



# **VOLUNTEER REFERRAL SERVICE ... HANDBOOK**

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## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION .....	1
HISTORY OF WIDE BAY VOLUNTEERS .....	2
VOLUNTEER REFERRAL SERVICE .....	3
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION .....	4
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION BENEFITS .....	5
Other Member Services Available: .....	6
HOW VOLUNTEERS ACCESS THE SERVICE .....	7
INTERVIEW PROCESS .....	8
ORGANISATIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	9
VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....	10
POLICE CHECKS AND VOLUNTEERS .....	11
<i>National police certificates (Police Check):</i> .....	11
<i>Working with Children Check (Blue Card):</i> .....	11
INSURANCE FOR INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS .....	12
<i>Volunteer Workers Personal Accident Insurance:</i> .....	12
<i>Public Liability Insurance:</i> .....	13
CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ORGANISATIONS .....	14

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Wide Bay Volunteers has three membership options with a differing range of services in each level giving you as an organisation the opportunity to subscribe to the level, that best suits your needs and requirements. The benefits and fees of these services along with the application procedures are explained throughout this handbook.

### **To be eligible for membership of Wide Bay Volunteers your organisation will need to:**

- be not-for-profit;
- provide a service to the community;
- have both public liability and volunteer personal accident insurance
- have safe work procedures in place to ensure volunteers are not exposed to risk of injury or illness, and
- have a volunteer coordinator to supervise volunteers

This handbook has been designed to provide you with informative and helpful information of what Wide Bay Volunteers can do for your organisation. By explaining how the ‘volunteer recruitment service’ operates, we hope to better inform you of what we can offer your organisation in the recruitment of quality volunteers.

At the back of this handbook we have included additional information, which is of interest and benefit to your organisation and also to the volunteers within your organisation (please refer to the appendices).

For more detailed information regarding any topics listed in this handbook, please refer to our website [www.widebayvolunteers.org.au](http://www.widebayvolunteers.org.au).

### **DISCLAIMER:**

Wide Bay Volunteers has made every effort to ensure the appropriateness of the information contained in this booklet. However, as the information is for general use and is not intended to serve as advice, no warranty is given in relation to the accuracy, reliability or appropriateness of any information provided. No part of this information is intended to replace detailed and expert advice in respect of individual circumstances. Users of this information are therefore encouraged to consult with their chosen professional advisers before making any decision. Wide Bay Volunteers disclaims all liability to any person in respect to any consequence of actions or otherwise based on information contained herein.

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## **HISTORY OF WIDE BAY VOLUNTEERS**

On 15th March 1999 Wide Bay Volunteer Resource Agency officially commenced as a regional office of Volunteering Queensland, operating out of the Bundaberg Neighbourhood Centre (Kenalwyn House). The organisation was incorporated on July 1, 2001 and has since become known as Wide Bay Volunteer Resource Association Incorporated and is operated in its own right by a Management Committee of local and respected business people, individual members and volunteer representatives.

The Wide Bay Volunteer Resource Association (*adopting the shorter title of Wide Bay Volunteers*) is a Bundaberg based, not-for-profit community organisation that recruits and refers volunteers into positions within other not-for-profit community organisations throughout the Wide Bay, Burnett, and Fraser Coast and Cooloola regions in Queensland. Our mission is to support volunteers and community organisations by assisting with the development of the required infrastructure, skills and capacity needed to achieve sustainable quality 'volunteering' for the benefit of the whole community.

Wide Bay Volunteers services an area of approximately 25,000km<sup>2</sup> (covering 22 local government areas) with an approximate population of 179,500 people. Funded primarily by the Federal Government and community sponsorship; fundraising activities supplement the costs of running the referral service on a day-to-day basis. Our membership of not-for-profit community organisations has risen from 43 in 1999 to over 150 fully registered members in 2009.

Since our inception in March of 1999, Wide Bay Volunteers has grown to be one of the state's most successful 'Volunteer Referral Centres'. We represent the interests of volunteers and community organisations who utilise the services of volunteers. Wide Bay Volunteers is an independent community based not-for-profit organisation operated largely by volunteers and a very small team of 3 part-time paid staff, who also contribute many hours of their own time to ensure that the organisation continues to operate at its full potential.

Although, Wide Bay Volunteers is an independent incorporated association we are affiliated with Volunteering Queensland and Volunteering Australia (our peak body). We are contracted through Volunteering Australia to deliver the volunteer referral service and provide assistance to community organisations in our region.

