



The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Module Two

Standard 1: Leadership and Management



Standard 1: Leadership and Management

Objective:

To define Standard 1 Criteria and Evidence, establish the importance of effective leadership and management in Volunteer Involving Organisations, and begin to implement the National Standards within your organisation.



Standard 1: Leadership and Management

What is Standard 1?

Standard 1 is Leadership and Management.

In order for your organisation to reach its goals, you must set it up for success by establishing management systems that support, guide, and empower your volunteers.

Your organisation's leaders, managers, and senior employees lay the foundation for success, charting the organisation's course to: make a difference, reach new heights, stand tall, and invite all those who need your services.

In short? Standard 1 aims to set effective management systems, policies, and processes in order to create a positive volunteer culture.

Standard 1 Criteria

There are five criteria for Standard 1, each with its own checklist to be used as "Evidence" for measuring how well you meet the Standard. These criteria are:

1. Defining Responsibilities
2. Communicating Policies & Procedures
3. Risk Management
4. Record Management
5. Partner Relationship Agreements

"Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others." – John Maxwell



Why is Standard 1 So Important?

By implementing these systems, organisations can provide clear direction and guidance for volunteers, while also understanding and mitigating the associated risks involving volunteers. Proper management procedures help volunteer managers become better leaders by providing the tools necessary to effectively manage each individual's time, monitor progress on initiatives, assign tasks, and evaluate overall performance.

The clearer your systems, the clearer you and your volunteers can identify the next steps to success.



Criteria 1.1

DEFINING RESPONSIBILITIES

Clarity is the key to leading confident, capable volunteers. As a leader, make it your goal to ensure that every member understands the who, what, where, when, and why behind their position and responsibilities. Piece the puzzle together, showing them how their everyday tasks play a role in the organisation's greater mission.

“Responsibilities for leading and managing volunteer involvement are defined and supported.” –
Volunteering Australia.



Evidence 1.1: Checklist

Let's take action! We can measure how well your organisation defines responsibilities by looking for the right evidence. Consider ranking how well your organisation shows evidence of each principle on a scale of 1 to 5.

Volunteering Australia outlines the following measures for The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement:



“Specific responsibility for providing leadership and managing the implementation of volunteer involvement is assigned.”

Volunteer involvement should be a considered, planned part of an organisation's strategic development, aligning with the organisation's strategic aims, and incorporated into its evaluation framework.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

(1 = Absent/Needs Improvement > 5 = Fully Implemented/Compliant)



“Volunteer involvement responsibilities are documented through position descriptions, delegation authorities, policies and procedures.”

Don't forget the golden rule: Get it in writing! Ensure that both volunteers and volunteer managers have assigned, documented, understood, and fulfilled their responsibilities. This can be accomplished through clear position descriptions, and delegation of authorities, policies, and procedures.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“Employees and governing body members understand and action their volunteer involvement responsibilities.”

Documenting is only the first step. Promote understanding and action through clear orientation and continual training. Make sure every member has easy access to their list of responsibilities.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“Employees with direct responsibility for volunteer involvement have relevant qualifications, skills, or experience for the role.”

Assess and establish the qualifications necessary for success in each volunteer involvement role. If finding and appointing members with these skills is difficult, consider developing training and resources to support them.

