Essential Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Guide

Creating written policies and procedures is good practice for volunteer-involving organisations. They provide clarity about rights, responsibilities and expectations for volunteers and the organisations they contribute to.

Make policies work for you

Volunteer groups and organisations of any size can benefit from writing down their policies and procedures. Such documents do not need to be long or cover every aspect of what you do. Rather, for key issues, think about:

- your overall approach to the issue
- who the issue specifically affects
- who is responsible for dealing with it
- what steps should be followed
- the language used is simple and accessible so that a broad audience can easily understand it

Walk the talk

Beware of leaving policies and procedures to languish in your files – if they are not being used, they are probably not useful. Make sure that volunteers are made aware of the policies that affect them, preferably when they start volunteering or are inducted into the organisation. Ensure that they feel comfortable clarifying any questions they might have, asking for further support (e.g. training) and providing feedback about the policies. These are 'living' documents that rely on the input of the people that they effect to remain useful and relevant.

By highlighting your policies, you not make sure that volunteers are aware of them, but reassure people that the organisation has thought-through its response to issues that affect them and the work they do. If things go wrong, you will have a commonly agreed starting point and approach to resolve issues in everyone's best interest.

Be the best

Australian best practice in volunteer management has developed over time and is exemplified in the National Standards for Involving Volunteers. For an outline of how these Standards can work for you, see our Guide - 'Best Practice for Volunteer Programs'.

Which policies

The list on the following page identifies important issues common to most volunteer-involving organisations and links to relevant resources. You may also require other policies for issues specific to your operations.

Volunteer policy (rationale, rights and responsibilities)	VV Guide– Involving Volunteers: the Principles
Recruitment (including PDs, selection process and approachto diversity/discrimination)	VV Guide– Recruiting Volunteers
Volunteer checks	VV Guide– Police Checks and Working with Children Checks
Orientation and induction	VV Guide – Orientation for New Volunteers
Support and supervision (including recognition, training and development)	VV Guide – Managing Volunteers for Retention
Grievance procedures and disciplinary policy	
Leaving the organisation (including dismissal)	VV Guide – Dealing with Conflict
Sexual harassment	VV Guide – Sexual Harassment
Privacy	VV Guide– Protecting the Privacy of Volunteers
Confidentiality and Intellectual Property	VV Guide – Confidentiality and Intellectual Property
Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses	VV Guide – Money and Volunteers
Volunteer insurance	VV Guide – Insurance and Liability
Health and safety	VV Guide – Health and Safety for Volunteers

More information

To help you manage your volunteers, Volunteering Victoria has developed a Toolkit with a range of simple tools and templates.

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015) assist you to benchmark against eight areas of volunteer program management.

https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Document-FINAL_Web.pdf

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