

# Engaging Young Volunteers Recruitment

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We often hear from Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) on the challenges to attract young volunteers. Sometimes we have found VIOs are unaware there are young people willing to volunteer. This Tip Sheet gives examples on best practice in the volunteering sector for ideas about how you can engage youth involvement in your organisation.

## Why should we engage young volunteers?

- Our aging population means that we're steadily losing volunteers who are no longer able to give their time to various causes. All volunteers must start out somewhere; young volunteers may not have years of experience, but they are the future.
- Young people are like sponges, soaking up knowledge, skills and experiences that will benefit them throughout their lives, which in turn will go on to benefit their community.
- A younger generation can bring new ideas, experiences, energy, and enthusiasm.

## Organisational culture

Make sure your organisation is ready and willing to accept young people into your work. There can sometimes be a perception that young people don't volunteer, but research shows that young people in Tasmania are volunteering at similar rates to other age demographics. It is important that youth involvement is recognised as a way of gaining new ideas, experiences and enthusiasm.

## Creating the volunteer role

Young people are likely to have a number of commitments: attending school, after school activities, part time work and family duties. There are some strategies you can use to make your volunteer role fit around these responsibilities:

- Be flexible on the days and hours required. This may give a young person more opportunity to fit volunteering into their commitments.
- Make sure the volunteering can happen outside of school hours.
- Consider opportunities for 'one off' volunteer events - in school holidays and semester breaks.
- Consider opportunities for volunteering that can happen online (virtual volunteering) or at home.
- Consider any legal issues – such as parent or guardian consent. See our Young People and Legal Requirements Fact Sheet for more information.
- Make sure the position description is easy to understand for a young reader, as they may be unfamiliar with some terminology.
- Don't forget to check that your insurance policy covers younger volunteers.

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## Recruitment

If you are looking to engage more young volunteers, you will need to think about how you promote your volunteer program.

- Make it easy for young people to join in – keep it simple and respond in a timely manner. Grab onto their interest!
- Make sure your website is clear and up to date with information about your cause and how people can volunteer.
- Highlight any skills that they will gain – particularly if they can see it might help them when applying for a job.
- Use online volunteer recruitment websites like Volunteer Connect.
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to grow interest in your organisation. Respond promptly to questions and comments.
- Actively encourage young people in your organisation to refer you to their friends.
- Be strategic with your advertising! Identify the benefits associated with your volunteering opportunity — it may be a reference, something to add to their CV, training, meeting new people or learning new skills.
- Contact local schools, and education and training institutes — they often look for volunteering opportunities for students.

## Transport

Young people may have additional challenges in getting to their volunteer role. You may want to consider:

- Can they travel to you using public transport?
- Do you have a policy for reimbursing any out of pocket expenses?
- Can you offer virtual volunteering or opportunities to work from home?

