

Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community group. Most groups will be made up entirely of volunteers who are all passionate about their local community and the goals of the organisation. It is important to recruit volunteers who are suitable for the responsibilities you have in mind for them, and who have the same values and passion for the work you are doing in your community. It is also important to be able to retain your volunteers – which can give your organisation consistency or make your project/event run more efficiently without having to train different people every year.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- Prepare a position description so you know exactly what you expect from your volunteer(s) and so that you can match the correct person to the job. A job description will also mean that the volunteer will be clear about what their role entails.
- You may wish to advertise, interview, and appoint for some volunteer positions exactly as you would a paid position - which can give the position increased credibility and status, and it will ensure that you get the right volunteer(s) for the job(s).
- Make sure you portray volunteering as a positive experience - display photos of volunteers participating and having fun. This is a great way to encourage people to get involved.
- Encourage current volunteers to recruit new volunteers - it is likely that they will know people with the same interests and skills.
- Be specific and honest about what is involved - i.e. the time and commitment required.

Tip

Some people are more able and willing to volunteer for specific tasks and limited time periods, rather than commit to roles on a committee. Think outside the square and break down some of the roles into defined tasks. For example, a journalism student may volunteer to help you with the promotion of a certain event but may not be involved in the ongoing organisation of it.

Recruitment Methods

- local volunteer centre (if you have one in your area)
- directly approach people in the community (shoulder tapping)
- advertising in local newspapers
- advertising in local newsletters (e.g. school and church newsletters)
- advertising on community noticeboards (e.g. supermarkets and council offices)
- word of mouth
- advertise via your email database or social network database if you use these facilities

RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

- Reward and recognise achievements and hard work done by your volunteers. This not only helps to create a positive working environment and retain volunteers but may also help to recruit new volunteers if others can see how well you appreciate your current ones. For instance, you could organise a dinner, get tickets for an event, issue a thank you certificate, or give a small gift etc.
- Ask for feedback regularly and act on it.
- Provide team building/social activities at least twice a year.
- Invest in training and development for your volunteers - empowering can be a great way to retain your volunteers.
- Reimburse (partially or fully depending on your policy regarding this) any appropriate costs they may have incurred whilst volunteering (e.g. travel).

TrustPower Community Awards

Held annually in each region of the country, the TrustPower Community Awards acknowledge the hard work, passion, and commitment by community groups with awards in various categories. Awards are given to groups rather than individuals and this could be a great way to acknowledge and reward your team – nominate your organisation and see what happens! Go to www.communityconnect.co.nz for more information or to download a nomination form.

VOLUNTEER - PAID WORKER RELATIONSHIPS

Your group may grow and evolve over time and this may involve an altered group composition made up of a combination of both volunteers and paid staff.

It is important to have clearly defined roles for both volunteers and paid staff.

If any volunteers undertake work usually done by paid staff, they should normally need monetary payment for this.

See sheets 14, 14a, 14b, & 14c for more information on employing staff within a Not-for-Profit organisation.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

It is a good idea to have a policy document for your volunteers with information on things such as:

- organisation goals and philosophy
- volunteer job description
- reimbursement policy (what for, how much)
- distinction between paid and unpaid work (if applicable)
- training
- health and safety
- rights and responsibilities
- grievance disciplinary policy
- pre-employment check and police check
- support and supervision
- confidentiality and privacy

Tip

It may be appropriate to carry out a police check on any volunteers you recruit - contact NZ Police for more information at www.police.govt.nz.

Remember the best thing volunteers can give is their time, but it is valuable. Consider the most efficient way to utilise people's time, e.g. meetings undertaken in reasonable timeframes with clear goals and outcomes.

Information prepared by



LINKS / WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.exult.co.nz

www.volunteernet.org.nz

*For more information or help you can also contact your local Community Development Planner at Venture Southland:
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