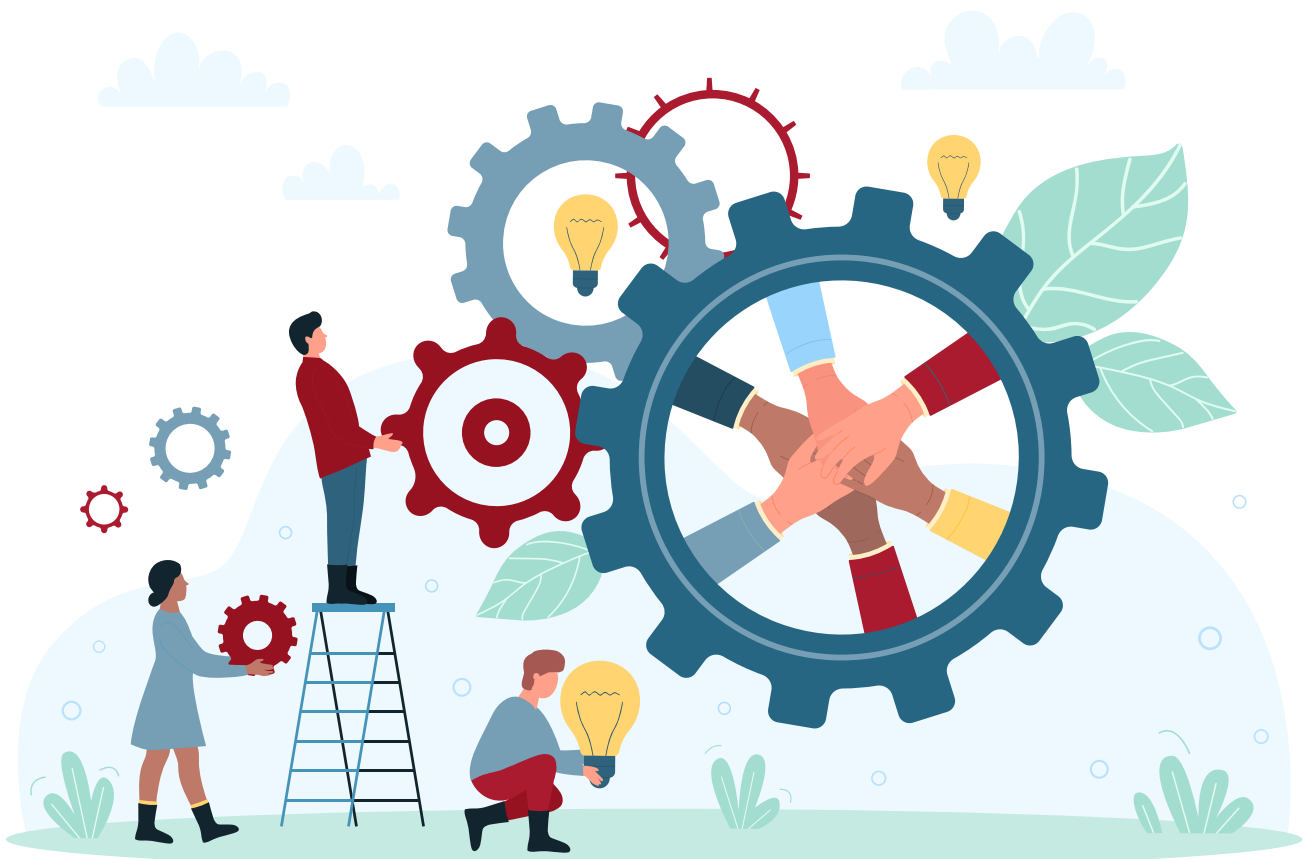
Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 1.2

COMMUNICATING POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Clarity paves the path to confident employees and volunteers. But clarity can only be achieved through effective communication. Management systems must support effective communication between employees, management, and volunteers. This communication helps create an environment of trust, which in turn can improve morale, boost productivity, empower engagement, and ultimately lead the way to your organisation's goals.

“Policies and procedures applying to volunteers are communicated, understood, and implemented by all relevant staff across the organisation.”
– Volunteering Australia.



Evidence 1.2: Checklist

Let's apply these principles! Take note of how well your organisation meets the Volunteering Australia criteria and how they can improve:



“Employees, governing body members and volunteers receive information, orientation and training on the organisation’s volunteer policies and procedures.”

Organisations should provide adequate training opportunities for all members to grow in their roles and increase accountability.

Training should be available at orientation, and continued after the member is onboarded. These might include webinars, workshops, or seminars relevant to all members and unique to teams and roles (for example, when training on volunteer recruitment and retention, team building, digital literacy, communication, organisational policies and procedures, legal considerations, and so on).

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

(1 = Absent/Needs Improvement > 5 = Fully Implemented/Compliant)



“Compliance with volunteer policies and procedures is regularly monitored and improved.”

How will you ensure organisation members follow the rules? Documenting and communicating policies and procedures establishes clarity and guidance. Even so, ongoing monitoring systems are necessary to assess how well volunteers and employees understand and follow your policies. This should be taken into consideration when defining responsibilities for volunteer managers.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 1.3

RISK MANAGEMENT

Step 1 of implementing the National Standards requires us to identify the benefits and challenges of doing so. Growth requires us to look ahead and map out the risks and opportunities in front of us.

Developing a comprehensive risk management system to ensure that volunteer involvement is safe, secure, and protected shows that your organisation prioritises growth. This system should be overseen by both the management and governing body of the organisation to ensure a high standard of safety.

“The organisation’s risk management processes are applied to the organisation’s volunteer involvement.”

- Volunteering Australia.



Evidence 1.3: Checklist

Let's assess the risks together! The safety and well-being of volunteers and employees come first. Protect these by assessing how well you meet the Criteria provided by Volunteering Australia.



“Risk management systems are in place to identify, assess and respond to risks relating to volunteer involvement.”

Risk management involves identifying potential risks associated with volunteer involvement and assessing these accordingly. It also includes creating processes to respond to these risks and informing volunteers of any potential threats they could face before committing their time or services.

