

Achieving excellence in your volunteer program

Volunteer Program
Management Guidelines



CONNECT

BELONG

LEARN

CONNECT with your organisation and get to really know your programs. Think about the aims, objectives, staff, existing volunteers, relationships, roles, needs, priorities, wish lists, practicalities, opportunities and challenges.

BELONGING to the volunteer community will provide you with resources, advice and networking opportunities - get to know the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre and Volunteering WA.

LEARN about the National Standards - these can be accessed on the City of Swan Volunteer Resource Centre Resources page.

* www.swan.wa.gov.au/services-support/volunteering/news-events-information/useful-volunteering-links



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Running a successful volunteer program involves a multi-faceted approach. The following is an explanation of six critical elements to consider particularly if you are new to volunteer management or new to the organisation.

1 INFORMATION IS KEY!

Check for handover notes.

Know your KPI's.

Know your budget.

Know your volunteers.



2 PROMOTION OF YOUR PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEER ROLES

Review existing roles.

Determine current volunteer support required.

Write or re-write job descriptions.

Do I have a need for any corporate volunteers to cover one off major projects?

Do I have a need for specific skilled volunteering – the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre can assist or go online to sites such as VWA skilled volunteer program or www.goodcompany.org

How will I advertise? – Swan Volunteer Resource Centre can do this on your behalf through online advertising (GoVolunteer, Seek Volunteer, Volunteering WA and the City of Swan) and promotion across a range of City of Swan sites.

 See section - tips for advertising volunteer roles.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



3 STARTING, RUNNING AND IMPROVING A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ✓

The Swan Volunteer Resource Centre can assist with templates and guidance on the following items:

Engagement and management of volunteers including Job Descriptions, application and induction forms and Policy and Procedure manuals.

Guidance for supervisors of volunteers including process and procedure templates and manuals.

Information on police clearances, including access to low cost volunteer National Police Certificates, working with children cards and volunteer insurance.

Acknowledging and celebrating your volunteers on special occasions such as birthdays, milestones and commemorative events.

Implementation of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

Sourcing additional funding for your volunteer program through State and Local Government, Lotterywest, VWA and others. Check the press and community support site.

The Swan Volunteer Resource Centre Manager is happy to make a visit to discuss any support you may need when reviewing your Volunteer Program.

4 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

What skills do I already possess? Are there areas for improvement?

Consider attending free training and information sessions with the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre, Volunteering WA (VWA) and State and National Volunteer Conferences.

Consider attending “Key Issues of Volunteer Management” workshops held regularly at VWA.

Consider ongoing mentoring through the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre or via application to VWA mentoring program.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



5 LEGAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Know the rights and responsibilities of your organisation and volunteers.

Occupational health and safety.

Working with children.

Equal Opportunities.

Police Clearances – find out about low cost applications through the Department of Local Government and Communities and West Australian Police. Links to these can be accessed on the City of Swan Volunteer Resource Centre Resources page.

* www.swan.wa.gov.au/services-support/volunteering/news-events-information/useful-volunteering-links

6 GETTING NOTICED

Advocate upwards! It is extremely valuable and important that you are able to promote the work and contribution made by volunteers. Your ability to do this effectively will give you the resources you need to run an excellent volunteer program and promote your role and value to the organisation.

GETTING NOTICED !



TIPS ON HOW TO ADVOCATE UPWARDS

Gain executive support

Target the CEO if possible. Get yourself known by the Board of Management, the Finance team, HR, Training, and Marketing.

Ensure that you have hard evidence of the value of your program and volunteers

Facts and figures are valuable and easily understood by those controlling the resources. You may wish to use the Volunteer Benefits Calculator as part of this suite of information. This online tool calculates the true worth of your volunteers and it's a free and easy service on the VWA website.

 www.volunteeringwa.org.au/resources/volunteer-benefits-calculator

Evidence support

Be ready to provide stories that support your program and show value and contribution.

Promote the program

Submit articles to the local media, online magazines, social media and newsletters that demonstrate the achievements and contribution of your volunteers.