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## **VOLUNTEER REFERRAL SERVICE**

As a volunteer referral centre, we have a bank of volunteer positions and not a bank of volunteers. Our service is based on volunteering being a freedom of choice and not an obligation.

Wide Bay Volunteers offers potential volunteers a selection from a variety of jobs and organisations throughout the Wide Bay, Burnett and Fraser Coast and Cooloola regions. Our Volunteer Referral Service allows not-for-profit organisations to source the right volunteer for the right volunteer job. Each year, we place over one thousand volunteers in not-for-profit community organisations.

As part of the Volunteering Australia network, we also work with [GoVolunteer](#) and [VolunteerSearch](#) to advertise your volunteer opportunities effectively online. We have also taken advantage of having access and linking to a state-wide volunteer database, which allows for further promotion and acquisition of volunteers for registered community based organisations.

### **Our experienced team offers a comprehensive service, including:**

- **Advice** - we can help you write effective volunteer job descriptions.
- **Mentoring** – we can assist you by providing ideas, motivation, encouragement and direction.
- **Opportunities** - we advertise your volunteering vacancies on four (4) national and state websites including GoVolunteer, VolunteerSearch, Seek and Volbase.
- **Interviewing** - we interview all potential volunteers to establish their skills, interests and availability. We then refer volunteers to your organisation for an interview or for any screening procedures and checks that may be necessary.
- **Insurance** – we will advise you about the insurances that you require to employ volunteers.

### ***Volunteer Positions:***

We use a standard “Volunteer Job Description” form to describe volunteer positions with your organisation. The more detail you give on this form, the easier it is for us to refer a potential volunteer to your organisation. A separate job description should be completed for each volunteer position your organisation requires. Once the position is filled, please let us know and we can put the position on hold. Similarly, we can reactivate positions as needed.

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## **MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION**

Wide Bay Volunteers has three levels of membership available. You can nominate to become a member at the level which suits your organisations needs. Membership Subscriptions are for twelve (12) months and are renewed at the end of each financial year.

### ***Full Membership - \$121.00***

- Entitles not-for-profit community organisations the use of the Full Volunteer Referral Service with the option of **covering multiple branches throughout Wide Bay Volunteers region.**

### ***Associate Membership - \$55.00***

- Entitles not-for-profit community organisations the use of the Full Volunteer Referral Service for **a single business location and covering multiple branches where applicable.**

### ***Nominal Associate - \$10.00***

- Entitles not-for-profit community organisations the use of the Limited Volunteer Referral Service for **a single business location.** This option is available mainly to unfunded organisations and allows for the waiver of subscription fee in consideration of funding hardship on application.

### **All membership levels receive the following benefits as standard:**

- Organisation ‘approved’ status for Centrelink clients who choose to volunteer
- Information on volunteering events and topics emailed to your nominated contacts
- Issued to Associates and Members which agree to comply with Code of Practice and to have due regard to National Standards
- Broadcast email service to volunteers and other member organisations to promote your event, corporate, project and urgent volunteer opportunities
- Opportunity for involvement in events and expo’s held by Wide Bay Volunteers
- Letters of support from Wide Bay Volunteers to endorse your funding applications

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION BENEFITS

<b><u>BENEFITS</u></b>	<i>Description of benefits</i>	<b>REGISTRATION CATEGORIES AND FEES</b>		
		<b>Nominal Associate \$10</b> <small>Fee can be waived in consideration of funding hardship</small>	<b>Associate Member \$55</b>	<b>Full Member \$121</b>
<b>Multiple Branches covered in more than one postcode area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration of more than one branch in multiple postcode areas throughout Wide Bay Volunteers region</li> </ul>			✓
<b>Multiple Branches covered in the one postcode</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration of more than one branch in a single postcode area covered by Wide Bay Volunteers</li> </ul>		✓	
<b>Screened Referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers are interviewed and informed of proposed role before being referred</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<b>Direct Referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers informally interviewed before being referred</li> </ul>	✓		
<b>Website listings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register your organisation and list unlimited job profiles</li> <li>Review of website listings and support to improve your organisation's capacity to engage volunteers</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<b>Direct linking</b> <i>* see note regarding on-line registrations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The option to receive expressions of interest direct from volunteers via website job listings if option selected on member application form</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<b>Approved Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation 'approved' status for Centrelink clients who choose to volunteer</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>E-News</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on volunteering events and topics emailed to your nominated contacts</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Membership Certificate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issued to Associates and Members which agree to comply with Code of Practice and to have due regard to National Standards</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ongoing reviews and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance with recruiting, placing, motivating, support and consultation on issues relating to volunteering</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<b>Email Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadcast email service to volunteers and other member organisations to promote your event, corporate, project and urgent volunteer opportunities</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Events and Expo's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for involvement in events and expo's held by Wide Bay Volunteers</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Support for Funding Applications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letters of support from Wide Bay Volunteers to endorse your funding applications</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Financial Concessions</b>	Members concession rate on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member discount for training conducted through Bay Connect (concession fee less 10%)</li> <li>calendar training (one discounted place per workshop)</li> <li>Training room hire less 10%</li> <li>Equipment hire less 10%</li> </ul>		✓	✓