A risk management system can be developed in the following 7 simple, yet powerful, steps:

1. **Identify the risks relating to volunteer involvement.**
2. **Assess the risks based on how severe they are and how likely they are to affect members and volunteers.**
3. **Minimise risks by establishing precautions and procedures.**
4. **Create response plans with specific steps you'll take in case each risk occurs.**
5. **Assign responsibilities and tasks to specific leaders within each plan.**
6. **Communicate the preventative steps and response plan to all members through ongoing training.**
7. **Continually identify and assess new risks within volunteer management.**

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

(1 = Absent/Needs Improvement > 5 = Fully Implemented/Compliant)



“Volunteer risk management is overseen by management and the governing body.”

Do you currently have set responsibilities for leaders within your risk management system? Management should have a full understanding of the potential risks and their roles in preventing and responding to them.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“Volunteers are informed of potential risks and are supported to manage or mitigate risk factors.”

Protect your organisation and your volunteers by ensuring they know any and all risks that come with their involvement. This should be communicated before volunteers accept the position. From here, volunteers should receive adequate support from both management and the governing body when it comes to recognizing and responding to any potential dangers. You can accomplish this through ongoing training opportunities, resources, and support.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 1.4

RECORD MANAGEMENT

Standard 1 promotes clarity, communication, and proper planning. Each of these principles requires a dedication to collecting and understanding information.

Successful volunteer management requires organisations to pay extra attention to the data available to them. Even more, compliant volunteer management takes accountability for the security and vulnerability of this data.

“Volunteer involvement records are maintained”

- Volunteering Australia.



Evidence 1.4: Checklist

Taking the time to collect, document, secure, and maintain the necessary information from volunteers can support an effective and well-run organisation built on integrity. Review the following Volunteering Australia Criteria:



“Required information to be collected from volunteers is identified.”

What information do you need from your volunteers to support them and to stay compliant? Identify key pieces of information that need to be collected from volunteers, such as their contact information or their skillset, and obtain this during the application process and orientation.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

(1 = Absent/Needs Improvement > 5 = Fully Implemented/Compliant)



“Information from screening checks for volunteers are documented and kept secured.”

Information management protects you and your volunteers. Create a system to securely document and secure screen check information to adhere to privacy protocols.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“The organisation has documented and implemented processes that comply with privacy legislation for securely managing volunteer personal and confidential information.”

Your organisation is responsible for protecting and securing your volunteers' personal information. Protect their data by allowing minimal, authorised members to access it. Secure all confidential data in password-protected files, and don't share it with anyone outside of your organisation.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“Records of volunteer contribution, achievements and acknowledgement are maintained by the organisation.”

Assign volunteer managers to keep track of volunteer involvement data, such as volunteer hours and productivity. Streamline the process by requiring volunteers to sign in and log their own progress. Volunteer managers can review this information and add any input as needed. Encourage volunteer engagement by acknowledging and celebrating individual volunteer milestones and contributions.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 1.5

PARTNER RELATIONSHIP AGREEMENTS

**Note: Criterion 1.5 only applies to organisations working in collaboration with other partners. Skip this section if inapplicable to your organisation.*

Leadership is all about relationships. Without positive relationships with fellow leaders and followers, you cannot make a true impact. Organisations engaged in collaborative volunteer activities with partner agencies need to establish processes and procedures to manage those relationships.

“Processes are in place to manage relationships with partner agencies in collaborative volunteer activities”
- Volunteering Australia.



Evidence 1.5: Checklist

Let's establish effective partner relationship agreements by creating frameworks that support your organisation's needs, goals, and policies. See where you're at by reviewing the following Volunteering Australia Criteria:



"Agreed frameworks and practice principles for co-design of volunteer involvement are documented."

Set your standards now! Decide and prioritise what principles, policies, and procedures you need to be protected when working with other organisations. Above all, document every partnership and collaboration. Even if you go way back, protect your organisation and theirs by outlining your agreement in a clear, signed contract.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

(1 = Absent/Needs Improvement > 5 = Fully Implemented/Compliant)



"Expectations of volunteers and agreements about respective roles of the parties are documented."

Information management protects you and your volunteers. Create a system to securely document and secure screening check information to adhere to privacy protocols.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



"The organisation has documented and implemented processes that comply with privacy legislation for securely managing volunteer personal and confidential information."

Include the expectations, rules, and standards for proper procedure in your contract. How do you expect your members and volunteers to act? How do you expect the other organisation's members and volunteers to act? Outline this in your contract and communicate continually. Establish consequences if either party does not fulfil its agreement.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



"Procedures for evaluating progress and outcomes are documented."

