



FAQs for organisations working with youth volunteers

The advice in this FAQ document is of a general nature only. There may be specific considerations for each organisation and sector. Always seek legal or professional advice if you are unsure.

What is the age range for ‘youth’?

Youth age group classifications vary, however in this program ‘youth’ refers to 15 – 24 year olds. When looking at engaging youth under 18 years of age in a volunteer role, consider the young person’s individual skills and experience, knowledge of rights and responsibilities, confidence and also vulnerability. See more information at <https://www.nfplaw.org.au/volunteers#youth>

What can youth volunteers bring to our organisation?

Young people can bring much in the way of talent, enthusiasm, energy, new perspectives and creativity. Adding a youthful voice to your organisation, committees, and programs is a powerful move – their voice can help you reach an even larger target or client base. If you would like to recruit younger clients/customers, youth volunteers can help you shape your messaging to appeal to this demographic.

They may be open to new ideas, accept change readily, and are able to grow into roles where appropriate responsibility and support is given. Youth can also be open to inclusion and helping to promote intergenerational connections. Youth can add value through their diverse technology and social media skills.

Does the organisation need consent/permission when recruiting youth?

Securing a parent or guardian’s consent for under 18’s is considered good practice, where possible. In designing roles for younger volunteers also consider:

- Appropriate supervision given age and experience, including any special needs
- Adjusting the time of day or duration of volunteering (e.g. hours in a week)
- Adapting around school/education commitments
- Appropriate working conditions noting health and safety of the young person.

What checks are required for working with youth?

A Working with Children (WWC) Check is required by a person if they engage in certain paid or unpaid work with children, described as ‘child-related work’ under the WWC Act. [Working with Children Checks](#) are for a defined period (generally three years). They are not transferable between States or Territories.

The relevant criteria in the legislation is extensive and very specific. The State Government website provides information to assist. Having clear policies regarding the need to protect children (and other vulnerable groups), undertaking reference checking and interviews and provide adequate induction, training and supervision are also important.



How to address risk management with youth volunteers?

Before engaging a youth volunteer, the organisation needs to consider the ability to provide suitable duties, supervision and meet the duty of care to provide a safe space for the young person.

Having clear policies regarding the need to protect children (and other vulnerable groups), undertaking reference checking and interviews and provide adequate induction, training and supervision are also important. Volunteer policies and procedures should expressly consider risks and issues associated with youth volunteers under 18 years old. There are [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), which are considered best practice for fostering child safety and wellbeing culture and practice.

Does insurance cover youth volunteers?

Volunteering WA encourages all VIOs to review any conditions of their Volunteer Accident Policies with their insurance company, to ensure all volunteers are adequately covered. See more information on the VWA website. [FAQs for Volunteer Managers](#)

How to attract youth volunteers?

Talk to any young volunteers within the organisation and tap into their networks. Promote the achievements and gains of the young people already in the organisation through social media. Encourage volunteering with friends, family or in small groups. Share the vision and passion for your organisation and the great work that is being done.

Review existing volunteer marketing and social media to ensure it is being seen by young people, and that it is the kind of thing that will appeal to youth. Social media is constantly changing, so find out where youth are at. Emphasise the element of personal and professional development and mention specifically that you're looking for young people. Tap into local youth organisations including schools or universities.

What can young people get out of volunteering?

Ideally, volunteering contributes to the personal and professional development of the volunteer. It can bring job and transferrable skills, communication skills, experience, contacts, and increased self-confidence. All these can help in the search for employment. Volunteering can provide good recognition for service and referees for job applications. Youth volunteers can also gain the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference. And it can be fun. Young people will often enjoy the chance to meet like-minded people and make friends.



What drives young people away?

Lengthy application processes that are not digitally compatible may be discouraging to youth. Youth volunteers can also be put off by the same things that discourage other volunteers - poor organisation, poor supervision or unsatisfying jobs. Young people may be sensitive to being 'talked at' or 'talked down to', so aim to promote reciprocal relationships with youth. They will expect meaningful duties, not ad hoc tasks that nobody else wants to do. Listen respectfully to youth opinions and give their ideas due consideration, actively involving them in decision making where possible.

What would our organisation need to change to include youth volunteers?

Organisations may need consider more flexible schedules, looking for tasks that can be done outside of standard work hours or that can be done virtually. Review systems for email and text (SMS) mobile phone communication with volunteers. More information on [virtual volunteering](#) is available from VWA.

Digital induction and training procedures might need to be reviewed so that they are simple and not overwhelming. Make it sound inclusive, fun, friendly and rewarding to get involved! Consider mentoring or coaching schemes that allocate more time at the beginning for supervision, and then for follow-up for tasks that start small and build up as confidence and skills develop. Allowing volunteers to make mistakes, and see this as a learning experience rather than a failure is important.

Look over the volunteer program or projects and ask if there are any changes that could be made if there was a younger team involved. There may also be grants available for community groups that involve young people or projects, where young people can learn and gain employment skills.

What are some key tips for becoming a more youth friendly organisation?

The key to keeping youth volunteers, as with all volunteers, is to ensure that the position meets everyone's needs. Discuss expectations with volunteers. Consider having a trial activity for youth volunteers to give you both a chance to make up your minds before progressing. Consider incentives such as free food, training opportunities or leadership roles for youth. [Ten Ways to Make Your Organisation Youth Friendly](#)

Where can I get more information?

Volunteering WA

Search on social media or www.volunteeringwa.org.au

Email info@volunteeringwa.org.au or phone 08 9482 4333

<https://volunteeringhub.org.au/category/youth-or-student-volunteering/>