



WEBSITE CONTENT

3. Recruiting Volunteers

A recruitment drive for volunteers should only be commenced once the volunteer involving program has been planned and the support of all staff within the organisation has been garnered. Once you are clear about the need for volunteers, the work they will undertake and the benefits your organisation can offer volunteers, you will be in position to start attracting *only* the volunteers suited to your organisation and the work your organisation wishes to undertake.

Organisations vary in the way they recruit volunteers. Some organisations have specific recruitment drives conducted at regular intervals, while others take on new volunteers in a continuous fashion. Each method has its advantages. Choose the one that best suits your organisation, your resources and the kind of individuals you wish to attract.

Why have written job descriptions?

The job description is a major recruitment tool. Clearly defined job descriptions can be developed and written for most volunteer involving positions. Job descriptions provide the organisation with a guide in relation to whom they need to recruit, and gives prospective volunteers a clear indication of what they are taking on.

Writing the job description

The VIO must determine the contents of the volunteer role descriptions including the necessary skills required to take part in a particular program and the methodology by which such skills may be identified. The VIO must also establish how many volunteer man hours may be necessary to complete the program, whether the volunteers sought must have particular skills, whether the program can be marketed to persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and, if it is on-going, then, how many volunteer man hours will be required to maintain the program.

It is recommended that volunteers do not work more than sixteen hours per week on a regular basis within the same organisation.

A well-devised job description used as a recruitment tool should attract the appropriate people to you, thereby saving time and energy. It can be stressful being confronted with a stream of willing but unsuitable applicants and if you decide to place them you are likely to spend additional time and resources closely supervising their efforts.

When to recruit



Recruit volunteers *only* when specific jobs have been defined. It is critical that the VIO has sufficient qualified personnel to administer and oversee the volunteer program. Adequate and able guidance for any volunteer project is integral to a successful program and productive outcomes. Finally, recruit at the right time for the target group, for example, will the time of year, or school holidays impact on the on the willingness of individuals to become volunteers.

Where to recruit

Determine the best practices for advertising your volunteer roles and programs including through volunteer referral services providers, posters, newspapers, social media, community centres, members, sponsors and much more. Further, not all suitable young people may be found through schools, youth clubs, TAFE colleges and universities. The unemployed can be reached through Centrelink and members of special interest groups may be contacted through appropriate newsletters.

Locally, publicity can be obtained by notices in local shop windows, libraries, school noticeboards, supermarket noticeboards, doctors, dentists, banks, and community health centres.

A small poster with an eye-catching message in simple appealing language will likely attract prospective volunteers to take a closer look and follow up.

However, you should realise that the best recruiters are enthusiastic staff and happy volunteers.

The Advertised Message

Your message to potential volunteers *must* distinguish itself from the range of information that the public is exposed to every day. The message requires a short catchy headline and should speak directly to the target group. You should also provide a contact name, address and telephone number.

Preparing for responses from potential volunteers

All the very best planning and advertising can go awry if the first person the prospective volunteer speaks to in your organisation knows nothing of your recruitment drive, or is unable to provide the required information. A recruitment kit complete with information relating to the organisation, an application form and job description should be ready to be provided to the applicant by either post or by electronic delivery.

The selection process

When assessing an applicant for a volunteer position, every applicant should be given a personal interview with a qualified person in an appropriate setting allowing for sufficient time to conduct a thorough interview.

The interview



The purpose of the interview is to determine the suitability of the applicant for the position, and to ensure that requirements of the volunteer program will be met by the potential volunteer. Some jobs may require very specific skill sets and the interview questions should be framed so as to address these issues.

The interview process ought to disclose the prima facie suitability of the potential volunteer for the volunteer project.

Where the potential volunteer does not meet the position criteria and where you are unable to place the individual in another volunteer position then you need to advise the individual of their unsuitability for the particular position and refer them on to other volunteer referral services.

You should always express appreciation for the applicant's interest in applying for the volunteer position.