

Volunteer Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the framework of engaging volunteers and to ensure our volunteers are managed and supported in a fair and consistent manner that complies with policies and procedures and delivers a positive experience for them and in line with the objectives of the organisations.

Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers appointed into volunteer roles and staff involved in the engagement, coordination, and supervision of volunteers. This policy includes but is not limited to:

- Legal and regulatory responsibilities
- Approved volunteer roles
- Onboarding, ongoing support and management and termination/resignation of volunteers

Policy

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as “time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain” <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/definition-of-volunteering/#/>.

We recognise and value the skills, experience, flexibility, and energy that a volunteer workforce contributes to our organisation.

Our volunteer workforce improves our capacity and opportunity to deliver services not possible without volunteer contribution. Our volunteers will be treated with respect, gratitude and with the highest level of duty of care. Our objective is that volunteering with our organisation will enhance the lives of our volunteers and provide meaningful and rewarding work that can clearly demonstrate the positive impact on the community.

Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited to support and enhance the work of our organisation. All volunteer positions will be supported by a role description that reflects the role and must have an up-to-date, clear, and concise written position/role description which accurately reflects the role and selection criteria.

We are committed to recruiting volunteers in a fair and equitable manner. We embrace diversity and value the unique contribution of all people. We are committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Our commitment is to ensure we recruit the right volunteer for each role and our focus will be ensuring right volunteer is placed in each role.

Volunteer applicants who progress past interview will be required to undertake a National Police Check, two reference checks, and submit a Statutory Declaration if required (see section below).

Any possible conflict of interest a volunteer may have must be openly declared and satisfactorily resolved as soon as possible between the volunteer and our organisation.

We are committed to best practice, ensuring volunteers are fully engaged with the organisation and appropriately inducted, trained and supported to carry out their specific roles.

Prospective volunteers are to be matched according to their suitability in line with the role/position description. The selection criteria for each role is dependent upon the particular skills, knowledge, interests and attributes needed to fulfil the duties of that specific role.

Screening & Checks

Our organisation operates on the principle that it has a duty of care to its clients, employees, volunteers and supporters and as such requires volunteers to undertake a variety of screening processes.

Police Checks:

As part of the recruitment process all volunteers must undergo a police check which returns a result acceptable to our organisation prior to commencement and on a 3 yearly basis. Police Checks must comply with funding requirements.

Disclosure of Court Outcomes - If an applicant discloses a criminal conviction, they are to be offered the opportunity to cease the interview and to be contacted by the CEO to discuss progressing or withdrawing their application.

If a police check result shows a conviction or pending matter, the matter must be referred to the Management Committee who will assess the court disclosure against the role under consideration, risk assessment, duty of care and funding requirements.

A criminal record will not automatically preclude the applicant from becoming a volunteer. The decision must be based on:

- Funding requirements
- The nature of the offence
- The date of the conviction
- The safety and vulnerability of clients, volunteers, and employees
- The role the applicant is considering.
- Whether there is potential to compromise the operations and public perception of our organisation

Statutory Declaration

Statutory Declarations are required for any volunteers if they have been a citizen or resident of a country other than Australia for a period of 12 months past the age of 16 (see section below)

Reference Checks

All applicants are required to supply the details of at least two (2) referees. The ACVVS Coordinator will make every effort to contact two (2) referees, however a minimum of one referee must successfully be contacted. Reference checks are to be conducted prior to a volunteer being offered a role.

Each volunteer program will use a template of questions when conducting a reference check related specifically to the role and enter details of referee details and responses on the database.

License and registration

Verification of a volunteer's current driver's licence, vehicle registration and/or insurance may be required for any role whereby the volunteer is required to transport clients. This will be specified in the role description. Either a copy of the driver's license will be requested to be kept on file or sighting the license will be required. Please see Safe Driving Procedure for detailed information.

Motor Vehicle Insurance

Volunteers utilising their own vehicle for client transport must hold comprehensive car insurance and provide insurance provider details, policy number and expiry date.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

On being accepted as a volunteer, all volunteers must receive a handbook outlining their role title, duties and responsibilities, all training required to be undertaken, support/supervisor and any other relevant information as required.

Interview

All recruitment and selection processes and practices ensure fairness, equal opportunity, and transparency throughout all stages of the process. Volunteer applications are considered on a merit basis. Assessment of suitability will be based on skills and attributes required for each volunteer role. Applicants who are short listed will progress to the second stage of recruitment and will be interviewed in person or via virtual interview.

The Organisation has the right to offer or withhold an offer of a volunteer position to any applicant at their discretion and without explanation.

Engagement of Volunteers

A potential volunteer will be informed as soon as practical if their application has been successful or unsuccessful. Unsuccessful applicants may either be referred to another volunteer opportunity within the organisation, or an external organisation.

Commencement of Volunteers

In order to commence, all screening and training must be completed, and the potential volunteer be provided with a position description, a volunteer handbook which includes relevant policies and procedures and have returned a signed copy of the volunteer agreement.

Training and Ongoing support

All volunteers will complete the relevant Volunteer Induction Training prior to commencement. Job specific training may be provided on commencement as outlined in their role descriptions. The content and delivery mode of job specific training will vary depending on the volunteer program and taking into consideration the preferences of the volunteer where possible.

Volunteers will be provided with training/information when the legislation impacting on their role is amended, or when new organisational processes are introduced.