<b>Vocational Placements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to link to 'Youth Pathways Program' and 'TAFE Volunteers Vocational Placement'</li> </ul>		✓	✓
<b>Skills Bank</b>	<i>New for 2008 onwards:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Skills Bank to search for skilled volunteers to meet your specific needs</li> </ul>		✓	✓

**\*On-line registrations for the Free Direct Linking Service (\$0) from organisations in the area serviced by Wide Bay Volunteer Resource Association Inc will be processed via the website [www.volqld.org.au](http://www.volqld.org.au). Organisations can select the Free Direct Linking Service only to receive the following benefits:**

Website listings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register your organisation and list unlimited job profiles</li> </ul>
Direct linking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive expressions of interest direct from volunteers via website job listings</li> </ul>
Approved Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation 'approved' status for Centrelink clients who choose to volunteer</li> </ul>
Enews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on volunteering events and topics emailed to your nominated contacts</li> </ul>

Or select Linking + Membership to access the additional benefits listed in the large table above.

### Other Member Services Available:

#### *Computer Training (Bay Connect Bundaberg)*

Bay Connect Bundaberg is a not-for-profit community project specialising in computer training and is part of the Wide Bay Volunteers association. Being volunteers ourselves, we understand the needs of the low-income community and offer our services at subsidised concession rates. Training in Introduction to Computers and 'Microsoft Office' applications as well as Internet and Email services are programs currently offered by Bay Connect Bundaberg today.

### Course Inclusions:

- Convenient short courses with thorough content (not self-taught out of a manual);
- Comprehensive training manuals written in plain-English for follow-up reference;
- On-screen visual demonstrations with hands on approach learning;
- Professional training delivery with personal support utilising trained volunteer tutors;
- Full Colour certificate provided with every course;
- Lunch and refreshments included with all courses.

A fully equipped training room, with ten workstations is provided and is available for hire to both community organisations (member discounts are available on application) and corporate companies.

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## **HOW VOLUNTEERS ACCESS THE SERVICE**

Wide Bay Volunteers promotes its referral service via a number of avenues to attract potential volunteers. Promotion happens through radio and newspaper advertisement, centrelink and job networks, as well as community events and projects. Volunteers can access the information on Wide Bay Volunteers job database a number of ways:

- Website search
- Face-to-face or Telephone interview

### **WEB SITE SEARCH**

Volunteers can access information on volunteer opportunities on the following state and/or national sites:

- [www.volunteersearch.gov.au](http://www.volunteersearch.gov.au)
- [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au)
- [www.volunteeringqueensland.org.au](http://www.volunteeringqueensland.org.au)

Volunteers can search by location, type of volunteer work and times they are available to find suitable volunteer opportunities. Once a position is selected, the volunteer can complete an online form by which their details are automatically processed and a referral made. All volunteers referred to financial members will attend a face-to-face or telephone interview with Wide Bay Volunteers and appropriately screened prior to the final referral. Complementary members have volunteers referred direct without screening or human contact.

### **TELEPHONE INTERVIEW *[Regional Hotline - 1300 301 018]***

Volunteers can contact Wide Bay Volunteers for a telephone interview to discuss volunteering opportunities in their local area. At this interview, our staff professionally screen volunteers to your organisations specific individual requirements then make an informed referral.

### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW *[Bundaberg only]***

Volunteers living in Bundaberg or surrounding areas can make an appointment and attend a face-to-face interview. At this interview, our staff professionally screen volunteers to your organisations specific individual requirements then make an informed referral.

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## **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

In both telephone and face-to-face interviews, information is collected regarding the volunteer's interests and abilities. A volunteer Referral Officer explains the interview process and gathers the following information from potential volunteers:

1. Contact details;
2. Motivations for volunteering;
3. Interests and Abilities;
4. Type of voluntary work the individual is interested in;
5. What special requirements may affect the volunteers work;
6. Times the individual is available for volunteer work;
7. The locations or suburbs most suitable to the volunteer;

Based on individual organisation requirements, volunteers are screened appropriately to ensure you receive the volunteers to suit your needs. This screening can include determining whether the volunteer holds a current Child Suitability Card, if they have any qualifications that may suit the position and more.

