



# employee VOLUNTEERING GUIDE

**A resource  
for employers,  
volunteers and  
not-for-profit  
organisations**



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# FOREWORD

**Volunteering has always been part of society, in Australia and internationally. Traditionally people have become involved in social issues through personal contact in their own communities or through organisations to which they belong.**

However, as traditional links in society change and social cohesion breaks down, many people look to their workplace for ways to become involved in the community, rather than their geographic community or membership of other organisations. In the past two decades there has been a marked growth in volunteering opportunities through the workplace, known as **Employee Volunteering**, or **Employee Community Involvement**.

In response to this upsurge of interest, a number of guides and websites have been developed (please see Part 7 for a list of some of these). This Guide does not aim to cover the same material that has been produced so well elsewhere. Rather, it aims to be a practical resource to both companies and not-for-profit organisations that are interested in employee volunteering activities.

The Guide is for all parties to employee volunteering – the employees of an organisation, the employer and the not-for-profit organisation who has activities that are suitable for the volunteers. Through the layout of the Guide, aspects that are relevant to one group rather than the other are marked separately. You are encouraged to make use of the sections that apply specifically to the features you are most interested in.

Each section has a **Checklist** to help you make sure that you have considered all possibilities.

Part 7 gives references to other resources that you may want to follow up for case studies and ideas in implementing employee volunteering programs that work well for your organisation, whether it is an employer or a not-for-profit .

## Working Group

This Guide was produced by a Working Group which emerged from the International Year of Volunteers Forum on Employee Volunteering held at the State Chamber of Commerce in September 2001.

**Members of the Working Group include staff from:**

- NSW Premier's Department
- Volunteering NSW
- The Benevolent Society
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Baptist Community Services
- State Chamber of Commerce
- Volunteer Network, Burwood Council

# 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **There are many reasons why employees, employers and not-for-profit organisations wish to become involved in employee volunteering programs and activities.**

For employers (government and business), supporting employee volunteering can be part of a broader corporate social responsibility program or to improve their image as a good corporate citizen. Employee volunteering can provide opportunities for team building and professional training and development. By responding to employee interests, employers can build loyalty and pride in the company.

Employees often want to volunteer to do something positive for the community, gain new knowledge and skills or increase their personal satisfaction.

Not-for-profit organisations can benefit from employee volunteering by having a new source of volunteers with specific skills and expertise, employer support in their volunteering activities, and access to a new form of support for the organisation.

The key to successful employee volunteering is planning and negotiation between all parties: the employee volunteers, the employer and the Not-for-profit organisation.

There are a number of steps you will need to take before you begin an employee volunteer program or activity. This includes identifying what you wish to achieve from it and how you will measure its success, finding a suitable partner organisation to work with, and establishing guidelines for working together.

Volunteer Resource Centres and brokers are a good way to establish and maintain an employee volunteering program. These intermediary organisations can facilitate the matching of what the employer and employees want to achieve with a range of options in the Not-for-profit sector.

It is important to understand the budgetary and human resource implications of any employee volunteer program or activity and have a thorough understanding of each party's needs, expectations and responsibilities towards each other.

Once you are ready to implement your employee volunteer program or activity, recruitment and screening procedures will need to be followed and legal and ethical requirements will need to be understood.

It is a legal requirement that all people working with children complete a Prohibited Persons Declaration and that volunteers have safe and reasonable working conditions. Orientation and training can be important to successful volunteering and occupational health and safety.

Employee volunteering programs or activities can be excellent promotional tools for all involved especially where the activity is employer-led. It is a good idea to negotiate with each party before embarking on external promotion of the program. Effective promotion of the volunteering program within your organisation allows other employees and volunteers to become involved or support the initiative. Publicising successful case studies can be a great boost to staff morale and lead to greater involvement in the future.

The evaluation process, once the activity or program has ended, is a good opportunity to look at the lessons learned and how to improve on future activities or programs. It is important to factor evaluation into the initial planning stage, so that results can be measured more effectively.

Many of the results will be intangible, such as increased awareness, relationships and satisfaction. These can be extremely valuable.

# 2

## WHAT IS EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING?

Employee volunteering is...

