



Planning volunteer recruitment

In recent times the volunteer sector has risen to face many challenges. As volunteering continues to evolve, Volunteer Managers need to look at ways they can enhance and future proof their programs.

“Where do I start?” you may ask? In Part 1 of our 3 Part Series on future proofing your volunteer program, we are looking at tips for planning your recruitment and creating roles that utilise digital skills.

Recruitment Planning

The volunteer space is highly competitive with many organisations recruiting for volunteers at the same time.

Use these tips to plan how you recruit volunteers to your organisation, and develop new volunteer roles. It may take more time, but your efforts will be rewarded by finding the best volunteer for your role.

1. Potential Volunteers have done their research

People looking to become volunteers may ask themselves:

“What type of organisation matches my interests and values? How can I best use my knowledge, skills and expertise to make a positive impact?”

Most potential volunteers do a lot of research as they know they will be investing their time to a cause they are passionate about or feel they can somewhat add to a community.

You need to be able to easily answer these questions for your organisation and volunteer roles. Think about how your website and social media channels help to tell the story of your organisation and how it supports your community. It may help to ask yourself and your colleagues or existing volunteers why they chose to get involved in your organisation.

2. Everyone can be a volunteer!

Lots of volunteers are retirees who bring a lifetime of valuable workplace skills and experience into an organisation. Some older volunteers may just need some assistance to upskill in using digital technology to be able to confidently and safely use your systems - but the investment in time will be worth it!

You can also consider a younger person to fill your volunteer role.

Younger people have a keen desire to make an impact but tend to not be interested in organisations that are overly bureaucratic or archaic in their ways of working. Many younger people are passionate about using and keeping up to date with digital technology. Volunteering can also be a great way for young people to develop practical work experience.

3. Get it sorted behind the scenes

Before you recruit it is important for your organisation to develop a Volunteer Engagement policy that links to the [National Standards on Volunteer Involvement](#) and the [National Volunteer Guide](#)

Educate your whole organisation on how this engagement policy will work and on the role of the volunteer. This needs to be clearly communicated to all members of your team.

Develop position descriptions that truly reflect the role and responsibilities of each volunteer role. This will require you to think about the key aspects of the role such as the who, what, where, why, when and how of the role. Often when you are creating a new role it is a good idea to use this as a simple guide to ensure you cover off on all of the key elements of the role.

Know the policies and procedures that will apply to volunteers. For example, some organisations require their volunteers to have a police check (this is a requirement of the Be Connected program).

4. Volunteering no longer needs to be in person

Consider if volunteers can work remotely or virtually and consider designing flexibility into the role. Can the volunteer work after hours, from a co-working space, from home or a cafe? These strategies will support people who work full time or have caring responsibilities, cannot easily travel to your office or a person with a disability if your office is not fully accessible to get involved.



TOP TIP: Virtual volunteering is an excellent way to help you manage the costs associated with your Volunteer Program. Plus, it is an excellent way to be more inclusive.

5. Think creatively about the roles you can offer

Volunteers can be wonderful digital mentors, helping people in your community to feel confident about getting online. See our [description of the role of a digital mentor here](#) for more information on what this might look like.

Other meaningful digital-based volunteer roles may include:

- digital marketing
- creating designs
- virtual consultations with learners to assess their needs and concerns
- updating your volunteer or client database
- digitising documents
- preparedness planning.

Volunteers can bring extra capacity to your team, as well as extra skills and experience.



Top Tip Be the trailblazer in the volunteer sector. Thinking creatively about your volunteer program and the roles that may be possible will help to keep your volunteers engaged, poised to make an impact and most importantly, successful!

6. Create a positive working environment

Will your volunteer be part of a team? The increased opportunity to collaborate boosts enthusiasm and can have a positive impact upon their overall job satisfaction.

Source the tools and resources you will need to help your volunteers succeed in advance. Think about the creative and different ways you can spend your Be Connected grant money to support volunteers to deliver your digital skills programs. For example, you may need to buy equipment such as laptops, scanners, headphones, data or even mobile phones.

7. Describe the volunteer role in Plain English

Using the right language is important when describing a volunteer role.

Promote the opportunity for volunteers to create and play an active role in making a positive impact in real terms in your organisation. For example, if they will be working as a volunteer digital mentor, this may mean that they will be helping people in their community to connect with friends and family online, which has never been more important.

You may have a role that is project based. You could choose to describe the role as one where the volunteer can “opt in” to the role for a short period of time. Once the project is finished they may choose to “opt in” to another project based role. This is an ideal retention strategy for those volunteers who enjoy variety, flexibility and being actively engaged in their work.

Be specific about any skills they need to have to do the role, and what you would be happy to upskill them in yourself. For example, would it be helpful for you to have a volunteer that speaks a language other than English to connect with your community?

Future proofing your volunteer program

This resource is Part 2 of a three part series on *Future proofing your volunteer program* for organisations in Good Things Foundation’s national digital inclusion network.

Next in the series:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Managing and upskilling volunteers