Collaborations are meant to help both you and them! Ensure that each collaboration is a mutually beneficial agreement by setting up standards for evaluating your results. And, of course, get the results in writing!

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



"Arrangements and agreements are reviewed on a regular basis."

Consider setting up routine calls or meetings to discuss where you're at in your goals (i.e., quarterly meetings, monthly check-ins). Review your contract. Practice listening and prioritising each other's objectives to continually adapt and improve your partnership.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Assessing Your Leadership and Management Standards:

WHAT'S NEXT?

Before moving forward, take a moment to look back at your Current Criteria Rankings and evaluate your strengths and weaknesses.

- What is your strongest Standard 1 Criterion?
- Which Criterion needs to improve the most?
- What actions are easiest to implement?
- What actions are the most challenging to implement?

Use this practice to identify your first steps and prioritise your efforts with confidence!







How to Implement National Standards as a Leader & Manager

So... *Where do you begin?*

In the 10 Steps to Implementing the National Standards, Volunteering Australia states Step 1 is to “Identify the benefits and challenges of implementing the standards.”

Consider this your task to identify the risks and opportunities of the National Standards. The Standards aren’t meant to be ‘one-size-fits-all.’ They require you, as a leader, to ‘try on’ the different principles and strategies to determine the greatest needs, priorities, and responsibilities of your organisation.

You can tackle Step 1 by following its 4 Tasks:

Step 1: Identify the Benefits and Challenges

» Task 1: Review the 8 National Standards.

Read through each of the National Standards. We’ll go through each Standard in-depth throughout our training. For now, you can get a brief understanding of each Standard here. Highlight which Standards best support your organisation’s mission and goals.

» Task 2: Identify the Benefits for Your Organisation.

Understanding the benefits of implementing the National Standards will not only motivate you in your journey — they’ll equip you with the tools needed to communicate the value to all other members involved.

Pinpoint benefits specific to your organisation. Review your organisation’s mission and vision statement to guide you as you align them with each Standard’s benefits. For example, some benefits may include:

Standard 1: Leadership and Management

- Positive volunteer and member culture
- Increased accountability
- Decreased risks and threats
- Improved partnerships and collaborations

Standard 2: Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

- Improved organisation reputation
- Clarity of your organisation’s mission and how your volunteers support it
- More efficient, focused efforts



Standard 3: Volunteer Roles

- Increased volunteer engagement and effectiveness
- Improved service for the community and stakeholders
- Access to feedback from volunteers and members

Standard 4: Recruitment and Selection

- Attract passionate, aligned volunteers
- Provide realistic expectations for volunteers for long-term relationships
- Compliance with anti-discrimination laws

Standard 5: Support and Development

- Increased understanding of the skills, support, and training needed
- Focused training and skills across volunteers
- Find and train volunteers with the necessary skills for success

Standard 6: Workplace Safety and Well-being

- Improved relationships with volunteers
- Reduction in health and safety risks
- Increased critical feedback from volunteers for improvement

Standard 7: Volunteer Recognition

- Greater organisational understanding of the impact of volunteers
- More passionate employees and volunteers
- Positive long-term relationships with engaged volunteers

Standard 8: Quality Management and Continuous Improvement

- Clear policies and procedures to reduce risks and errors
- Improved quality and efficiency of volunteer efforts
- Increased donors and public support

How to Implement National Standards as a Leader & Manager



» Task 3: Identify the Risks for Your Organisation.

Prepare for success by knowing what you're up against. What limitations and challenges might your unique organisation face when adopting the National Standards? For example, these might include:

- Lack of management available to oversee new systems
- Limited resources, time, and budget to implement new processes
- Poor or absent relationships between volunteers and employees
- Lack of skills needed to implement the Standards
- Differing opinions on how to implement the Standards

Identify your greatest challenges and determine what you'll do to reduce or overcome them.

» Task 4: Assess Your Skills and Delegate for Strengths.

Based on the responsibilities required and potential risks, determine the time, skills, and resources needed to successfully implement the Standards:

- What can you do best?
- What tasks and responsibilities are outside of your scope?
- What tasks and responsibilities might appeal better to other leaders?
- What can you not do on your own?

Practice efficiency by focusing on tasks that complement your strengths and delegate tasks that align with those of others.



Resources

- **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement - Document**
<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Standards-Document-FINAL-3004.pdf>
- **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement - Supporting Material**
<https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/resources/national-standards-and-supporting-material/>
- **Advancing Your Personal Leadership, One Step At A Time**
<https://www.workforgood.org/article/advancing-your-personal-leadership-one-step-at-a-time>
- **Assess and Manage Risk**
<https://business.gov.au/risk-management/risk-assessment-and-planning/assess-and-manage-risk>



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The seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present.