



Ethical volunteering checklist for volunteer involving organisations



PURPOSE

This ethical volunteering checklist ensures volunteering efforts are steered by ethical principles to create a safe, empowering, and meaningful volunteering environment where volunteers are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

The ACT Volunteering Strategy 2024-2034 and first Action Plan 2024-2027 outline a comprehensive roadmap to support and enhance volunteering across the Canberra Region. This checklist is a deliverable of the 2024-2027 ACT Volunteering Strategy Action Plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

VolunteeringACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra Region and recognises any other peoples or families with connection to this Country. We acknowledge and respect their vital ongoing contribution to the community and are committed to reconciliation. We will continue to walk alongside First Nations Peoples and embrace the traditions, stories, and wisdoms of the oldest continuing cultures in the world.

This document was created on Ngunnawal Country.

VolunteeringACT acknowledges volunteers of all ages, abilities, genders, and sexualities, and from all cultures. Their skills, expertise, and time are critical to delivering services and programs, and making Canberra a better place to live. We also acknowledge the contribution of volunteer involving organisations that contribute to the health and happiness of our community.



Supported by



ACT
Government

The co-designed Strategy and Action Plan has been developed in partnership between the ACT Government, VolunteeringACT, and the ACT volunteering ecosystem.

INTRODUCTION



This ethical volunteering checklist is aligned to the four guiding principles of the [2024-2034 ACT Volunteering Strategy](#): **Respect, Volunteer-Centred, Responsive, Collaboration**; and to **Safety** as a priority from the [National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033](#) and the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2024](#).

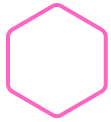
The ACT Ethical Volunteering Checklist serves as a tool for volunteer involving organisations in the Canberra Region.

Many small to medium-sized organisations may lack the resources to fully implement or achieve accreditation against the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement. This checklist can help support and guide organisations in adopting best practices complementary with the National Standards.

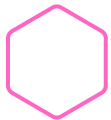
VolunteeringACT encourages organisations to use the checklist as a resource to regularly review the ethical standards of their volunteer programs.

1. RESPECT

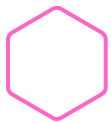
Volunteers are treated with dignity and respect



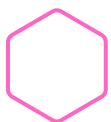
Volunteer recruitment processes are transparent, based on the requirements of the role and free from discrimination or bias.



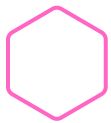
Volunteers are provided with a clear understanding of the difference between their role and the roles of paid staff (if relevant) to ensure boundaries are maintained.



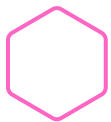
Clear position descriptions with roles and responsibilities for volunteers are developed to avoid burnout and confusion.



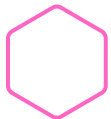
Roles and commitments are aligned with the volunteer's capacity, skills, and interests, making any necessary modifications to account for different ages, abilities and experience.



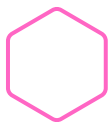
Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies are in place and procedures address acts of discrimination or harassment in a fair, just and timely manner.



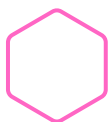
Volunteers should not replace positions that have been previously held by a paid worker, or used to replace paid staff, or undercut paid wages.



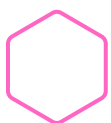
Ongoing support and guidance is provided to volunteers throughout their involvement.



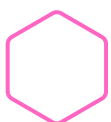
Volunteers are reimbursed or paid in advance for approved/agreed expenses eg. parking, uniforms.



Volunteers are treated in a manner that acknowledges and respects individuals' identity, culture, beliefs and customs.



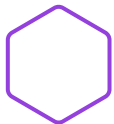
Volunteer environments are inclusive, safe and supported e.g. low sensory or private spaces such as a breastfeeding space, and flexibility for cultural or personal needs such as a prayer space.



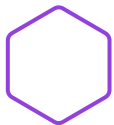
Volunteers' contributions and time are recognised regularly and in their preferred manner such as [101 Ways to Recognise Your Volunteers](#)

2. VOLUNTEER-CENTRED

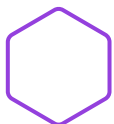
Volunteers are empowered and supported, and are included in decisions that impact them



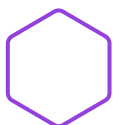
Volunteer roles are designed to provide meaningful work that are important to achieve the organisation's mission and purpose.



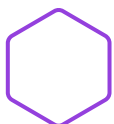
How the volunteer's role and work contribute to the organisation is clearly communicated to the volunteer.



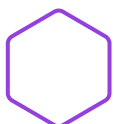
Volunteer involvement is recognised through the organisation's strategic and business planning processes to demonstrate the value of volunteers.



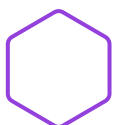
Volunteers are informed about organisational goals, changes, and any updates that affect their work and have an opportunity to inform future planning and improve the effectiveness of the program.



