

Recruiting Volunteers

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to an organisation.

Tips

- **Understand what motivates people** to volunteer in your club or sport and what benefits they gain from it.
- **Don't rely on advertising or publicity** – relatively few volunteers are recruited that way.
- **Ask people already involved in or connected to the club** to volunteer – many volunteers initially become involved in volunteering through friends, family or because they are already involved in the club or sport in another capacity.
- **Provide potential volunteers with a realistic preview of what the job entails** – volunteers need to understand the size and nature of the task ahead of them before deciding to commit their time and energy to a position.
- If possible, **provide a job description** including meeting times, major tasks, average weekly or monthly time commitments, benefits and conditions. This will help potential volunteers make an informed decision about whether a job might suit their skills, experience and availability.
- **Make sure new recruits feel valued** – they are giving up their leisure time so it is important they feel the role is important.

Challenges

- It can be difficult to attract a pool of qualified applicants using an informal recruitment process.
- Some organisations do not have the constitutional power to recruit individuals for some voluntary positions.
- Sporting organisations are generally bound to elect board or committee members or to appoint some members on an ex-officio basis.
- The number of positions to be filled is usually greater than the number of people prepared to volunteer.

Selecting and screening volunteers

The selection process involves choosing the individual who best meets the requirements of a position. Depending on the level of the position [policy/management or operational], the selection process can involve a number of steps, which may include screening, formal interviews, testing, reference checks and a physical examination.

However, it is not often that community based sport organisations are in a position to work through a formal volunteer selection process.

An important consideration in the selection process is whether a position can be appointed or whether the constitution requires it be elected.

Elected positions

Club or association members usually elect committee or board members to a position, which makes the selection process largely redundant.

Appointed positions

When electing new volunteers, it is important to consider the following:

- Do they have the required accreditation?
- Are they prepared to undertake relevant training?
- Do they have experience working with others in a positive way?
- Are they of good character?

Reference checks

Reference checks are advisable when appointing individuals to a position that involves close contact with children (i.e. any person under 18 years).

There may also be statutory requirements under child protection legislation, to run a criminal history check or for the applicant to provide a written declaration that they are not a 'prohibited' person (i.e. someone who has a conviction for a sex offence).

Criminal history checks may also be necessary if a reference cannot be verified or a reference raises any questions about the character or integrity of a potential volunteer.

Appointing a person to a volunteer position as a 'last resort' may be more harmful in the long term than temporarily leaving the position vacant and starting the recruitment process again.

Recruitment and selection checklist	
Appoint volunteer coordinator	
Prepare projections for human resource needs	
Conduct a job analysis	
Prepare a job description	
Develop a recruitment plan	
Implement recruitment plan	
Screen applications and select or shortlist volunteers to be interviewed	
Conduct interviews and select successful volunteers	
Where appropriate check volunteer references	
Notify successful volunteers and set up a time for orientation	
Notify unsuccessful volunteers	