

GUIDE TO VOLUNTEER SUPPORT POLICY TEMPLATE

ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA

This policy guides how the organisation supports volunteer workers to carry out their work effectively.

A written volunteer support policy is required as part of meeting Standard 9 (Employee and volunteer support).

Standard 9 – employee and volunteer support

The organisation develops, implements and reviews procedures for how the performance of volunteers is monitored, managed, developed and supported.

Policy checklist

The following checklist will help you check that an existing policy covers this area adequately.

The policy should:

- explain how volunteer services and contributions are supported and managed
- explain how critical incidents are responded to
- contain clear procedures and actions
- indicate the timing of any actions
- show when it was approved
- show when it was last reviewed.

COMPLETING YOUR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT POLICY

Using the policy template

The template provides some example statements. You can adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit the operations and services of your organisation.

To customise the policy template, click on the shaded sections `<<Insert text>>` and insert the information that is specific to your organisation.

When you have completed the policy template, delete the shaded instruction sections such as: [Refer to the volunteer support policy template guide for questions and/or examples to consider when customising this section.](#)

For further information on using the policy guides, refer to the information in *Using the policy templates and guides*.

Guidelines for each section of your policy

1. Purpose

When identifying the purpose of the policy, consider how it might apply to your volunteers. What are the benefits of effective volunteer support for your volunteers, your clients and your organisation? Do you need to make specific statements to ensure you are inclusive of particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Australian South Sea Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability?

2. Scope

To determine the scope of the policy, consider the following questions:

- Does this policy apply to all your organisation's services and to all volunteers and volunteer supervisors?
- Are volunteers supported as a group or given individual support?
- Does the policy apply differently to some volunteer roles or parts of the service?

3. Policy statement

If you are adopting the policy statement in the template, consider whether there are any additional commitments your organisation wants to make.

In identifying the actions your organisation will take to implement this policy, you should include the following:

- matching the skills and capacity of individual volunteers to their role to enable them to build on their strengths and interests
- providing adequate supervision and management for volunteers so they are able to perform well in their assigned roles.

4. Procedures

The procedures describe how your organisation achieves the aims and goals you have outlined in your purpose, scope and policy statement.

4.1 Coordinating volunteer services

The way you coordinate and manage volunteer services and support starts with the careful matching of a volunteer to a job role. If a volunteer is placed in a role that will enable them to build on their strengths and interests, they are more likely to perform well, contribute positively to the organisation, and enjoy their experience.

In describing your procedures for the coordination of volunteer services, consider the following:

- Who is responsible for the coordination of volunteers, and exactly what does this person do?
- How are volunteers placed in roles that will maximise the likelihood of their contribution to the organisation being successful? This will include understanding their strengths and interests, matching to the role, and providing adequate induction to the role they have been matched with.

4.2 Managing and supporting volunteer services

In describing your procedures for the management of volunteer services, consider the following:

- What regular formal supervision do volunteers have? Who provides this?
- What opportunities are there for debriefing for volunteers?
- Do you have peer support or mentoring programs for volunteers?
- What opportunities are there for team building with other volunteers and paid staff?
- Are volunteers supported and rewarded with benefits, expenses or signs of appreciation such as free or subsidised social events or opportunities to take part in service sector networks or training?
- Is professional or clinical supervision available to volunteers who have a need for this, as a consequence of their role or experience of a particular incident or series of incidents?

5. Other related policies and documents

List the other policies related to the volunteer support policy. The policy should be linked to:

- employee recruitment
- volunteer selection
- employee and volunteer induction policy
- employee and volunteer training and development
- employee performance and support policy
- dispute resolution for employees and volunteers policy.

6. Review processes

Consider how often the policy should be reviewed and the process for doing this:

- **frequency of review:** Most policies benefit from an annual review. The experience of implementing the policy is used to decide which changes are necessary. Consider reviewing your volunteer support policy as part of an annual review of your organisation's employment and volunteer management policies, or, if your organisation is small, perhaps over a three-year period. Critical incidents may prompt you to review the policy ahead of schedule.
- **responsibility for the review:** In most organisations, the person accountable for human resource management would be responsible for reviewing this policy. In small organisations, this may be the coordinator or manager. In larger organisations, this may be a human resource or personnel manager.
- **process for the review:** Decide which particular staff, volunteers, external people and organisations will provide input to the policy review, and whether clients will be involved.
- **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the policy and approve changes? What will be the timeframe for the review process?
- **documentation and communication:** What records of the policy review process are needed? How will changes to the policy be communicated to staff implementing the policy? In a small organisation, this may be as simple as noting the changes at a staff meeting. In a larger organisation, an email memo may be needed.
- **key questions for the review:** Is the policy being implemented? Are procedures being followed? Is the policy clear? What has changed that may prompt a change to the policy (for example, new funding guidelines, new pressures on the service, major changes in the direction or policies of the organisation)? Have particular stakeholders had difficulty with any aspect of the policy? Can their concerns be resolved? How does the policy compare with that of similar organisations?