Any action by an employer to encourage and support the volunteer involvement of their employees in the community

There are a number of ways that companies become involved with the community/not-for-profit sector. These include:

- Cash donations
- In-kind donations
- Sponsorship
- Employee skill sharing
- Employee volunteering
- Cause related marketing
- Access to company resources and contacts

Employee volunteering can be part of a wider partnership between a company and one not-for-profit organisation, or it can be an activity with a wide range of such organisations. To ensure that there is a good result on both sides, all parties need to be clear on what they are looking for from an employee volunteering program.

This means planning, setting objectives, deciding what you want from the program and the best way to achieve it.

Just as an employer needs to consider what kinds of programs will suit their objectives, the not-for-profit organisation needs to assess where they need additional resources. A key to success is where these both match.

Employee volunteering programs can be **employee-driven** or **employer-led**. These are quite different.

### Employee-driven programs

Where programs are employee-driven, the employer may choose to give support in a number of ways:

- Matched giving and financial support. This can include matching the hours that an employee spends in their own time, with a cash contribution
- Giving contributions in kind to not-for-profit organisations that employees support through volunteering
- Volunteer award schemes, where the company holds an annual celebration of employee volunteering efforts and achievements
- Volunteer coordinators: where individuals are able to use some company time and resources to coordinate community involvement activities, generate publicity, recruit volunteers.
- Generally speaking, most employee-driven volunteer work will take place in the employee's own time.

# 2

## WHAT IS EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING? CONTINUED

### Employer-led programs

Where programs are employer-led, there are some differences:

- Employees may be provided with paid leave to undertake volunteering
- Employers may allocate 'time banks' – an agreed allocation of work time that can be used for volunteering. Staff can then negotiate who will use this paid time for their volunteering interests.
- There may be one-off events organised by the company, around specific issues or as part of partnerships with not-for-profit organisations
- There may be a link to training and development opportunities for the employee, through the volunteering activity.
- The employer is likely to be seeking some specific outcomes as a result of their investment in an employee volunteering program

Examples of these programs are likely to be:

- Secondments – short placements in not-for-profit organisations for a set period of time
- Team development assignments
- One-off team events, such as tree planting, a focused day of activity, building / renovation activities
- Mentoring

See Part 7 for more information on types of Employee Volunteering.

### Relationship between the not-for-profit organisation and the employer

Where the employee volunteering program is employer-led, it is more likely that there will be a relationship developed between the not for profit and the employer. The nature of this relationship will depend on:

- the purpose of the employee volunteering program
- whether it is part of a broader partnership
- whether the activity is one-off or an ongoing activity

At a minimum, there needs to be clarity and agreement about what each party seeks from the engagement through employee volunteering, and how each party's requirements can be met.

This Guide outlines the issues that need to be considered between the employer, the employee volunteers and the not-for-profit organisation.

# 3

## GETTING STARTED

**The success of any employee volunteering program will largely be determined by how well you have planned it.**

There are a number of things you should consider before you start. Ask yourself:

- How can each of you (employee volunteers, employers, and not-for-profit organisations) benefit from employee volunteering?
- How do you find a suitable partner organisation?
- Are there sufficient resources, both human and material, to support the volunteering activity?
- What are your rights and responsibilities towards your partner organisation and the employee volunteers?

### 3.1

#### Identifying your needs and goals

**Employers** seek to get involved in supporting employee volunteering for a number of reasons:

- As part of a broader corporate social responsibility program
- To improve their public image, as a good 'corporate citizen'
- To acknowledge and foster employee interests in community involvement
- To give opportunities for team building and training and development that also make a contribution to the communities where they operate
- By responding to employee interests, to build loyalty and pride in the company
- To reinforce internal values.

**Employees** seek to get involved because:

- They want to do something for the community and 'make a difference'
- It can be an opportunity learn and develop skills
- It gives an opportunity to gain new knowledge about the community
- It can be a new source of personal satisfaction.

For **not-for-profit organisations** it can bring:

- A new source of volunteers who:
  - know how to work under supervision
  - have skills and expertise
  - are supported by their employer in their volunteering activities
- A lower-cost solution to addressing community needs
- A fresh perspective on organisational operations and community involvement
- Access to a new group of people who can potentially become supporters of the organisation.

Getting the right match between what each party is seeking from the employee volunteering program is the key to success.

