



Volunteer Strategy Focus Areas

11. Volunteer Strategy Resource

This resource outlines the five focus areas that will help make your volunteer strategy strong, thoughtful and effective. We've gathered these together from the common elements highlighted across communities involved in the Safeguarding Volunteering Project. These five essential areas are listed below and explained in more detail on the following pages.

Focus Area 1: **Flexible and diverse volunteering**

Focus Area 2: **Volunteer recognition and awareness**

Focus Area 3: **Demand for volunteers**

Focus Area 4: **Essential services delivered by volunteers**

Focus Area 5: **Best practice volunteer management**

But first! Get your team ready to think creatively

To find new ways of doing things and address challenges to volunteering in your community, your strategy will benefit from innovative thinking and creative ideas.

To boost creativity in your team, you can:

- set group rules so that participants agree to respectful, safe discussions where everyone feels they can contribute, and
- get your community in the mood for ideas with some creative thinking exercises. Some websites with good ways to get innovative:
 - **Innovation Lab's**¹ suggested warm-ups including blind portraits and 10 ideas in 10 minutes.
 - **IDEOU's**² activities for better ideas like assumption envelopes, paper airplanes and a dynamic duel.



Image. hatchakorn Srisook

¹ <https://innovationlab.net/blog/9-best-exercises-to-spark-creativity-in-ideation/>

² <https://www.ideo.com/blogs/inspiration/10-activities-to-generate-better-ideas>



Key focus areas for your strategy

Discuss each of the five focus areas outlined below with your co-design team members to explore the best actions for your community. Then, use the focus areas as sections in your strategy. This will support you to get tangible and meaningful outcomes for volunteering in areas that will make a real difference.

The five focus areas are outlined below. Use the suggested questions to prompt discussion and reflection among your team members.

Focus Area 1: Flexible and diverse volunteering

Evidence tells us that the next generation of volunteers in our communities are doing it differently than they have before. Your strategy will need to adapt to the future needs of a busy and changing society. We also know from research that our next generation of volunteers is looking for ways to contribute more flexibly and shorter-term³. They are also more likely to join a cause that aligns with their values and passions.

Questions to get your team thinking

- How do we engage new generations in volunteering opportunities that are both meaningful and accessible for them?
- How do younger generations volunteer in your community now and what do they want from volunteering?

Focus Area 2: Volunteer recognition and awareness

Volunteer recognition is not just the appreciation and acknowledgement volunteers are offered for their efforts, it's also the acknowledgement and understanding they get from an organisation of the value and contribution they provide. It is important that there is an understanding within your community (committee members, paid staff, volunteers, clients, community members, etc.) of the value and contribution of volunteers.

Questions to get your team thinking

- What does it mean to recognise volunteers? How do they want to be recognised?
- How do you provide recognition in a meaningful way?
- What value does your community place on volunteering?

³ https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/youth_volunteering_evidence_review_0.pdf



Focus Area 3: Demand for volunteers

With 68% of our population already volunteering and demand for volunteers likely to increase, we need to consider how much we're asking of volunteers. Data tells us that most volunteers are doing more than one role and some organisations rely on fewer people to undertake the same level of activity.

Questions to get your team thinking

- What are volunteers in your community being asked to do?
- Are the volunteer roles in your community appropriate for volunteers?
- Do you have enough people in your community to fill demand for volunteers (specialist roles, essential services roles)? If not, what are your alternatives to fill demand?

Focus Area 4: Essential services delivered by volunteers

Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations assist all Tasmanian communities by supporting delivery of essential services. It's important to identify and understand essential service volunteer roles in your community to make sure you're prepared in the event of a pandemic or natural disaster.

Questions to get your team thinking

- What essential services are delivered by volunteers in your community? (It may help to refer to Volunteering Tasmania's list of essential service volunteer roles.)
- Do you have the population to fill volunteer roles required in your community (specialist roles, emergency services roles)? If not, what are your alternative options?

Focus Area 5: Best practice volunteer management

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement⁴ work to ensure volunteers are supported, safe and contributing in a meaningful way. While the landscape of volunteering (legislation and regulations) is changing, it is important that volunteer wellbeing, safety and regulation are also considered to ensure the volunteering sector's security and sustainability.

Questions to get your team thinking

- How do organisations keep volunteers safe and supported?
- What methods will minimise risk and increase the safety of volunteers in your community?
- Are volunteer involving organisations aware of volunteering legislation? Do they comply with it?
- What level of understanding does your community have of the National Standards for Volunteer Management? What is the level of implementation of the Standards across your community?

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⁴ <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/national-standards-and-supporting-material/>