



# Information Sheet

## Recruit and Select Volunteers: 6 Steps

### Why Use this Resource?

Recruit the right volunteer for the right assignment. This resource provides strategies for effective volunteer recruitment, from the targeted development of volunteer roles and position descriptions, to how to advertise for, interview, screen and select volunteer applicants.

**[Links to National Standards for Involving Volunteers - No. 3 Recruitment, Selection and Orientation]**

The simple fundamental truths about recruitment are:

- The most effective method of recruitment is word of mouth from current volunteers
- No one volunteers unless they are asked
- It is far more effective to retain satisfied volunteers than to recruit new ones
- One volunteer, who leaves after a poor experience, will do more damage than the good done by ten excellent recruitment campaigns

There are six stages to the recruitment and selection process:

- Develop Volunteer Roles
- Write Volunteer Job Descriptions
- Develop Your Message and Advertise
- Interviewing
- Screening
- Selection

### 1. Develop Volunteer Roles

The first step in recruitment is to develop volunteer roles. Consider the following issues:

- Clarify what the volunteer will be expected to achieve.
- Identify the boundaries of the volunteer role.
- Identify and prepare supervisors for the role.
- Develop effective communication processes around the role.
- Establish a suitable place for the volunteer to work.
- Identify and obtain necessary resources to enable the volunteer to fulfil the role.
- Ensure relevant work is available for volunteers to do.
- Develop suitable support mechanisms for volunteers and the role, and for those who supervise the volunteers.
- Identify and implement suitable supervision.

### 2. Write Volunteer Job Descriptions

Once volunteer roles have been identified, volunteer position descriptions need to be developed (the terms volunteer job description, volunteer role description or volunteer position description, are all alternative titles).

Volunteer position descriptions are essential in defining the roles of volunteers in the organisation. They provide a clear process of communicating to the volunteer what the expectations and responsibilities of the role are and set the parameters and boundaries in which the volunteer is expected to work to maximise their skills, knowledge and abilities.

As a guide, position descriptions should include the following elements:

- Title of the role: What is the actual name of the position? (e.g. volunteer lifeguard, interpretive guide, receptionist)
- The need for the role: What is the purpose of the role? Why does this job need to be done?
- Time commitment: How much time and over what periods is the volunteer required.
- Reporting and supervision: Who will directly support the volunteer and who will the volunteer be accountable to? Who will the volunteer report to? Who will the volunteer work with?
- Details of duties/activities: what are the specific tasks, functions and key areas of responsibility of the role?
- Selection criteria: What skills, knowledge, abilities or qualities are required or desirable for volunteers undertaking the position? Do they need specific qualifications, licenses, or suitability notices to undertake the role?
- Benefits of the role: What can the volunteer gain from undertaking this role?
- Training/ education opportunities: What opportunities are available to increase the volunteers' skills, knowledge and abilities through training and professional development?
- Considerations specific to the role: Does the role require the volunteers to be working on their own? What will the work environment be?



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### Managing the Recruitment Process

Before recruitment starts ensure a process is in place for volunteers to apply and a contacted person is nominated and prepared to deal with initial enquiries.

The contact person will need to be able to provide information about:

- The organisation
- Volunteer roles available
- The process for becoming a volunteer (e.g. application forms, orientation, selection, screening, training, time frames, specific to particular roles)

The contact person will need to collect information about each enquiry including:

- Name
- Contact details
- How they heard about volunteering with this organisation
- Area of interest

Someone will need to be allocated to complete the next step (e.g., send more information, receive applications, arrange interview/ orientation times, and commence required screening.)

### 3. Develop Your Message and Advertise

Once job descriptions are available the recruitment message can be developed. The recruitment message includes information about the organisation and details that will encourage people to become involved. The recruitment message provides an opportunity to address any fears potential volunteers may have.

#### Targeted Recruitment

The recruitment message needs to convey key information to potential volunteers:

- Need - what is the reason the job should be done?
- Solution - How this job can help solve this need?
- Fears/Concerns - Will I be capable of doing it?
- Benefits - What's in it for me?
- Contact Point - How do I get involved? Who do I contact?

Refer to **Volunteer Recruitment Campaigns, Steve McCurley National CASA Association**

#### Broadcasting Recruitment

The recruitment message can be broadcast through a variety of means, including:

- Volunteering Qld (for further details visit [www.volunteeringqld.org.au](http://www.volunteeringqld.org.au))
- Newsletters - your organisation and others
- Newspapers - human interest stories in local community newspapers can be very effective in targeting potential applicants from the local community and can also often be very cost effective
- Internet
- Listing volunteer positions
- Community billboards
- Community announcements (radio and television)
- Magazines
- Word-of-mouth
- Local employment centres
- Go Volunteer ([www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au))



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### 4. Interviewing

Interviewing provides an opportunity to determine the suitability of a potential volunteer for a role or to match volunteers with roles. Interviews also provide an opportunity to explore the applicant's potential and capacity to be able to ensure their volunteer involvement is meaningful and fulfilling to them.

Interviews also allow a potential volunteer to get to know your organisation and develop a clearer understanding about volunteer roles available.

### 5. Screening

Any organisation involving volunteers needs to consider and put in place appropriate screening mechanisms.

Screening covers the processes used to verify the background, qualifications, skills and experience of individuals prior to their appointment to a volunteer position. Screening is an important part of an organisation's risk management strategy. It complements, but by no means reduces the need for good practice in the recruitment, selection, training, supervision and support of volunteers and paid workers. Effective screening is especially important in those organisations where there is involvement with children, the elderly or any other vulnerable group.

No single screening method is adequate. Screening may involve reference checks, police record checks, driving record or other checks as deemed necessary for the particular role or organisation. However screening is not limited to such checks. Screening promotes and maintains internal security. Any screening undertaken by an organisation must be done within state and federal legal requirements.

### 6. Selection

Selection involves some process of matching the person to the role. While an organisation seeks volunteers to meet its needs, volunteers similarly seek an organisation, which meets their needs and expectations. Matching therefore involves focusing on a win-win outcome for the organisation and the volunteer. It is important that the organisation gain a clear understanding of the goals that each particular volunteer seeks to achieve through volunteering, and to assess whether engagement with their roles or program will be able to effectively meet the volunteer's goals. It is better to turn away a potential candidate than create a dissatisfied volunteer whose needs are not being addressed in your program. Organisations have a responsibility to their clients and to potential volunteers to select the right people for particular roles. This may relate to legislative or organisational requirements but certainly relates to best practice volunteer management.

It is essential that those responsible for selecting volunteers recognise the need to be able to say no to a volunteer's request to work in a role for which they are not appropriate and to reject some volunteers' requests to work with the organisation in any capacity.



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