### The benefits

- Good for the community
- Good for employees who volunteer
- Good for the employer

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### CHECKLIST → GETTING STARTED

#### EMPLOYERS / EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

- Have you defined your goals for the employee volunteering program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What type of work do you / your employees want to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who will be responsible for coordinating the employee volunteer program?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is there an appropriate budget for all expenses associated with volunteer involvement?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Has the employer developed an employee volunteering policy (this is a statement that sets out the commitment to employee volunteering and the conditions of this, such as time available, reimbursement of expenses etc)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How will you measure the success of the program? (See Part 6 for more on Evaluation)  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you defined your goals for the volunteering activity?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What type of work do you want employee volunteers to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who will be responsible for organising the overall project?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have appropriate work areas, materials and equipment been organised?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have you determined the time, date and scope of your projects?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have you defined who will be working with volunteers and involved them in the planning at all stages?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are all your organisation's stakeholders in agreement about having volunteers from private sector companies as part of their operations?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is there an appropriate budget for all expenses associated with volunteer involvement?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do your current policies and procedures adequately cover employee volunteers? If not, what do you need to change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How will you measure the success of the program? (See Part 6 for more on Evaluation)  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### 3.2

#### Forming partnerships

Brokers and volunteer resource centres can assist employers and not-for-profit organisations form useful partnerships. They can assist with ensuring that all parties have realistic expectations, set realistic time frames and make sure that it is a win-win situation for all parties.

#### CHECKLIST → FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

##### EMPLOYERS / EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

- Have you considered using a broker or contacted your local volunteer resource centre for more information?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have you asked your employees what types of organisation / types of work they would like to support?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have you looked at the not-for-profit organisations you have current or previous relationships with, to assess opportunities for volunteering?  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you considered using a broker or contacted your local volunteer resource centre for more information?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have you researched the companies that have an interest in your locality or the cause you work for?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### 3.3

#### Allocating resources

Adequate resources are vital to a successful employee volunteer activity.

Many employers and volunteers can encounter problems if they under- or over-estimate the resources that are required to participate in employee volunteering programs. Some activities may require resources such as uniforms, fundraising equipment, or travel and accommodation.

Most not-for-profit organisations can determine what resources are required for their own activities but experience difficulties when utilising volunteers from a different organisation with unique expectations.

#### CHECKLIST → RESOURCE ALLOCATION

##### EMPLOYERS / EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

- Have you identified the objectives and outcomes of the employee volunteering program?
- Have you negotiated with the not-for-profit organisation on who will cover any costs that may result from their participation in this project?
- Have you allocated time for forward planning of activities?

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you organised enough people who can train and coordinate employee volunteers? Are these people appropriate for this type of volunteering?
- Have you considered what implications this activity has for your budget?
- Have you negotiated with the employer / employee volunteers on who will cover any costs that may result from their participation in this project?
- Have you assessed the costs and benefits to your organisation in terms of physical and human resources?

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### 3.4

#### **Working together**

Successful employee volunteering is based on mutual understanding of each group's expectations, needs, and responsibilities towards each other.

**Not-for-profit organisations** need volunteer assistance for specialist projects or daily running of their services and programs. A not-for-profit's work in the community depends on solid and reliable service to their clients.

**Employee volunteers** need to show their commitment to the volunteer activity and to positively represent the workplace they have come from.

**Employers** need their community engagement to be worthwhile and align with organisational mission or vision.

The volunteer agrees to perform a specific activity and the not-for-profit organisation agrees to provide the volunteer with a worthwhile and rewarding experience. Each has rights and responsibilities, and it is important to observe these in order to work together in a way that benefits everyone.

It is important to negotiate practical issues, such as your policy on reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, at the outset.

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### CHECKLIST → RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

##### Do you agree to:

- Undertake any preliminary screening required before becoming involved in the volunteer activity?
- Undertake training / orientation provided for you?
- Turn up at the agreed activity at the agreed time?
- Adhere to your job description and the organisation's code of practice?
- Exercise 'duty of care' and work to an appropriate code of conduct respecting confidentiality and privacy issues?
- Communicate any doubts and concerns that arise throughout the volunteer activity?
- Be professional and represent your employer in an appropriate manner?
- Report back to your employer on your employee volunteer experience?

