicate the flexibility of volunteer roles and explore unconventional opportunities to attract a more diverse pool of volunteers.



### Volunteer roles may not accommodate religious practices.



**REALITY:** All volunteer organisations should strive to respect and accommodate individual needs, including religious practices.



**TIP:** Engage in open communication with volunteers to establish culturally safe and mutually respectful arrangements that align with their religious practices.



## Volunteering costs volunteers money.



**REALITY:** There are many volunteer roles that have minimal or no costs. Where expenses do arise, some organisations offer reimbursements, honorarium payments, or cover administrative costs such as those for screening processes.



**TIP:** Consider where costs can be reduced or reimbursed and actively communicate these options to potential volunteers.



## Volunteering requires advanced skills or fluent English.



**REALITY:** Volunteer opportunities are diverse and cater to a range of skills and language abilities. Volunteering can also provide newly arrived migrants with a chance to practice English, build connections, and even pave pathways to employment.



**TIP:** Highlight the variety of roles available and work collaboratively with volunteers to accommodate their language needs and support skill development. Recognise that volunteers from diverse backgrounds enrich your organisation with unique perspectives and talents.



## Volunteers from migrant backgrounds “create more work”.



**REALITY:** Migrant volunteers bring valuable skills, cultural knowledge, and unique perspectives that can enhance organisational success.



**TIP:** Embrace diversity as a valuable asset to your organisation. Leverage the cultural knowledge of migrant volunteers to foster cross-cultural understanding and strengthen ties with local communities. Recognise their contributions as vital to your organisation’s growth and innovation.

Volunteering Victoria acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.

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