

Continuous Improvement

The purpose of this quick guide is to outline the continuous improvement review process for your volunteer program.

Why review your volunteer program?

Continuous improvement is an ongoing process of planning, review and evaluation, aligned with your organisation's goals. This can occur as part of the broader organisational functions, Quality Assurance or Continuous Improvement plans (if already in place) or stand-alone if not.

Benefits to regularly reviewing your volunteering program include:

- volunteers feel supported and satisfied in their role
- support ongoing volunteer recruitment
- increase volunteer retention rates
- aligning with organisation purpose (vision, mission and values)
- delivers outcomes for the organisation and service users

What is a continuous improvement review?

A continuous improvement review highlights the strengths and weaknesses of your program. It is important to consult a range of stakeholders to gain a full picture on your program. Reviews can be aimed at different parts of your program, or at the program overall. A review may consider how effectively a program is meeting its outcomes, the engagement of volunteers, or whether the program continues to align with your organisation's priorities.

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (National Standards) provide a framework for your organisation to use in designing, implementing and reviewing volunteering programs. The National Standards prompt you to consider the role volunteers play in your organisation and how effective volunteer involvement can help achieve the strategic goals of your organisation. See the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) and find out more about conducting a gap assessment of your volunteer program.

Reviewing your volunteer program

Some considerations when reviewing your volunteer program, include:

Review against organisation strategies and business planning

Consider your program's objectives against the strategic and business planning of your organisation. Understanding this will identify priorities and allow you to communicate the purpose of your volunteer program.

Some questions to consider include:

- Does your volunteer program align with your organisation's vision, mission and values?
- How can your volunteer program better support and align with the broader objectives of the organisation?
- What is included in your volunteer program, and what is not?
- How does your volunteer program enable your organisation to deliver on its objectives?

Online volunteer benefit 'calculators' can help to demonstrate the economic benefits of volunteers. These free online tools are available through an internet search.

Consultation

Speak with volunteers, staff and service users. They can provide insight into how effectively they feel the program is running and provides an opportunity for them to make suggestions for improvement. It also allows you to highlight volunteer involvement and the importance and impact that volunteers have on your organisation.

Analysis and reporting

Collecting and reviewing data is a great way to understand where your program is performing well, and areas for improvement. Once you have collected relevant data and consulted with stakeholders, analyse your findings and consider what could be improved, what needs any change.

Following the analysis, consider writing a report including the steps taken as part of the review, a summary of the findings, and any recommendations being made. This report can be used to inform stakeholders and to support recommendations to make any changes. It will also be useful to see progress over time and assist with future reviews.

Ongoing Continuous Improvement

Outside of a set review there are other ways to support ongoing continuous improvement including:

- address volunteer concerns
- communicate the recommendations and actions of reviews with stakeholders
- follow up and track recommendations to ensure they are being acted upon
- ensure volunteers can provide ongoing feedback
- liaise with other similar Volunteer Involving Organisations
- contact your Volunteering Peak Body to access training and support.

Acknowledgement

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