#### EMPLOYERS

##### Do you agree to:

- Make a commitment to the volunteer activity?
- Have a clearly articulated volunteering policy for your employees?
- Identify the main contact person and ensure their availability to liaise with the not-for-profit organisation in the lead up to the volunteer activity?
- If the activity is part of work time – follow through with releasing the agreed staff at the agreed time?
- Discuss openly any public relations or marketing activity you wish to undertake in relation to the employee volunteer activity?
- Follow up on feedback from staff involved in the activity?

# 3

## GETTING STARTED CONTINUED

### CHECKLIST → RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

##### Do you agree to:

- Identify the main contact person and pass on their contact details to the employer and employee volunteers?

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- Where relevant, treat employee volunteers as co-workers?  
This includes providing and explaining job descriptions and organisational policies including code of conduct, grievance resolution, and equal employment opportunity, occupational health and safety, and anti-discrimination legislation.

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- Plan the activity and ensure the appropriate resources, workspace and tools have been allocated?

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- Provide appropriate orientation and training for the activity?

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- Provide a register of who volunteered in the activity?

---
- Provide reimbursement of agreed expenses?

---
- Provide an outline of the insurance cover?

---
- Safeguard employee volunteers' health, safety and wellbeing during the activity?

---
- Give adequate supervision to employee volunteers and a meaningful activity for the duration of time involved?

---
- Acknowledge the efforts and contributions of employee volunteers?

---
- Give feedback to the employer on the outcomes of the employee volunteer experience?

---
- Demonstrate that the activity contributes to your organisation's purpose, and benefits the community?

---

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION

**Now that you are ready to begin your employee volunteering activity, there are a number of practical steps you need to take.**

For employee volunteering to be a successful and rewarding experience for all parties, you will need to consider:

- Matching the right person with the right job
- Working with children
- Working conditions, occupational health and safety and training for the employee volunteer
- Legal issues such as insurance and confidentiality

### 4.1

### Matching the right person with the right job

Some volunteering tasks will require matching. This occurs when a volunteer wishes to work with a not-for-profit organisation without having a specific project to do. The not-for-profit organisation needs to take time to assess how the volunteer's skills, interests and availability can best be utilised.

Sometimes employee volunteering programs can be used for training and development purposes. This gives the not-for-profit organisation and the employee an opportunity to negotiate a role that enables the employee to gain new skills while making a useful contribution to the not-for-profit organisation. Expectations need to be agreed and finalised before the project commences.

### CHECKLIST → MATCHING VOLUNTEERS AND ACTIVITIES

#### EMPLOYERS / EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

- Does the volunteering activity require matching of specific volunteers with specific tasks?
- Does the job provide the challenges or satisfaction the employee volunteers may be looking for?
- Have the employee volunteers been asked what type of work they would be most interested in? Don't assume an IT person would want to use their professional skills – they may be looking for a break or career change.

#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Does the volunteering activity require matching of specific volunteers with specific tasks?
- Does your application form gain all the details needed about the prospective employee volunteer?
- Have you ensured that all employee volunteers will be appropriately inducted and trained in appropriate procedures, including relevant reporting and emergency procedures as well as vigilance against any form of abuse?
- What form of supervision / evaluation will take place?
- Do the volunteers have an understanding of your organisational mission?
- Are the volunteers supportive of the goals and client base?

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.2

#### Child-related volunteering

Volunteers and their organisations provide many of the activities and services that children need and enjoy. Child-related volunteering can be a positive, rewarding and at times challenging experience, with the potential to greatly enrich the lives of all involved.

Many organisations who involve volunteers have expressed that kids' safety and welfare is a priority. Despite the good intentions of most people, there will be some who use their position to harm children. This can occur in any organisation working with kids.

Volunteer activities that present greater opportunities for harm include:

- Volunteers having direct, unsupervised contact or working under limited supervision with children
- Volunteers working under limited supervision
- Activities involving more vulnerable children
- Activities where other adults place a high level of trust on the volunteer or organisation supervising the volunteer
- Activities requiring physical contact with the child.

**To minimise the risks to children of abuse and neglect, there are a number of strategies for protecting children and young people that not-for-profit organisations may wish to consider.**

Strategies include:

- Developing clear job descriptions
- Completing interviews and reference checks
- Maintaining support and supervision for the volunteer
- Accessing initial and ongoing child protection training
- Following up with participants about their experience of the program.
- Implementing professional behaviour standards through codes of conduct or similar guidelines, and
- Having effective and timely employee complaint management and reporting systems for allegations of child abuse.

