

# A GUIDE TO SETTING UP A YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

Youth volunteering programs demonstrate your organisation's social responsibility principles. The integration of Youth Volunteers within Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO) is critical to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive volunteer base. Youth Volunteers, individuals aged between 15 to 24, can be outstanding ambassadors for organisations, including yours. Young people are the future of volunteering and a Youth program is a pathway for the future.

A youth volunteer program can make an outstanding contribution not just to an organisation but also to its community. However, VIO need to consider the following matters carefully before proceeding with organising a youth volunteer program:

## 1. Goals of a Youth Volunteer Program

The VIO needs to identify the goals that it wishes to achieve from the youth volunteer program.

- Identify whether the project is an internal matter, a social issue or is it a program for a specified target audience,
- The organisation must ensure that the project is not a matter which should be addressed more properly by either an employee or a paid intern,
- The organisation also needs to consider whether the project is a part of its current work processes or an innovation,
- Determine whether the potential Youth Volunteer Program will be sufficiently flexible to ensure take into account school/university vacations, examination timetables, term and end of year holidays,
- Identify the recipients of the youth volunteer program, such as individuals, interest group/s or an organisation, and
- Determine whether the youth volunteer program will be a one-off project or will be a long term undertaking.
- Manage any risks associated with younger volunteers.

## 2. Resources

Define the resources required for the youth volunteer program. The resources will be in terms of:

- Adequate physical assets. These physical assets will include physical space and necessary equipment to undertake the tasks of the program, including accounting for the monetary costs of setting up, maintaining and monitoring a youth volunteer program which may be resource intensive.
- It is critical to have properly qualified personnel as mentors/supervisors as many of the participants may be under the legal age of 18. This means that they will be required to have a satisfactory Working With Children Check from the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. Please check the applicable guidelines at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children>)

# A GUIDE TO SETTING UP A YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

## 3. Volunteer Role Description

The organisation must determine the contents of the youth volunteer role descriptions. These position descriptions must include the skills or abilities required to take part in the program and the skills and capabilities which will be taught within the parameters of the program. The specifics of any instruction to be provided should be detailed. The VIO must also establish how many volunteer man hours may be necessary to complete the program. The estimate of time for youth volunteer program project should take into account the time which may be necessarily lengthened to take into account school/university breaks, the inherent skill set of the volunteers as well the training which may be required in order to complete the project.

## 4. Work Health and Safety Requirements

It is mandatory for the VIO to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that the rights and safety of all volunteers are maintained. The organisation is obliged to ensure that any youth volunteer program complies strictly with Work Health and Safety legislation.

Copies of the rights and obligations of volunteers should be provided to all participants in a volunteer program.

## 5. Education and Training

The organisation will need to evaluate the potential youth volunteer program against the requirements of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015 to ensure that the program meets the applicable standards. The Centre for Volunteering is able to provide appropriate training sessions and workbook guides at the request of the VIO.

## 6. Promotion of roles and program

Determine the best practices for advertising your volunteer roles and programs including through Volunteer Referral Service providers, posters, newspapers, social media, community centres, members, and sponsors.

# A GUIDE TO SETTING UP A YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

## 7. Recognition

It is imperative that youth volunteers are recognised for their efforts, time and skill. Recognition can be as simple as:

- noting the volunteer's name and/or work on your social media platform/s
- a Certificate of Recognition or
- as complex as individual trophies handed out at a presentation event. For example Youth and Student Volunteers are recognised along with Adults, Seniors and Teams in the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards (See: <http://www.volunteering.com.au/volunteer-awards/>)

The method and type of recognition of the youth volunteers is limited only by your imagination.

The Centre for Volunteering has a range of services and resources available for volunteer involving organisations. For more information please visit [www.volunteering.com.au](http://www.volunteering.com.au) or contact us on 02 9261 3600.

