

# Starting your corporate volunteer program

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Congratulations on considering how to implement a corporate volunteering program. Here are some tips from Tasmanian organisations who are doing it well:

## **1. Prepare a business case for corporate volunteering**

Depending on your organisation and its size, you might need to formally prepare a business case or a proposal for starting a program. This could simply be an outline of the value proposition of a corporate volunteering program. Talk to your manager or CEO about any processes or procedures involved before you get started.

## **2. Talk to the experts in your organisation**

How organisations manage corporate volunteering programs vary. Often there may be a wealth of experience or history in organisations, including people who know what has or hasn't worked in the past. Involve stakeholders in the setup of any program. This might include Human Resources, Communications or staff responsible for community engagement or community grants.

## **3. Consult with your staff**

Involve your staff in the planning stages of your program. Gather their interest and feedback early on, either formally or informally. You might want to consider:

- a) Whether staff are interested and willing to participate in the corporate volunteer program
- b) Whether staff are interested in individual volunteering or team activities
- c) What causes, passions or interests staff have
- d) How much time they think is reasonable to be offered through a volunteer program
- e) Any concerns or questions they have

Volunteering Tasmania has sample survey templates that you can use in this early stage. Contact us to discuss this on (03) 6231 5550 or [admin@volunteeringtas.org.au](mailto:admin@volunteeringtas.org.au)

## **4. Have a clear corporate volunteering objective**

Once you have talked to the experts and consulted with your staff, you may want to gather up your feedback and formally define the objectives of your program.

Things to consider include:

- a) The duration of your program – is this a pilot program? A long term commitment?
- b) What outcomes does the organisation want?
- c) What outcomes are staff seeking?
- d) Does it align with the organisational/strategic objectives?
- e) What budget is allocated for the program?

Setting goals and objectives is important because it will help you evaluate the success of your program's outcomes.

## **5. Keep your corporate volunteering policy simple**

Most organisations will have a policy or leave arrangement in place for staff accessing corporate volunteering. Keep this simple and you may like to cover:

- a) The amount of time available to staff
- b) How they negotiate time to volunteer (e.g. with their supervisor or human resources department)
- c) Any paperwork required

Keeping it simple and with minimal paper work will ensure your program is flexible, and make it easier for staff to access.

## **6. Find a Manager of your Volunteers**

Corporate volunteering programs require internal support. Identify a specific staff member to manage your volunteer program, and this person could be responsible for:

- a) Building awareness of the program
- b) Consulting with staff about volunteer opportunities
- c) Building partnerships with Volunteer Involving Organisations to find roles for staff
- d) Manage the paperwork and human resources associated with the program – including any Police Checks, Working with Vulnerable People registrations and workers compensation
- e) Review the volunteer opportunities and seek feedback from staff
- f) Set up reward and recognition programs for your staff that volunteer

You can look to the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) for guidance on best practice volunteer management.

## **7. Find volunteer opportunities**

Once you have some corporate volunteering arrangements in place and the appropriate staff to manage the program, you will need to find some volunteer roles. There are many ways you can go about this:

- a) Self-searching on Volunteer Connect to find roles suitable for individuals or teams
- b) Engaging with Volunteering Tasmania and attending the Managers of Volunteers Network meeting and building relationships with volunteer groups
- c) Selecting Volunteer Involving Organisations that you may want to specifically partner with. You may want to have formal partnerships with one or two causes specifically relevant or of interest to your organisation
- d) Advertising across your own media and communications channels

It's important that you set realistic expectations about your program and the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations to deliver suitable opportunities. If possible, you may want to offer financial compensation (or some other incentive or reward) to the host organisation for the time it takes them to manage the opportunity for your employees, especially if they create one just for you.

### **8. Evaluate the program – continuous improvement**

An important part of running a corporate volunteer program is reflecting on the progress and the results. You could consider things like:

- a) Evaluate the community impact of your volunteering – what effect did your employees have on the community?
- b) How was your involvement with the Volunteer Involving Organisation? Did both parties benefit from the partnership?
- c) How did your employees benefit?

Reflecting on these questions will help you adjust and improve your program going forward.

### **Where can I get more advice?**

For more ideas, we encourage you to join the conversation with us at Volunteering Tasmania on (03) 6231 5550 or email [admin@volunteeringtas.org.au](mailto:admin@volunteeringtas.org.au)