Volunteer Involvement COVID-19 Action Plan

Your organisation is likely already experiencing disruptions to your normal way of doing business and will, undoubtedly, experience far more in the weeks/months to come as restrictions change. The volunteers who are already engaged with your organisation remain a vital resource as you navigate these unusual circumstances and, as such, deserve some thoughtful strategizing around how to leverage their skills while also protecting them physically, mentally, and emotionally.

You may find the steps outlined below are more or less relevant to your organisation at this time. Ultimately it is up to you to decide when and how you might put these items in place and what works best for your volunteer program and your organisation.

Actions	Outputs/Activities	
1. Investigate your volunteer insurance and State WHS legislation	1.1 seek advice from your insurer about the implications of the pandemic regarding their volunteer workforce if they choose to continue involving volunteers at this time	Clearly communicate with your staff and volunteers about the limitations of your insurance policies (and that no insurance may be applicable) and give volunteers the option to pause or modify their involvement or in the case of staff to take eligible leave or leave without pay if they are concerned about vulnerability.
	1.2 Under WHS legislation your organisation has an obligation to protect the physical and mental health wellbeing of your volunteers.	If your organisation decides to continue involving volunteers at this time, you are encouraged to seek independent legal advice about the measures you need to take to comply with WHS legislation.
2.Familiarise yourself with the most up-to-date requirements and advice from the Australian and NT and SA State Governments	Ensure you remain up to date with the latest requirements in SA and NT, including those regarding social distancing and testing	Australian Government Department of Health NT Health SA Health NT Government COVID-19 SA Government COIVD-19
	Access advice and resources from Safe Work Australia on how to maintain a safe workplace during the pandemic	Safework Australia Workplace checklist to keep your workforce safe Safework Australia Safework SA NTWorkSafe

3. Evaluate the impact of any changes you have made to your operations and conduct a risk assessment of the organisation's volunteer involvement as part of responding to COVID-19	Evaluate what is currently operating and what has been put on hold	• Undertake a risk assessment
		   o What am I assessing?
		   o How am I assessing?

	What changes have been made to your services?	• They have ceased - e.g. stopped sporting fixtures, closed community centres or suspended home visits • They have been modified e.g. only staffed by one or two volunteers at a time or delivered on line • There are now formal or informal groups active in a similar area
	Has there been any loss of capacity?	• Financial - donations, grants, events, other fund-raising • Staff • Volunteers, governance, strategic partnerships • Loss of in-kind support from partners - such as access to sporting grounds, club rooms or mobile vans
	What restrictions remain in place that affect your operations?	Such as travel bans, restrictions on contact sport or limits to visitors in aged care facilities and schools

4. Determine your priorities	From the risk assessment determine what the priorities are for volunteer involvement	• What activities are most important to re-establish? • Consider the needs of people who are vulnerable and require help for daily living and basic needs of food, shelter and safety • Consider activities that will contribute positively to the health and well-being of your community • Do you have the resources to sustain these activities if restrictions remain in place for say a further 6 or 12 months?
	Consider impacts if there are further changes to restrictions	• Further relaxation of current restrictions or • A return to or introduction of more severe restrictions
5. Redesign your volunteering involvement	Undertake a detailed risk-assessment on each of your volunteer involvement programs as they may have different needs and considerations for example those that involve volunteers transporting clients might have different needs to volunteers based within the office	• Eliminate any remaining programs that Do not meet social distancing requirements and cannot be delivered safely • Eliminate close contact with people wherever possible • Specifically consider the issues of engaging volunteers or delivering services to people at greater risk
	Update policies and procedures for any changes, e.g. safety, IT and privacy	• Ensure that privacy risks (such as dealing with health information of volunteers and remote working) are addressed • Protect vulnerable groups • Consider enabling and continuing to enable volunteers who have vulnerabilities to have the time off, volunteer from home

	Prepare to undertake the programs or activities	• Write/ tailor position descriptions • Determine how many volunteers you need • Source and develop training and orientation material
	Volunteering from home	If working from home, they can complete a working from home questionnaire to assess if the workplace is safe
	Communication How are you involving volunteers throughout all of the processes	How are you communicating changes? - Inviting volunteers to workforce meetings being held online to update the team - Emails - Newsletters
6. Re-engage and recruit volunteers	Identify volunteers who can be re-engaged if they haven't been during this time	• Thank them for their patience and ongoing engagement • Assess their interest/willingness to undertake any roles • Let them know it's ok to say no, and return to your organisation at a later stage • In accordance with statutory requirements and Your organisation's policies • Complete training and induction • Ensure that all hygiene, PPE and COVID-19 awareness training is completed
	Contact Volunteering SA&NT if you need volunteers.	Free advertising service that you can access if you have the 2 insurances.
	Consider the physical and psychological safety of volunteers	• Ensure there is adequate supervision and support for volunteers' mental health and well-being • They may have limited contact to usual supports due to social distancing requirements • Pay particular attention if their role may be stressful or interface with people in need

		• If applicable, consider access to mental health support such as Lifeline, Beyond Blue or an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for volunteers • Does your organisation currently allow volunteers to access the EAP PROGRAM? We suggest this be something organisations consider as best practice.
7 Safeguarding volunteers		• Ensure processes are clear regarding: • Set strict expectations for unwell staff and volunteers: • Communicate clearly the need for all unwell staff and volunteers to stay at home. If a team member who is unwell comes into the office, ensure they go home immediately and seek medical attention if needed. • Does your organisation have plans that can be actioned quickly if one of your team contracts the pandemic illness, for example the 2020 COVID-19 virus? • Does your organisation have a contingency plan for the closedown of your workplace due to mass illness amongst staff and volunteers or a requirement to self-isolate? • Ensure that all volunteers who require information in other languages have access to the other resources may include training, induction and what to do if they come into close contact with the virus • Develop processes, reporting, and supervision to support activities • Implement physical changes to your operations • Schedule cleaning regimes: • Frequently clean key areas including keyboards, telephones, workstations, door handles, and common areas. • Increase cleaning regimes • Install posters • Ensure adequate access to handwashing stations, hand sanitiser and PPE • Ensure you can access PPE and skilled resources specifically to manage COVID-19 hygiene and other requirements

		Social Impact How can your organisation show support to staff, volunteers, clientele and community members or groups who may be experiencing racism or discrimination due to pandemic circumstances
		✓ Consider if volunteers should be encouraged to have a current flu shot ✓ Consider if volunteers should be encouraged to participate in COVID Safe - this initiative of the Australian Government is designed to assist in the notification of people who have come into close contact with the virus
Useful websites		Volunteering SA&NT Volunteering Australia Not for profit law Institute of Community Directors Australia South Australian Department of Human Services Tobi Johnson