

Achieving excellence in your volunteer program

Volunteer Program Management Guidelines



Running a successful volunteer program involves a multi-faceted approach. Excellence requires dedication, planning, identifying skill sets, strong communication and a strong sense of purpose. This booklet highlights critical information for those new to volunteer management or new to their organisation/community group.

CONNECT

BELONG

LEARN

FIRST STEP

CONNECT with your organisation and/or the members of your community group. Really get to really know your programs. Think about your objectives, priorities, challenges and opportunities of your organisation. And what role does everyone play for you to succeed.

BELONGING to the wider volunteer community will provide you with resources, advice and networking opportunities – get to know the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre and Volunteering WA, the State Peak body for volunteering.

LEARN about the National Standards for Volunteering and understand how Work Health and Safety legislation impacts you and your volunteer program. These resources can be accessed on the City of Swan Volunteer Resource Centre useful links page.



www.swan.wa.gov.au/Your-Community/Get-involved/Volunteering/Volunteer-news-events-information/Useful-volunteering-links



KNOWLEDGE IS KEY AND EMPOWERING

- Check for handover notes if you are new to the role or organisation/community group.
- Know your mission, vision and values
- your own KPI's
- your budget
- your volunteers



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

What skills do I already possess?

Are there areas for improvement?

Consider attending free training and information session with the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre, and where possible attend State and National volunteer conferences.

Consider attending Key Issues of Volunteer Management workshops held regularly by Volunteer WA (VWA) and supported by the Swan Volunteer Resource Centre (SVRC)

Consider ongoing mentoring through the SVRC or by application to the VWA Mentoring program.

www.volunteeringwa.org.au/volunteer-management/mentoring-for-organisations

GET STARTED

How, where and when will I advertise? – See section on recruitment and for more information the SVRC brochure on Recruitment and Retention.

www.swan.wa.gov.au/volunteersearch.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Conduct an audit of your existing volunteer program and associated organisational needs.

What level and type of volunteer support is currently in place.

What support do you need moving forward?

Is your organisation ready to receive volunteers?

Return to your audit and outcomes regularly.

Are you on track?

Have a current job description prepared to outline how the role will meet operational needs and provide opportunities your volunteers. This will guide your advertising and craft a clear and compelling description.

Be real and specific about your expectations –

Highlight the impact the volunteer can make and the benefits they will gain from the experience.

Think about your recruitment messages, know what is it you are looking for and what you need your volunteer to do.

Consider corporate volunteer opportunities – these will generally be one of tasks that a group of corporate employees, possibly with specific skills, will undertake. www.volunteeringwa.org.au/volunteer/corporate-volunteering/corporate-volunteering-for-businesses

Ensure you have the appropriate support structures and resources in place prior to advertising: these will include:

- Volunteer Supervisor, trained in supervision and a Professional Development (PD) that reflects the requirements of this role. Volunteer led community groups may want to consider looking for a Volunteer Coordinator to cover this role
- Volunteer data base for program management, recording of volunteer details, rosters, clearances, training and communication. The SVRC can provide details of program management tools.
- Clear guidelines, policies and procedures and a volunteer information resource outlining all relevant information that the volunteer will find valuable when commencing their volunteering.



Structure adverts to attract a blend of the volunteer role and the volunteer benefits

Volunteers want to know the impact of their volunteering.

Key issues that are important to volunteer, but not necessarily important to the organisation's mindset, should be considered.

Look at wording through the eyes of the volunteer – would this position appeal to you?

What will the volunteer receive for giving their time? New friends, new skills, satisfaction of a job well done, enhancement of their resume, new challenges, a positive experience.

Time poor volunteers will respond to small projects and short sharp opportunities – consider breaking down traditional roles to smaller chunks.

Be eye catching, imaginative and prompt to respond

- Volunteers see hundreds of opportunities on line – yours needs to stand out.
- Incorporate eye-catching visuals, such as photos, video or infographics, to accompany your volunteer position advertisements. Visuals can grab attention and evoke an emotional connection to your cause
- Ensure you follow up with enquiries at the earliest opportunity

- Interested volunteers want to start straight away – don't over complicate the application and induction process.
- If you fail to respond in good time another agency will.