Volunteers will be provided with opportunities to network and support each other through a variety of avenues.

Volunteer Role Review & Feedback

All volunteer managers/supervisors will seek feedback and review the volunteer experience, position, and training on a regular basis.

Volunteer Recognition

The contribution of our volunteers is valued and acknowledgement of the contribution to the community, our key stakeholders and our organisation is an important measure to ensure our volunteers feel appreciated and respected members of our workforce. Opportunities for celebrations and recognition will be held throughout each year. Service pins will be awarded to volunteers at 1, 3, 5 years of service and every 5 years thereafter with small gifts to also be given at 5 years' service and every 5 years thereafter.

Volunteer Reimbursement

Although volunteering incurs certain costs, such as transportation or personal expenses, we are unable to provide reimbursement to our valued volunteers. As a non-profit organisation dedicated to our mission, we rely on limited resources to deliver essential services and programs.

Volunteer Insurance

ACVVS acknowledges the invaluable contributions made by our dedicated volunteers and is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. All registered volunteers of the ACVVS while actively engaged in authorized volunteer activities are covered by insurance. Coverage is applicable during the agreed-upon volunteer period and within the geographical boundaries specified by the organisation.

Resignation or Exit of Volunteer

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to our organisation. However, it is recognised that due to changing circumstances volunteers may need to resign from their voluntary position.

When a volunteer decides to leave or retire from their role, they are to be encouraged to provide as much notice as possible and to discuss their exit with their program coordinator so that a transition period can be planned in relation to recruitment of the vacancy. Relevant stakeholders will be informed of volunteer ceasing in their volunteer role. All exiting volunteers are to be offered an opportunity to give feedback on their experience. Our organisation has the right to request a volunteer to leave their role if:

- The focus of the services provided by the volunteer program shifts, creating both new positions and redundancies in the process.
- A volunteer:
 - fails to maintain appropriate standards of conduct as outlined in their role/position description.
 - lacks the necessary skills for the position.
 - breaches safety or confidentiality guidelines.
 - breaks the law.
 - does not undertake requested checks and/or specific training as requested.

Where a volunteer is to be terminated, volunteer managers are to consult with relevant HR staff to discuss procedure.

Upon receiving notice of a volunteer's departure or cessation of their volunteer role, the designated point of contact within ACVVS will promptly inform all relevant stakeholders.

Although the volunteer may be ceasing their role, ACVVS will offer continued support and resources to ensure a smooth transition and provide assistance as needed. This may include offering references, sharing volunteer accomplishments, or facilitating networking opportunities within the organisation or the broader community.

Privacy and confidentiality

In accordance with its Privacy policy, we respect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information supplied by volunteers, facilities and recipients of the ACVVS. No information shall be disclosed or used without permission from volunteer, facility or recipient to a third party.

Performance Management

We know that when people volunteer, they have the best of intentions. However, from time to time, the performance or conduct of a volunteer may fall below what is expected, not align to our mission or values or a volunteer may act outside their position description.

Our aim is to prevent misunderstandings and to maintain a harmonious workplace.

Stage 1 – Informal meeting. An informal meeting will be held to discuss and resolve the issue with the coordinator. This may include additional training, redeployment into another role or additional support provided.

Stage 2 – Formal meeting. If despite informal discussion, the conduct or performance still does not meet acceptable standards, a formal verbal warning will be given to the volunteer, The verbal warning will be given by the coordinator of the service. This will be followed with a letter outlining the issue discussed along with any resolution/actions agreed to be taken.

Stage 3 – If there is no improvement, the volunteer and the Management Committee Chair will receive a letter, outlining the issue and an invitation to attend a disciplinary meeting. The meeting should take place as soon as reasonably possible but allow the volunteer to consider their response to the information contained in the letter. The meeting should be an opportunity for both the volunteer (with their representative) and the coordinator and Chair of the Management Committee to talk about the issues or allegations being made and consider the information with a view to establishing whether to progress the disciplinary action or allow for further resolution actions to be achieved. This would then be reviewed within a set time frame agreed to by both parties.

If it is decided that no further action is warranted, the volunteer should be informed in writing and a copy kept in their secure file. However, if the volunteer is found to be performing unsatisfactorily or their behaviour is deemed unsatisfactory, they will be given a final written warning. A copy should be kept on file.

Final stage – Dismissal

If the volunteer's conduct or performance still fails to improve or if further serious misconduct occurs, the final stage in the disciplinary process will be dismissal. Dismissal can be given verbally however must also be followed up in writing.

Gross Misconduct

Where a volunteer or staff member is found responsible for gross misconduct, they will be instantly dismissed without notice (summary dismissal) and the above procedures regarding progression of warnings would not apply. Management Committee sign off for instant dismissal is required.

Examples of gross misconduct include but are not limited to:

- Deliberate falsification of expense claims
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Convictions of a criminal offence that undermine a person's suitability for volunteering.
- Bullying or harassment
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials
- Failure to abide by policies and procedures.
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.
- Prolonged absence without notice
- Breach of conflict-of-interest policy

Health and safety

We are committed to providing volunteers with a safe workplace. On commencement, volunteers will be provided with relevant information and guidelines to ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy workplace along with training and information regarding emergency procedures, which can be found in the volunteer handbook.

Volunteers are required to report all incidents to their coordinator as soon as possible, as outlined in any relevant Organisation incident reporting procedures guidelines.