

Receiving Volunteer Feedback

The purpose of this quick guide includes information on receiving feedback from your volunteers including why you should be asking them for feedback and some ways you can do this.

Feedback

Asking for volunteer feedback is an important part of demonstrating your organisation's commitment to volunteer involvement. It forms a key part of continuous improvement of your volunteer program. Volunteer feedback should be included in your organisation's policies and procedures, especially in relation to formal processes such as performance reviews.

Understanding how each volunteer can contribute to and develop within your organisation is important for their satisfaction and retention. Volunteer insights and ideas can help improve the way an organisation works. Addressing volunteer feedback, is an important part of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/national-standards>

There are different avenues for an organisation to receive feedback. These may include:

- policy and procedure development
- informal conversations
- formal meetings and regular performance reviews
- surveys

Feedback considerations

In developing or reviewing feedback regarding volunteer programs, consider the following:

What do you want feedback on, and from who?

Consider if you want feedback to answer a specific question, or if you just want general feedback. Decide who you want to provide the feedback including volunteers, staff and service users who experience your volunteer program.

How will you ask for feedback?

- Speak directly. If the target for feedback is your volunteers, you could ask your questions privately, or at a volunteer meeting.
- Performance reviews. When conducting a performance review or an exit interview you will be documenting the conversation.
- Online options. These can include an email, poll or survey, newsletter or having a feedback form.

Consider giving volunteers and other stakeholders the option to provide feedback anonymously, e.g. by leaving surveys next to a feedback box or using an online survey tool.

Keeping track of feedback

Prepare a way to organise and store the feedback that you receive. Organising your feedback will make it easier for you to analyse information, make changes, provide reports and follow up on suggestions, comments or complaints.

Follow up

Acknowledging feedback is important. If there are actions planned, let that person know. You could also ask the individual if they are willing to answer more questions in detail if required. Sometimes feedback may be negative, however this is feedback that you can use to make positive changes to your program or procedures. By actively listening to volunteers, key points can be considered for any future actions.

Evaluating and reporting

Regularly collecting feedback is an opportunity to have a look for trends, and report on areas for improvement. Once you have evaluated the feedback, you can create and prioritise a list of actions, who is responsible and when these actions are planned to occur. Changes made can be communicated to all volunteers and other stakeholders affected by the actions.

Creating action plans with review times to check in on progress, is part of the final step to ensuring a successful continuous improvement approach to volunteer engagement. As appropriate, actions may also be included in the organisation's Quality Assurance or Continuous Improvement Plan.

Acknowledgement

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