



The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Module Three

Standard 2: Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

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Objective:

To identify Standard 2 Criteria and Evidence, the benefits of committing to volunteer involvement, how to earn management commitment, and build a dedicated National Standards team.



Standard 2: Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

What is Standard 2?

Standard 2 is Commitment to Volunteer Involvement.

This Standard encourages organisations to identify and illustrate an authentic commitment to volunteer involvement. Through their actions and words, organisations clarify the vision motivating their volunteer programs, enabling them to effectively plan and set the programs up for success, and provide the necessary resources for volunteers to fulfil their responsibilities. These efforts must be built upon the overarching mission of the organisation.

In short? Standard 2 aims to help organisations commit to volunteer involvement through goal setting, planning, and resourcing.

Standard 2 Criteria

According to Volunteering Australia, there are three Criteria that qualify the level of commitment an organisation has to volunteer involvement:

1. Declaring Purpose, Vision, & Intent
2. Planning & Designing
3. Resources

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes... but no plans.” – Peter Drucker

Why is Standard 2 So Important?

Volunteers aren't separate from the cause: they enhance, empower, and embrace it! Committing to volunteer involvement strengthens commitment to your organisation's goals — but only if your volunteer program is actually aligned with these goals.

Standard 2 puts the pieces together, showing employees, managers, and volunteers how the efforts contribute to the cause. Publicly declaring your purpose attracts support and clarifies your intent. Planning and designing your organisation to set your volunteers up for success enables you to access the benefits of being a volunteer-involving organisation. With the right resources, you can make it happen *together*.

But without these principles, volunteer work can get lost or be frittered away, weakening in number and effort. It can become disconnected from organisational goals, and become a burden instead of a benefit. It can hold you back from the power of working with and within the community.

By implementing Standard 2 into your organisation, you can strengthen both your commitment and your results.



Criteria 2.1

DECLARING PURPOSE, VISION, & INTENT

Integrity is the core characteristic of a truly impactful organisation. To succeed, your organisation must make promises and follow through on them. Your organisation – and everyone in it – must stand for the same values in the press and behind closed doors. Two of the most powerful ways to develop integrity as an organisation are to clarify and align.

Clarify who and what your organisation stands for. Pinpoint the vision, mission, and purpose behind your volunteer program. What sets it apart from the rest? Remember that clarity leads to confidence. Therefore, if your employees, managers, volunteers, and donors understand your clear purpose, they can act on it with confidence.

“The organisation publicly declares its intent, purpose, and commitment to involving volunteers.”

– Volunteering Australia.

This clarity will enable you to align your organisational efforts with your organisational mission. This, in turn, will allow you to keep your volunteer involvement in check, ensuring that it represents and supports your goals.



Evidence 2.1: Checklist

Let's begin! We'll start by assessing how well your organisation currently meets each Criterion by looking for the right evidence. Once again, use the scale to rank your organisation's current efforts and Evidence of each principle from 1 to 5.

Volunteering Australia recommends adopting the following measures to implement Standard 2:



“A formal statement, endorsed by the governing body, articulates the organisation’s philosophy, direction and broad objectives for involving volunteers.”

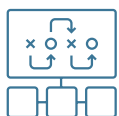
Do you have a formal public statement from leadership declaring your commitment to volunteer involvement? Consider including a statement on your website, social media, and/or via press release to clarify this commitment.

This statement should include:

- Your ‘why.’ Why is volunteer involvement central to the mission and goals of your organisation? There should be a clear understanding of your ‘why’ across teams.
- Any processes, practices, and policies in place that recognise, support, and provide for your volunteers.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

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



“The benefits to the work of the organisation of involving volunteers is recognised through its planning processes and documents.”

What unique benefits does volunteer involvement offer your organisation? These benefits should be reflected throughout your operations and documents, both public and private.

Consider creating a value proposition for volunteer involvement. Share this statement with employees and volunteers alike by utilising it throughout your marketing, training, and operational material.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“The organisation’s commitment to volunteer involvement complies with legislation, industry standards, guidelines and codes of practice.”

Ensure your volunteer involving policies and practices comply with the standards and ethics within your industry. This is essential to protect the safety and security of your volunteers, as well as your liability. Moreover, these laws and regulations can help you provide volunteers with a fair and just experience. For example, some guidelines might include a limit on hours volunteered, diversity and inclusion efforts, disability accommodations, and so on.

Create systems to stay up-to-date with current legislation affecting volunteering within Australia and your industry. Remember: It's all about integrity.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 2.2

PLANNING & DESIGNING

Declaring Purpose, Vision, & Intent focuses on clarity. With Planning & Designing, we can begin aligning our effort with this vision. It's less about *talking* about our plan and more about *implementing* it.

By taking the time to replan and redesign your volunteer involvement framework, you're investing in your efforts. You can reap the returns of a volunteer program that accelerates your organisational goals, opens up new opportunities, and encourages volunteers to commit to *you*.

“Volunteer involvement is planned and designed to contribute directly to the organisation’s purpose, goals and objectives”

– Volunteering Australia.





Evidence 2.2: Checklist

Let's take action! Take a step back and look at the bigger picture of your volunteer involvement processes, plans, and procedures. Evaluate how well your organisation's Planning & Designing efforts meet the National Standards, as outlined by Volunteering Australia:



“The organisation’s broader planning processes incorporate volunteer involvement.”

Does your organisation factor volunteer management into its operational planning? If so, how much? Are they an afterthought, or are volunteers a core element of your efforts?