Look for opportunities

Be prepared to stand up and present your case whenever an opportunity arises to promote your work and that of your volunteers.

Report regularly

Ensure that you have a well written report that appears as part of the monthly Board of Management Agenda (or equivalent). Remember – facts, figures and graphs provide quick and easy visual impact.

Attend meetings

Attend Senior management meetings to talk about your volunteer program.

Strategic planning

Ensure that volunteering is an item in the organisation's Strategic Plan.

Appear in annual reports

Create a page for your organisation's Annual Report about your volunteer program.

Staying visible on Websites

Does volunteering have a spot that is central on your organisation's website?

Lobbying

Lobby for your organisation's Mission Statement to reflect the importance of the volunteer program.

Newsletters

Ensure that if you have a volunteer newsletter it is distributed far and wide and is definitely seen by the Board and CEO.

YOU AND YOUR VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers gift their time, skills and experience, so it is vital organisations give back to these valued helpers. There are several ways organisations can show their gratitude and retain volunteers – here are a few.

- Remove barriers to volunteering by making the application process as simple as possible.
- Maintain communication by giving frequent information to volunteers and asking for feedback. Take time to listen, talk and get to know them as people.
- Create suitable roles for each volunteer. Think outside the box and if there is still nothing appropriate, it may not be the right place for them to volunteer.
- Keep an open mind on who can volunteer and how they can contribute – people can surprise you.
- Treat volunteers as you would want to be treated and never take them for granted.
- Ensure support and training doesn't stop at induction. Keep the training relevant and interactive.
- Help volunteers to take pride in what they do and the contribution they are making to the cause, the clients or the organisation.
- Always ensure volunteers have the necessary tools, skills and resources to do their job.
- Say thank you in lots of different ways – a full biscuit tin, a Christmas card and an event during Volunteers' Week all say "I recognise and value your contribution".
- Pay attention to what your volunteers are saying - they can be a great source of wisdom and ideas.
- Connect your volunteers together to build peer support and team work.
- Offer new opportunities to existing volunteers - most people like a bit of a change now and then. Keep looking for ways to improve the volunteering experience.
- Keep your volunteers safe – pay attention to health and safety and risk management.
- Be open and honest with your volunteers especially when there is an issue to be addressed.
- Don't let your volunteers over commit - remember they have lives outside of their volunteering.

Volunteers are not necessarily free. Consider the day-to-day logistical and even emotional support of all volunteers. Does your organisation have access to an Employee Assistance Service program and do you have a consistent process for covering out-of-pocket expenses?

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS



TIPS FOR ADVERTISING VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Assess your volunteer need - the role and what type of commitment you are asking of a volunteer

- Have a job description prepared that you can use to prepare your advertising.
- Be real and specific about your expectations.
- Think about your recruitment messages, know what it is you are looking for and what you need doing.
- Ensure you have the appropriate support structures and resources in place prior to advertising.

Advertise for volunteers early

- Preparation is the key.
- Volunteers are always looking on the internet for a position.
- Note: the SVRC does not have a list of volunteers waiting for positions. We refer individuals at the time of their interview (with the exception of clients who have requested they be informed of future events).

Structure adverts to attract volunteers

- A blend of the volunteer role and Volunteer benefits is most effective.
- Key issues that are important to volunteers but not necessarily important to the organisation's mindset should be considered.

- Look at your wording as a volunteer – would this position appeal to you?
- What's in it for me (the volunteer)? This doesn't mean dollar value - what will the volunteer receive for giving their time. For example, they will meet new people, learn new skills, add to their CV, help other people, make good use of their spare time, take on new challenges, or use their skills and experience in a positive way.

Be adventurous, eye catching and imaginative with your position name and job description.

- The volunteer may be searching through hundreds of positions online. Your position needs to stand out.

Ensure you follow up with enquiries at the earliest opportunity.

- When a person wants to start volunteering, they want a position straight away.
- If you fail to respond in good time, another agency will.
- The Swan Volunteer Resource Centre is very happy to assist you in reviewing your current volunteer roles and others you may not have considered. If you consider all of the above points your positions will be appropriately advertised with the greatest impact.