Volunteers are able to obtain a copy of their criminal record for a fee from the Freedom of Information Unit of the NSW Police. The Freedom of Information Unit can be contacted on **02 9339 5199**. Their postal address is **GPO Box 45, Sydney 2001**.

Organisations may request that volunteers provide this record as part of their application.

#### The Working with Children Check

In July 2000, legislation was introduced in New South Wales that affects all people working with children and young people; the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, and the *Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998*.

These laws make up the **Working with Children Check**. Their goal is to create workplaces where children are safe and protected by looking at a person's suitability to work with children.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

The Working with Children Check applies to people in 'child-related employment'. This means employment (both paid and unpaid) that primarily involves direct, unsupervised contact with children.

The Working With Children Check has two main components:

- All people working or seeking work in paid or unpaid child-related employment must make a declaration that they have not been convicted of a serious sex offence, or a registrable offence under the Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000. The Prohibited Employment Declaration form is provided in the Working with Children Check Guidelines for this purpose.
- Employment screening for persons in paid child-related employment, foster carers, ministers of religion and members of religious organisations.

The Working with Children Check Guidelines are available on the Commission for Children and Young People's website [www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check), or by contacting the Commission on **02 9286 7276**. The Guidelines contain all the information needed to complete the Working With Children Check for paid and unpaid staff.

### Voluntary Screening Program

The Commission for Children and Young People is developing a Voluntary Screening Program to help organisations make children's safety a priority when selecting and supervising staff. The program will look at ways to reduce the risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of children. It will involve the development of resources that organisations can use to make volunteer activities safer for children.

As part of the program, random background checks will be undertaken on up to 20,000 new volunteers and new student placements in high risk activities during 2003 and 2004.

To find out more about the Voluntary Screening Program you can contact the Commission on **02 9286 7276** or by email at [check@kids.nsw.gov.au](mailto:check@kids.nsw.gov.au). You can also log onto the Commission's website at [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au) to receive updates by email. Just click on 'join our email lists' on the home page and mark the 'kids-check-news' box. You can unsubscribe from this list at any time.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### CHECKLIST → WORKING WITH CHILDREN

#### EMPLOYERS

- Have you explained the requirement to complete a Prohibited Persons Declaration to employees who may require them (if working with children)?

#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you established whether the employee volunteers will be undertaking child-related volunteer activities?
- Have you considered the position design and description to ensure that positions are designed to minimise risk?
- Have you established a standard recruitment process?
- Will you conduct interviews of the volunteers to assess their suitability for child-related employment?
- Will you complete reference checks for the employee volunteer?
- Will you request that volunteers provide a copy of their criminal record check from the NSW Police?
- Have you established a process for managing situations where a person is found to have a relevant criminal record?
- Have all volunteers in child-related positions completed a Prohibited Employment Declaration?
- Is there ongoing support and training available for volunteers in child-related employment?
- Does your organisation have a code of conduct and complaint handling processes that apply to employee volunteers?

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.3

#### Working conditions

The work available and the working conditions of the employee volunteer within the not-for-profit organisation will ultimately determine how positively they view the experience.

Working conditions include the duration, nature and safety of work undertaken, as well as adequate supervision and training and learning opportunities.

#### CHECKLIST → WORKING CONDITIONS

##### EMPLOYERS

- Have you considered the travelling implications for the employee volunteer?
- Is the venue easily accessible?
- Are there any travel costs involved? If so, what is your policy on reimbursement?

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Are the hours for the voluntary activity suitable for a worker?
- Can the activity be accommodated around work commitments, such as before or after work or during lunch?
- If volunteering during work hours has been agreed to by the employer, have you built into the venture the unpredictability of workplace demands, such as individuals being called away at the last minute?
- Have job descriptions been developed for the employee volunteers? It is vital that the employee volunteer clearly understands their role and also knows the boundaries to their activities.
- Have you considered what information needs to be provided to the employee volunteer to clearly explain their working conditions? For example, emergency procedures, dispute resolutions, location of toilets, breaks and start and finish times. Any other relevant policies should also be made available to employee volunteers.
- Have each of the roles been allocated relevant and functioning equipment? What are the training and occupational health and safety implications of this equipment?
- What costs will individuals incur through travelling? If so, what is your policy on reimbursement?