The Referral Officer will contact your organisation immediately, when a volunteer expresses an interest in a position with your organisation. The Referral Officer will either fax the volunteer's particulars for you to ring the potential volunteer directly, or alternatively phone you to set up an appointment time for you to meet with the volunteer. When you receive a fax, please ring the volunteer as soon as you can to let them know the availability of your position. Often people are enthusiastic to get started volunteering! We try to avoid sending volunteers where they are not needed – it's disheartening for volunteers and frustrating for the organisation.

When you interview a volunteer who has been referred through Wide Bay Volunteers, it is entirely your decision whether the person is suitable. If your volunteer position is unavailable or doesn't match with the potential volunteer's expectations, please feel free to suggest that the volunteer contacts us again to explore other options. We have over 1000 voluntary jobs across all areas of the community sector to choose from!

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## **ORGANISATIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers are vital resources in any community organisation. Volunteering is about freedom of choice and as such volunteers can expect recognition for work that they do. Both the volunteer and the organisation have obligations to each other.

### ***Organisations have the right to:***

- receive as much effort and service from an unpaid worker as a paid one, even on a short term basis;
- expect conscientious acceptance of responsibilities as to promptness, reliability and good performance;
- expect enthusiasm and belief in the work the organisation is doing;
- express opinions about poor volunteer effort in a diplomatic way and suggest a change to another job;
- make a decision as to where the volunteer would best fit;
- expect from the volunteer clear and open communication at all times;
- expect loyalty to the agency and only constructive criticism;
- expect from volunteers given leadership responsibilities, an effective work productivity;
- release an unsuitable volunteer;

### ***Organisations have the responsibility to:***

- plan the volunteer program before recruiting volunteers;
- recruit, interview and select the right volunteer for the right job;
- provide written job descriptions and procedures for volunteer jobs;
- orientate volunteers by providing information about the organisations purpose structure, programs, policies and procedures;
- provide initial training and ongoing training where necessary;
- include volunteers in decision making where decisions affect volunteers work;
- keep records of volunteers goals, training and feed back support sessions;
- communicate clear expectations and provide the appropriate support and supervision for volunteers;
- formally and informally recognise volunteers efforts in the organisation;
- continually evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of volunteers in the organisation;

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## **VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### ***Volunteers have the right to:***

1. be interviewed and employed as a volunteer in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation;
2. information about the organisation for which you are volunteering;
3. a clearly written job description;
4. know to whom you are accountable;
5. be recognised as a valued team member;
6. be supported and supervised in your role;
7. a healthy and safe working environment;
8. be protected by appropriate insurance (refer to insurance info sheet);
9. say no if you feel you are being exploited;
10. be reimbursed for approved out-of-pocket expenses;
11. be advised of the organisation's travel reimbursement policy;
12. be informed and consulted on matters which directly or indirectly affect you and your work;
13. be made aware of the grievance procedure within the organisation;
14. orientation and training to do your volunteer work;
15. information about the organisation's policies and procedures that affect your work;
16. have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the Privacy Act.

### ***Volunteers have the responsibility to:***

1. be reliable;
2. respect confidentiality;
3. carry out the specified tasks defined in the job description;
4. be accountable;
5. be committed to the organisation;
6. undertake training as requested;
7. ask for support when you need it;
8. give notice before you leave the organisation;
9. value and support other team members;
10. carry out the work you have agreed to do responsibly and ethically;
11. notify the organisation as soon as possible of absences;
12. adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures;

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## **POLICE CHECKS AND VOLUNTEERS**

### ***National police certificates (Police Check):***

Police checks are one tool for assessing an applicant's suitability for a volunteer role. As an organisation, you may request volunteers to undergo a check for one or more of the following reasons:

- *Legislative requirement.* Some volunteers (often working with children) are required by law to undergo police checks.
- *Funding requirement.* Some government departments require volunteers to undergo police checks to satisfy conditions for funding organisations.
- *Duty of care.* Organisations need to do all that is reasonable to avoid harm to clients, volunteers and the organisation. Failure to do so results in liability for any harm. Risks to organisations that might be best managed through incorporating police checks include potential for abuses of vulnerable client populations and financial risks associated with volunteers handling money without supervision.
- *Insurance Obligations.* Some insurers require police checks for staff and volunteers as a condition of providing insurance.

