

Induction and Onboarding for New Volunteers

Guide

Induction and onboarding provides new volunteers with all the information they need to understand their responsibilities and their rights within the organisation.

This is a crucial part of risk management for volunteer programs. It also provides volunteers with the opportunity to clarify any questions they may have about their role.

Welcoming new volunteers

Well-planned volunteer onboarding will save your program or group time and resources. It defines the expectations of the volunteer relationship on both sides.

Volunteers must have the necessary information to perform their role. Providing information on navigating organisational policies and procedures is important. This equips the volunteer to do their job by providing clear expectations. A thorough induction can help avoid potential performance issues and sources of conflict.

Make a plan

- » Induction can be formal: for example, a training session for a group of volunteers. It can also be an informal one-on-one discussion with relevant staff members.
- » Make sure you have adequate time to cover all key topics. There will be items specific to the volunteer role. Other items are a general introduction to the organisation.
- » You also need a clear plan for what you want volunteers to learn through induction. Creating a checklist will ensure that you cover all the relevant topics and will also provide consistency for all new volunteers.
- » You should then check their understanding by reviewing the session. Once completed ask them to sign relevant policies for your records.

Even small contributions add up to big impacts

Take the opportunity to promote the cause, mission, and impact of your organisation. Some volunteer roles may not be the most glamorous jobs in the world. A volunteer knowing how their contribution makes a difference can be a big motivator.

Role orientation

- » Give an overview of the organisation's services that relate to the volunteer role.
- » Make it clear what role volunteers, staff, and management each play, and the relationship between these roles.
- » Give clear information about any training or orientation activities the volunteer will be involved in and why.
- » Describe relevant procedures for that volunteer. This is particularly important for roles that have specific legislative or regulatory requirements, such as committee or board members.
- » Provide a position description for their role. This will give clear guidance on the requirements of the role and the reporting structure for future reference.
- » Introduce relevant staff to the physical environment, equipment, and facilities.

Rights and responsibilities

Ensure that volunteers are made aware of their rights and responsibilities related to the role and to the organisation. This can reduce conflict within teams and provide a more supportive environment for the volunteer.

Provide volunteers with all relevant policies and procedures. Explain these to them to ensure they are understood in relation to their role.

General onboarding package

An onboarding package can make new volunteers feel welcome. It can provide them with the information and documents they need to perform their role.

The package could contain:

- » a letter of welcome
- » an overview of the organisation's history, philosophy, mission, clients, structure and funding base
- » the volunteer's position description
- » a statement of the volunteer's rights and responsibilities
- » a training schedule
- » the organisation's volunteer policy
- » a list of relevant procedures and policies, and where to obtain them
- » relevant forms (e.g. for reimbursement of expenses, attendance records, etc)
- » a map of the work site and evacuation locations
- » an organisational chart and/or a list of key staff, names and contact details
- » the latest annual report of the organisation
- » emergency procedures
- » instructions for reporting critical incidents, injuries or near misses
- » relevant information regarding insurance coverage
- » details of operating hours, public holidays, etc
- » information on upcoming important events.

Outline regulatory or legislative requirements, such as privacy or health and safety. Failure to ensure volunteers receive and understand such information could expose the organisation or the volunteer to liability. You should provide information on how the volunteer may raise concerns.

Policy must-haves

Your induction program will need to include an overview of organisational policies and regulatory requirements. Some items common to most volunteer involving organisations are as follows:

- » Sexual harassment
- » Privacy, confidentiality, and records management
- » Occupational Health and Safety
- » Discrimination
- » Code of conduct
- » Complaints and grievance

If you are inducting board members to an incorporated organisation, you will also need to review the requirements of the regulation that covers you: [Incorporated association rules - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

Further information

As Victoria's peak body for volunteering, you can always come to us for reliable resources and advice. Below are some helpful links and resources to continue your understanding of *Induction and Onboarding for New Volunteers*.

- » The [Volunteering Victoria website](#) is your go-to resource for 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 anytime with your questions.



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>Guide: Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures</p>	 <p>Volunteer Management Toolkit</p>
 <p>Justice Connect: Not-for-Profit Law</p>	 <p>National Knowledge Base: Induction and Onboarding</p>	