Advertise volunteer positions through various channels

Use your organisation's website, social media platforms, local community bulletin boards, volunteer matching websites, and newsletters. Consider partnering with other community organisations or businesses to expand your reach

The Swan Volunteer Resource Centre is here to assist with writing role descriptions and your promotion. –for more information on volunteer recruitment and retention www.swan.wa.gov.au/Your-Community/Get-involved/Volunteering/Where-can-I-volunteer-in-my-community/Swan-Volunteer-Resource-Centre

If you consider all the above points your positions will be appropriately advertised and will receive maximum reach.

KEY PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Work health and safety (WHS) is a critical aspect to consider when involving volunteers. Ensuring the health and safety of volunteers not only protects their well-being but also contributes to the overall success and excellence of the volunteer program. Adequate measures must be taken to identify and mitigate potential risks and hazards, providing a safe and secure environment for volunteers to carry out their tasks. Refer to WHS General Regulations 2022.

- To prioritise a thorough work health and safety assessment for volunteers specific to their roles.
- Regular communication and training sessions on work health and safety are essential for volunteers.
- In addition to proactive risk management, maintaining a culture of safety is crucial and demonstrates a commitment to the well-being and welfare of volunteers.

Legal and ethical issues – running a volunteer program comes with certain legal and ethical considerations to ensure the well-being of volunteers, to protect the organisation, and maintain a positive experience for all involved.

Some common legal and ethical issues to be mindful of:

- Ensure compliance with relevant Work Health and Safety legislation, including the day to day support of adequately and appropriately trained staff
- Volunteers should be treated fairly and respectfully, with consideration for their rights and dignity.





Depending on the nature of the volunteer program and the community served, it may be necessary to conduct background checks or screenings to ensure the safety and well-being of beneficiaries and volunteers. i.e reference check, Police checks, working with children checks. www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/volunteer-national-police-certificate-program

- Volunteers have access to sensitive information about beneficiaries or the organisation or community group. Protecting confidentiality and privacy is crucial and volunteers should be informed about their obligations to maintain confidentiality and the organisation's policies on data protection.
- You should have policies and procedures in place to address ownership, attribution and appropriate use of intellectual property.
- Position descriptions outline the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer. A signed agreement protects all parties and mitigates potential for volunteers and the organisation to step outside agreed expectations.
- ensure that your volunteer program complies with applicable laws and regulations, and that volunteers are covered by appropriate insurances such as personal accident, public liability and professional indemnity.
- promote ethical conduct among volunteers, emphasising honesty, integrity, respect and professionalism. Provide guidelines and training on practices and codes of conduct.
- Provide appropriate supervision, guidance and support for volunteers. Regular check-ins, feedback sessions and opportunities to raise concerns or seek assistance are important for their well-being and to address any issues promptly.
- Volunteer recognition and appreciation.
- your volunteers are your best advocates. They will often encourage others to volunteer or support your group.



GET NOTICED

Advocating upwards to get your volunteer program noticed requires effective communication, strategic planning, and demonstrating the value and impact of the program.

Tips to help you advocate for your volunteer program to higher levels of management and the wider community:

- Understand your goals
- ensure that you have hard evidence of the value of your program and volunteers. The volunteer benefits calculator is an easy online tool that calculates the true worth of your volunteers and can be accessed on the VWA website. **www.volunteeringwa.org/resources/vlunteer-benefits-calculator**
- Create a compelling case and be prepared to stand up and deliver a strong and persuasive argument for the importance of your volunteer program. Clearly articulate the benefits, such as increased community engagement, enhanced reputation, cost savings, and improved employee morale. Use storytelling techniques to convey the personal and community impact of the program.
- Build relationships with key decision-makers and stakeholders within the organisation such as the CEO, President, Board of Management, finance officers, training, marketing and HR. A personal connection can help generate support and advocacy from influential individuals both within and external to your group.
- Create a detailed plan outlining the goals, strategies, and expected outcomes of your volunteer program. This demonstrates that you have a clear vision and a proactive approach to managing and expanding the program
- Develop measurable KPIs that align with the goals of your volunteer program and the organisation as a whole. Track and report on these metrics regularly to demonstrate progress, outcomes, and return on investment
- Ensure that you have a well written Annual 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.