Police checks should be initiated by organisations rather than individuals to ensure the greatest level of accuracy and assurance. The first points of contact are usually local police stations, although practices vary in some areas.

Consent must be obtained from the applicant in writing via a completed consent form before the check is initiated. Organisations wishing to include police checks in their risk management strategies can access police checks from the Queensland Police Service.

Cost: \$38.20  
Processing time: up to four weeks

### ***Working with Children Check (Blue Card):***

Police record checks are mandatory in Queensland for volunteers working with children. The system is administered by the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. These checks are commonly referred to as the 'Blue Card' because of the card issued to volunteers. Unlike police checks in other states, the process of issuing a blue card involves checking a range of registers and disciplinary findings of professional associations.

In most cases organisations cannot accept volunteers for work while checks are pending, regardless of how often they come into contact with children or young people. There are some exceptions to the mandatory requirement for checking - for example parents volunteering at their children's school. Organisations should consult the Commissioner or Wide Bay Volunteers if they are in doubt as to whether a check is required. For more information visit: <http://www.childcomm.qld.gov.au>

Cost: free  
Processing time: up to three months (valid for two years)

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## **INSURANCE FOR INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS**

It is an organisation's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided to protect volunteer staff and volunteer members of community management committees. Wide Bay Volunteers recommends that organisations involving volunteers seek professional advice in determining what cover is available and most appropriate for their needs. The first requirement in considering insurance is to understand the various types of cover available to protect volunteers. The following is a list of the insurances required by Wide Bay Volunteers in order for organisations to access the Volunteer Referral Service.

### ***Volunteer Workers Personal Accident Insurance:***

Personal Accident Cover for volunteers covers volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses following accidental injury, disability, or death while carrying out their work on behalf of the organisation (similar to the State Government's compulsory Work Cover for paid employees). Depending on the policy, this type of insurance should normally cover loss of income. It is important to remember that this cover is rarely included in Public Liability Insurance, and therefore a separate policy needs to be taken out with the insurance broker or underwriter. Personal Accident Insurance is not excessively expensive and usually not difficult to obtain. It is important to be aware of any age limit or any activities that might be excluded from this insurance cover. There is usually a \$50 - \$100 excess for Non-Medicare medical expenses. These details are spelt out in policy wording. Students or work-placements may not be included in this insurance policy. It is therefore important to check the policy before engaging students or work-placements.

*When considering volunteer personal accident insurance, the following questions are a guide to be considered:*

- What is the age range cover for volunteers? Is a minimum and/or maximum age specified? Is this acceptable? A good policy does not have age limits for volunteers.
- What cover should be included following injury or death, e.g. medical/funeral expenses, home help, home modifications, weekly benefits, rehabilitation costs?
- What level of cover for loss of income if injured while volunteering?
- What level of cover for personal accident?
- Does cover include expenses incurred as a result of stress?

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- Will volunteers be covered during their journey to and from work? In what way?
  - Are exclusions and excesses involved? What is the gap between public medical benefits and the insurance claim?

### *Public Liability Insurance:*

This insurance covers the organisation's legal liability to pay damages to a third party (eg. member of the public or clients of the organisation) for personal injury or property damage accidentally caused by a member of the organisation including its volunteers. A separate or extended cover can be taken out to include legal costs in relation to a claim being made against the organisation. Some insurance brokers will include Product Liability as an extension of their Public Liability Policy.

When considering public liability insurance, the following questions are a guide to be considered:

- Does the liability policy include the actions of both paid and volunteer workers?
- Will volunteers be permitted to use their own cars when their work involves transporting others or carrying out any other volunteer work for the organisation?

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## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ORGANISATIONS**

In order to enhance the volunteers' experience and comply with legislation and duty of care a voluntary organisation agrees to:

- Interview and employ volunteer staff in accordance with anti discrimination and equal opportunity legislation;
- provide volunteer staff with orientation and training;
- provide volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace;
- provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteers;
- not place volunteer staff in roles that were previously held by paid staff or have been identified as paid jobs;
- differentiate between paid and unpaid roles;
- define volunteer roles and develop clear job descriptions;
- provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteers;
- provide volunteers with a copy of policies pertaining to volunteer staff;
- ensure volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial dispute or paid staff shortage;
- provide all staff with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures;
- acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff;
- ensure that the work of volunteer staff complements but does not undermine the work of paid staff;
- offer volunteer staff the opportunity for professional development;
- reimburse volunteer staff for out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation;
- treat volunteer staff as valuable team members, and advise them of the opportunities to participate in agency decisions;
- acknowledge the contributions of volunteer staff.





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