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.4

#### Occupational Health and Safety

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) is the responsibility of the organisation utilising the employee volunteers. The NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of people at work, and visitors to workplaces, by laying down general requirements which must be met at every place of work in NSW.

A risk analysis should be carried out prior for the employee volunteering activity to identify the preventative steps that will need to be taken.

There are a number of publications available through WorkCover NSW, including Risk Management at Work and The Small Business Starter Kit, which will provide you with valuable information on occupational health and safety.

Please contact **WorkCover NSW** on **02 4321 5000** or visit **[www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)**

#### CHECKLIST → OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you identified occupational health and safety issues and taken steps to eliminate or minimise them?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Will training – specific to the tasks involved – be provided? An example may be manual handling for managing a wheelchair.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do the volunteers require protective clothing and equipment? If so, who will be responsible for its provision and management?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Will supervision be provided?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is there a mechanism for the reporting of accidents and incidents?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.5

#### Training

In any volunteer activity training is necessary to inform, prepare and protect volunteers and clients. Training for an employee volunteering activity may also be viewed as an opportunity to develop relationships whilst promoting services. It is vital to provide training as many of these volunteers may not have previously participated in voluntary work and may be about to engage in work which they have no experience with.

The training of employee volunteers may be delivered in a variety of ways, including informal training on the day of the event, provision of written materials, training of team leaders who then have the responsibility of relaying the information to the other members of their group and regular volunteer training.

To help you determine your training plans, consider the magnitude and complexity of the volunteer task, the agreed time commitment with the employer/s, and management of the group.

#### CHECKLIST → TRAINING

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you defined who has the responsibility for training?

---
- How will training be provided?

---
- Do you have a realistic notion of how much time the employee volunteers can give to training?

---
- Will you hold the training before the activity? Where will it be held?

---
- What is the content of the training package?

---
- Have you developed guidelines for the volunteer role?

---
- Can your training be flexible?

---
- Have you developed an orientation process? Does the orientation package provide information including the site of the activity, the facilities, staff, clients and any machinery or equipment that will be used?

---
- Have you considered Occupational Health and Safety? (See previous page for more information)

---

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.6

#### Insurance

To ensure the safety and the financial viability of any activity, there will need to be proper insurance coverage before the activity can commence.

#### CHECKLIST → INSURANCE

##### EMPLOYERS

- Does your insurance cover employee volunteers? This is especially important where the volunteering activity is carried out during paid work time.
- Have you checked whether or not the not-for-profit organisation has appropriate insurance cover if required?

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Have you checked the personal accident coverage in your policy? When taking out coverage check to see when the employee volunteers are covered. Some policies cover door to door; others cover, for instance, from the main road or when your car hits the curb.
- Have you checked the public liability insurance stipulations? There are so many changes happening in this area. Keep in contact with your insurance agent to make sure you are in compliance with their guidelines.
- If you need additional insurance cover you will need to consider and negotiate with the employer organisation about who will cover any additional costs.

# 4

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

### 4.7

#### Confidentiality

During the course of an activity an employee volunteer may receive confidential information concerning a client or not-for-profit organisation. Under privacy laws, it is a legal and ethical requirement that this information remain confidential.

Employee volunteers should not disclose private or personal information about the not-for-profit organisation or its clients or activities.

More information about privacy rights and responsibilities can be obtained from [www.privacy.gov.au](http://www.privacy.gov.au)

#### CHECKLIST → CONFIDENTIALITY

##### EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

- Do you understand both the legal requirements and the organisation's requirements regarding confidentiality?

##### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Has a contract been drafted between the employer organisation and the not-for-profit organisation regarding confidentiality issues? A 'memorandum of understanding' can be coupled with a confidentiality agreement for the project.
- What are the boundaries and parameters for the confidentiality agreement? These issues may form part of your training or orientation program.
- Have you used a common language that all people involved in the activity understand and feel comfortable with?
- Have you made allowances for differing levels of literacy for people involved in the activity? How will you ensure that all groups understand and comply with the confidentiality agreement when signed?

