Volunteers in residential facilities

Some facilities may benefit from using volunteers. Volunteers are people who provide a service:

• that benefits the community
• of their own free will
• without financial payment.

Developing a volunteer policy

A volunteer policy should reflect and state the philosophy and mission of the organisation and its commitment to volunteer involvement.

Your volunteer policy should also include:

• principles of volunteering
• a code of practice
• a statement of volunteer rights and responsibilities
• a procedure manual which should contain such things as reimbursement of expenses, insurance, grievance procedures, health and safety regulations
• task descriptions for volunteers.

Pre-placement checks

It is important to check the details of people who are volunteering, including:

• proof of identity
• qualifications
• referee checks
• work history
• police checks.

Task descriptions for volunteer positions

Activities should be written into a clear and concise task description so the agreement between the agency and volunteer is not open to misinterpretation. It should include the following basic elements:

• a description of the position
• skills or qualifications – mandatory and desirable
• key areas of responsibility – a list of duties.

It should also clarify organisational relationships, answering questions such as:

• who is the volunteer supervised by or accountable to?
• does the volunteer supervise other volunteers?
• does the volunteer liaise with others in the organisation?
The task description should also spell out the conditions of the position:

- days and time required
- training requirements.

**Training volunteers**

Training is an important part of a volunteer program. It can be divided into four categories:

1. Orientation
2. Pre-placement training
3. Continuing education
4. On the job.

Training should be ongoing, not just at the start of the volunteer’s service. Regular review discussions should be scheduled.

**Recruitment of volunteers**

Methods of recruitment could include:

- enquiring among family and friends of residents
- staff members presenting talks at local community groups to invite participation
- host an open day morning tea
- list your facility with Volunteering Victoria in your region.

**Arranging insurance**

Appropriate and comprehensive cover is vital for any organisation involving volunteers. Types of insurance to consider are:

- professional indemnity
- personal accident for volunteers
- directors’ and officers’ liability
- public liability
- burglary
- money
- contents/special inclusions
- fire.

As a general rule volunteers are not covered by WorkCover.

**Remember to:**

- recognise volunteers as valuable team members
- provide mechanisms to acknowledge the value of contributions made by volunteers (such as certificates, annual volunteer event).
If you have any questions about volunteers, contact

**Volunteering Victoria**

7th Floor, Bourke Street
Melbourne  3000
Ph: (03) 9642 5266

**Community Visitor Scheme** on (03) 9845 2720 to help link volunteers with isolated older people in residential care facilities.

*Adapted from Volunteer Centre of Victoria information sheets.*