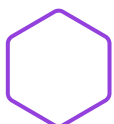
A clear point of contact for support or guidance is provided for volunteers.



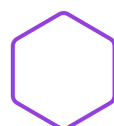
Training, resources, mentoring and skill development opportunities are provided for volunteers to assist them to succeed in their role.



Volunteers have avenues to voice their concerns and needs without fear of retaliation (a clear grievance policy or procedure is in place and is easy to access and understand).



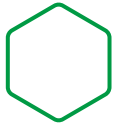
Volunteers have access to opportunities for feedback and ideas on their role and the organisation.



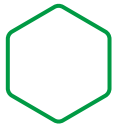
Volunteer recognition (and opt-out options if the volunteer prefers not to be recognised) are in place and enacted to show appreciation of volunteer efforts.

3. RESPONSIVE

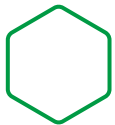
The organisation is responsive and adaptable to the needs of volunteers



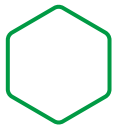
Volunteer programs are adequately resourced, and volunteer managers are supported and trained.



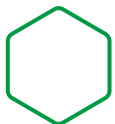
Volunteer needs, preferences, and accessibility requirements including for digital or remote volunteers or volunteers under 18 years old, are identified and responded to including through proactive check ins and flexible engagement options.



Volunteer programs are regularly reviewed at different points of the volunteer cycle and adjusted based on feedback, lessons learned, and evaluation.



Regular communication occurs with volunteers to advise of changing policies/ procedures or respond to unexpected situations.



Exit interviews or surveys are conducted to understand why volunteers leave and to inform future improvements.



Volunteers are provided information on how their feedback has been incorporated into organisational operations.

4. COLLABORATION

The organisation promotes collaboration, valuing diverse skills, knowledge, and contributions by volunteers



Volunteers are included in shared decision-making and co-designing solutions in their work.



Volunteer skills and experience are identified and effectively utilised and valued in their role.



Volunteer roles can be adapted to suit a range of skill levels, from skill development through to advanced and mentoring-level roles.



Collaboration opportunities are promoted to all volunteers and are inclusive and accessible enabling participation from volunteers with diverse communication styles, confidence levels and lived experiences.



Volunteers are supported to participate meaningfully in collaboration, including being provided with relevant information, context, and facilitation to contribute effectively.

5. SAFETY

A safe and supportive volunteering environment free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination



Volunteers are clear if roles require a Working with Vulnerable People card (WWVP), a national police check, or other checks.



Health and safety risks are identified, assessed and managed specifically for volunteer roles in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.



A safe working environment is provided for volunteers, free from emotional, physical, and psychological harm.



Confidential and personal information is dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988.



Volunteers receive orientation and ongoing training relevant to tasks to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities competently and safely.



Volunteers of all ages and abilities are adequately covered by insurance.



Volunteer induction and onboarding documents include information about regular check-ins with volunteer coordinator and resources on available mental health support.



Counselling or debriefing is available for volunteers if they experience stress or emotional impacts from their work.



Staff who work with children and young people as volunteers are aware of the ACT Child Safe Standards and the obligations around child safety and wellbeing.

OVERALL REFLECTION



The organisation's leadership is committed to best practice volunteer involvement and ensures adequate budget/resources are allocated.



The volunteer program regularly assesses its adherence to ethical principles: Respect, Volunteer-Centred, Responsive, Collaboration, and Safety.



Gaps or areas for improvement in how volunteers are treated, supported, or involved in the volunteer programs are identified and acted upon.

For information on how to develop strategies for ethical volunteering and best practice volunteer management please refer to the resources on the [VolunteeringACT website](#) including [the Volunteer Program Inclusion Checklist](#), [the National Knowledge Base](#) and [Volunteering Australia website](#).

APPENDIX

Below are the QR codes for all the hyperlinks used in this checklist.

The ACT Volunteering
Strategy (2024-2034)



<https://shorturl.at/RBo08>

National Strategy for
Volunteering (2023-2033)



<https://shorturl.at/19GH4>

National Standards for
Volunteer Involvement



<https://shorturl.at/kdPzV>

101 Ways to Recognise
Your Volunteers



<https://shorturl.at/FOZc4>

2025 Volunteering Awards,
Canberra Region



<https://shorturl.at/YI3Uk>

Work Health and Safety
Act 2011



<https://shorturl.fm/Go8P5>

National Knowledge Base



<https://shorturl.fm/51Lw1>

Volunteering Australia -
Resources for volunteer
involving organisations



<https://shorturl.fm/3cfqg>

Privacy Act 1988



<https://shorturl.fm/cOACI>

ACT Child Safe Standards



<https://shorturl.fm/BJLda>

VolunteeringACT website



<https://shorturl.fm/tXA8m>

Volunteer Program Inclusion
Checklist



<https://shorturl.fm/8F45O>