# 5

## PROMOTION

**Where employers are actively running an employee volunteering program, they will want employees to know about the program and have the opportunity to take part if they choose.**

Make use of internal communications mechanisms within your organisation, such as:

- Team briefings
- Notice boards
- Posters / flyers
- Websites
- Staff newsletters
- Induction programs

Publicising successful projects through these channels is a great way of demonstrating the tangible benefits of employee volunteering and encouraging more people to get involved.

On the whole, employers do not seek external promotion of their employee volunteering programs, especially if employees are doing this work in their own time. It is recognised as being not appropriate. However, where the employer is investing in the program (through release time for volunteering, use of company resources, matched giving), they may wish to make this information available to others.

### CHECKLIST → PROMOTION

#### EMPLOYERS

- Has the employee volunteering program been adequately promoted internally and reported externally as needed?

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- Do your own employees know about this activity? Are they able to support the initiative if they want to?

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- Is your organisation prepared for a number of employees being away from their workplace for given periods? Do other departments know this is happening and have contingency plans been developed?

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- Have you negotiated with your not-for-profit partner whether each party wants any publicity?

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#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

- Are other stakeholders prepared for and aware of your efforts to build an employee volunteer program? Think about your Board, funding body, other corporate partners, suppliers and consultants.

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- Have you discussed and resolved all issues associated with such a program?

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- Are you able to acknowledge through your networks the contribution made by specific companies and their investment in employee volunteering?

---

# 5

## PROMOTION CONTINUED

### 5.1

#### **Recognition of volunteers**

Employee volunteers deserve the same recognition for their efforts as individual volunteers. This contributes to ongoing motivation of volunteers and helps maintain the momentum of programs.

This recognition can come from the not-for-profit organisation as well as the employer. Employers can align this to their existing reward and recognition programs within the organisation.

Ways of recognising volunteer efforts include:

- Certificates of appreciation / thank you letters
- An internal awards scheme
- Nomination for external volunteer awards
- An annual recognition event / dinner / reception

Employees whose volunteering efforts are organised through their workplace but undertaken in their own time may prefer to have their work recognised by the not-for-profit organisation.

This can be negotiated as part of the initial planning between the parties at the start of the program. It is important that the not-for-profit organisation also acknowledges the efforts of their existing volunteers.

# 6

## EVALUATION

**In your initial planning (see Part 3 – Getting Started) you will have identified your goals and objectives in developing an employee volunteering program.**

As part of your planning, you will have identified ways of evaluating the success of the program or volunteer activity once it has been completed. It is important to know what it is you want to measure before you start, so that you can collect data along the way if you need to (for example, how many employees participated, for how long; number of people in the community touched; number of 'trees planted').

Evaluation should identify how your objectives have been met, weighing the actions against results and identifying additional benefits. It is a powerful tool for accountability purposes and for developing and improving future activities. Feedback should be supplied to all of the participants in the employee volunteering activity.

The quality of the process is an important part of evaluation, as well as impact of the program. Much of this information can be collected anecdotally via debriefings or interviews, or may be collected formally from surveys. If one partner requires a complex evaluation of the activity, then that partner should arrange it. However, the cooperation of both parties is needed and should be negotiated at the start.

### CHECKLIST → EVALUATION

**Some measures you may wish to consider are:**

- Effective management of the activity / event
- How well the preparation worked, and the communication between the employer and the not-for-profit organisation
- The number of people that participated in the activity and the number of people that benefited from it
- If a product was produced or a service provided
- The financial or resource cost of the activity compared to the benefits
- The timeframe of the activity
- Effective communication and publicity of activities
- Was value added by participation in the activity?

**Some of the outcomes will be less tangible, and more difficult to measure, but important to identify for partners, such as:**

- The value of relationships forged by the partners
- The potential for future cooperative events
- Community and individual goodwill generated by the activity
- Broadened perceptions and experience of the participants.
- Satisfaction levels for the individuals and organisations that have participated

# 7

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

### Websites

#### **[www.volunteeringaustralia.org](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org)**

The website of Volunteering Australia, the national body for volunteering in Australia with lots of information and resources on volunteering.

#### **[www.volunteering.com.au](http://www.volunteering.com.au)**

The website for Volunteering NSW. Volunteering NSW offers a number of programs and services with a view to fulfilling its goal of enriching the life of the community through volunteering.