DON'T BE SHY, BE OUTSPOKEN, POSITIVE AND PREPARED TO SELL YOUR VALUE AND IMPACT.



- Engage with different departments or teams within the organisation or community space to identify areas where volunteers can contribute and add value.
- If your volunteer program is relatively new or unknown, start with a pilot project or smaller-scale initiatives to demonstrate success and build credibility. Highlight the positive outcomes achieved and use them as evidence of the program's potential for expansion.
- Highlight stories of volunteers who have made a difference through their contribution on various platforms. Share testimonials and examples of how the program has positively impacted beneficiaries, the community, and the organisation. Visual materials, such as photos or videos, can make the impact more tangible and memorable.
- Identify individuals within the organisation or your community space who are passionate about volunteering and may have influence. Engage them as champions or allies for your program, seeking their support and advocacy when opportunities arise to present your case within or external to your organisation
- Demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and learning. Regularly evaluate the volunteer program, seek feedback from volunteers and stakeholders, and make adjustments as needed.
- Regularly update and communicate with higher-level management and the community about the progress, achievements, and challenges of the volunteer program. Share success stories, impact metrics, and volunteer feedback to keep them informed and engaged
- Be open to feedback, adapt your approach if needed, and be willing to address any concerns or objections raised by management or external queries. Show your commitment to continuously improving and evolving the program.
- Apply for funding/grants opportunities that meet with your organisations mission, vision, values. Funding can come from a range of places, including, State and Federal Government, Lotterywest, corporate sponsors, local businesses or in collaboration with other community groups and Local Government.
www.swan.wa.gov.au/Your-Community/Community-Grants-and-Sponsorships/Grant-and-Sponsorship-Program

ABOUT SWAN VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTRE

The City of Swan Volunteer Resource Centre is a gateway to all things volunteering. The Centre is operated through a partnership between the City of Swan and the Department of Local Government and Communities.

WE PROVIDE...

A free referral service to enquiring volunteers.

A free support resource to volunteer involving organisations in the City of Swan.

We promote, educate and encourage volunteering in the community.

OUR VISION...

A concept – an expression of a community-wide vision of volunteerism that is inclusive of peoples and causes.

A place – where diverse groups and individuals can meet in mutual concern for the support of volunteers.

A focal point - for visibility and coordination of volunteer efforts.

OUR MISSION...

Articulate the scope and vision of volunteerism to every audience.

Convey the image of volunteering as something of true value, done by everyone.

Advocate for the best engagement of volunteer efforts.

Model the effective involvement of volunteers by recruiting people to work for and in our Centre.

Do what single organisations and individual volunteers could not do alone by making sure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Bring the most current volunteering trends and issues, as well as national and global perspectives, into our local community: and in turn, share then best of local volunteering practices to the larger field.

Be flexible enough to grab onto new opportunities to increase volunteering.

Work through and with community organisations to reach goals together.

**WHEN EVERYTHING IS
IN PLACE, REMEMBER
REAL EXCELLENCE IS
ACHIEVED THROUGH
RESPECT OF YOUR
VOLUNTEERS AND
THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.**

OUR VALUES...

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering best describes the values that the SVRC follow and uphold – “volunteering brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people. Connections can be made across differences that push us apart so that we can live together as healthy, sustainable communities, working together to provide innovative solutions to our shared challenges and to shape our collective destinies”.

CONTACTS

Swan Volunteer Resource Centre

Unit 23, 8 Stafford Court,
Stafford Street, Midland 6056
Phone: 9278 9690
Opening Hours: 10am-4pm,
Monday to Friday (closed Wednesdays)

Ellenbrook Hub Volunteer Centre

Ellenbrook Community Library
90 Main Street, Ellenbrook
Phone: 9207 8787
Appointments available Wednesdays.

Bullsbrook Hub

Bullsbrook Community Library
3 Maroubra Ave, Bullsbrook
Appointments available Thursdays.

swan.volunteers@swan.wa.gov.au
www.swan.wa.gov.au/volunteer





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in alternative formats on request