#### **[www.employeevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.employeevolunteering.org.uk)**

This website is part of the National Centre for Volunteering. The site showcases a number of employee volunteering case studies.

#### **[www.imagine.ca](http://www.imagine.ca)**

Run by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Imagine is Canada's national program to promote public and corporate giving, volunteering and support to the community. There is an extensive bibliography on employee volunteering on this website.

#### **[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)**

The Points of Light Foundation is a US 'non profit, non partisan organisation dedicated to engaging more people, more effectively in volunteer community service, to help solve serious social problems'. The Foundation promotes corporate volunteerism by helping businesses form vital community partnerships via employee volunteering programs.

#### **[www.cecile.net](http://www.cecile.net)**

CECILE – Coordinating Employee Community Involvement Links in Europe – is a growing network of partnership organisations and companies dedicated to expanding employee community involvement in Europe and internationally. It has members throughout Europe, in Asia, South America and the Middle East.

#### **[www.positiveoutcomes.com.au](http://www.positiveoutcomes.com.au)**

Positive Outcomes is the Australian representative of this network

#### **[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)**

Has some excellent fact sheets on running Volunteer programs, writing Role Descriptions, volunteer training etc.

### General resources

The following books and articles provide information on building or expanding a successful employee volunteerism program.

#### ***Corporate Volunteering: a handbook for corporations and business***

Carl Holroyd and Anthony Silver

Volunteer South West (Western Australia) in conjunction with Edith Cowan University  
Published 2001

#### ***Building Value: The Corporate Volunteer Program as a Strategic Resource for Business***

Published 2001, Points of Light Foundation, Washington

This is the Points of Light Foundation's newest, most-up-to-date resource book for managers of corporate volunteer programs – full of strategies and examples from corporations with guidance on how to take a successful volunteer program to the level of a strategic business resource. Visit the Points of Light Foundation website ([www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)) for more information.

***Employee Volunteering – The Guide***

Published 2001, The Volunteer Centre, UK

Produced in association with the International Year of the Volunteer 2001 in the UK, this summary booklet and forthcoming book provides practical information and guidance on employee volunteering. For more information visit the UK National Centre for Volunteering website [www.employeevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.employeevolunteering.org.uk)

***The Corporate Volunteer Program as a Strategic Resource – The Link Grows Stronger***

Points of Light Foundation, Washington

Based on extensive research, this publication focuses on companies strategically integrating effective employee volunteer programs into their core business functions. Visit the Points of Light Foundation website ([www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)) for more information.

***Involving European Employees: How Europe's Companies Connect Corporate Citizenship with Good Human Resource Management***

Published 1998, The Corporate Citizenship Company, UK

This study provides an introduction to employee community involvement and describes employee volunteerism activities in 18 countries, giving examples from leading companies. Visit the Corporate Citizenship Company website ([www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk](http://www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk)) for more information.

***CECILE Network: A Complete Guide to Employee Community Involvement***

Published 1999, The Corporate Citizenship Company, UK

This study from the Coordinating Employee Community Involvement Links Europe (CECILE) association of companies examines how companies support employee community involvement and the benefits that companies, employees and the community gain. Includes case studies. For more information visit the Corporate Citizenship Company website ([www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk](http://www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk)).

**How-to Guides**

These books help you guide your company through the process of setting up an employee volunteering program.

***TOOL KIT – Establishing a Corporate Volunteer Program***

Authors: Turnbull, Peri Lynn; Published 1997, The Conference Board of Canada, Ottawa

A step-by-step description of the process for establishing a corporate volunteer program. The report describes the potential elements of such programs and suggestions regarding the communication, recognition and evaluation aspects of employee volunteer programs. Visit the Conference Board of Canada website ([www.conferenceboard.ca/ccbc](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/ccbc)) for more information.

***Developing a Corporate Volunteer Program: Guidelines to Success***

Points of Light Foundation, Washington

This publication examines how volunteering and community service can meet corporate goals and fit successfully into day-to-day operations. Visit the Points of Light Foundation website ([www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)) for more information.

***Corporate Volunteerism***

Published 1999, The Centre for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College

This book on Corporate Volunteerism provides how-to's, facts and case studies to help community relations practitioners implement or improve employee volunteerism programs. For more information visit the Boston College website – [www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/csom/ccc/index.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/csom/ccc/index.html)