Review your daily workflows and foundational systems. Identify the extent to which volunteers are incorporated into these processes. From here, you can rework your systems to support and access the benefits of volunteers.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

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



“Volunteer involvement planning identifies strategies for recruitment, recognition, management and development of volunteers.”

Want committed volunteers? Commit to them first.

Does your organisation have a documented system and strategy for recruiting new volunteers? Recognising and rewarding current volunteers? Managing and helping your volunteers to grow, learn, and feel supported?

Assess your current management practices and consider how you can strengthen them to grow your volunteer program.

Recruitment strategies should attract volunteers passionate about supporting your cause. Whether through online networks, collaborations, or events, these methods will assist in successfully attracting members to join the volunteer team.

Recognition and appreciation strategies can further inspire volunteers to feel valued and appreciated for their contributions. This could include acknowledging them with awards or certificates at important milestones, providing recognition on social media platforms, sending thank you cards, and so on.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Evidence 2.2: Checklist



“Proposed volunteer involvement is assessed to ensure appropriateness and benefit.”

Volunteer involvement shouldn't be random or neglected. Every role, project, and task assigned to volunteers should be strategic. How well does volunteer involvement benefit your organisation? Are the tasks assigned to volunteers appropriate, relevant, and fulfilling to both the volunteer and the organisation?

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

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



“Volunteer involvement plans align to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives, and volunteer activity contributes directly to these.”

All volunteer activity should contribute to the mission of the organisation.

Volunteer management is essential for any organisation looking to grow and achieve its goals. An effective volunteer involvement plan will be thoughtfully designed to align directly with the organisation's goals.

For volunteers to align their efforts with these objectives, they must be aware of them. Ensure volunteers understand the 'why' behind their contributions. As a result, you may enjoy motivated, passionate volunteers who deliver focused results.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“The organisation is open to opportunities for collaborating with other agencies in involving volunteers.”

How often does your organisation work with other volunteer-involving agencies? Is your team open to discussing and seeking these opportunities? Are the benefits of such collaborations clear?

Successful organisations are eager to network and collaborate with others to leverage the power of volunteers. Organisations can increase their resources and access to tools and talents that benefit their volunteer program through such partnerships. By working together, you can pool your resources to create more effective initiatives that reach and impact more lives.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Criteria 2.3

RESOURCES

We've clarified your vision. We've aligned your efforts. Now, it's time to take care of the logistics. You can jumpstart this process by considering the following questions:

- What financial resources are **needed** for volunteers to meet these objectives?
- What human resources are **needed** for volunteers to meet these objectives?
- What financial resources are **currently available** to volunteers?
- What human resources are **currently available** to volunteers?
- Should you follow the same financial and human resource structure for your volunteers as the rest of your organisation? Or, do you need to create a custom structure?

These resources are an *investment* in the results of your volunteer program. Commit to your vision and plan by carefully identifying and providing the proper resources for your volunteers. Of course, there are some barriers here. A 2022 study by Volunteering Australia reported that COVID-19 and recent events have negatively impacted many

“Resources (including time, funds, equipment and technology) are allocated for volunteer involvement.”

- Volunteering Australia.

organisations. The top three barriers Australian organisations faced included: financial stress; less time available from volunteers; and playing catch-up from the effects of the pandemic.

In short? Time, budget, and numbers are limited for many organisations committed to volunteer involvement.

That's okay.

By clarifying the purpose behind your volunteer efforts, you can identify the most essential resources, and prioritise accordingly. As you optimise your efforts, they can grow. As a result, you can develop your volunteer program and gain access to more resources along the way. As you invest in your volunteers, they can better show up for you.





Evidence 2.3: Checklist

Let's review the current financial and human resources available to your volunteers. Identify your strengths and opportunities for improvement by evaluating each of the principles defined by Volunteering Australia:



“A budget is allocated and used for volunteer involvement planning, operations and review.”

At a minimum, your organisation should have a strategic budget allocated for volunteer involvement.

This should be determined and calculated based on your volunteers' specific needs, roles, and responsibilities. Consider how the money will be used to effectively manage and support volunteers. Identify what resources are needed for volunteers to have a positive experience, such as recruiting, training, and acknowledging their efforts while ensuring that the organisation is compliant with legal regulations.

Your budget should also cover operational expenses, such as program supplies, technology, equipment, travel, etc. Remember: Clarifying the purpose behind volunteer involvement can help prioritise a return on your investment.

Finally, consider funds must be allocated to evaluate the program's success and areas of improvement. By proactively setting aside funds for these activities, you can review your program and provide volunteers with quality support – all while managing your resources efficiently.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

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



“The governing body, employees and volunteers dedicate time to plan, discuss and manage volunteer involvement.”

How much time do management, employees, and volunteers spend on improving the volunteer program?

Organising successful volunteer involvement takes a great deal of planning and dedication from all members. Open up the conversation to define the scope of involvement, determine roles and responsibilities, establish expectations, and agree upon goals. You may accomplish this through formal and informal meetings scheduled regularly.

Check in regularly. With effective management processes in place, you can access the expertise, enthusiasm, and effort of passionate volunteers ready to drive your organisation forward.

Volunteering Australia recommends regularly reviewing your volunteer program to ensure it supports the needs and goals of all parties, whether management, employees, or volunteers.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Evidence 2.3: Checklist



“Equipment, materials, communication technology and space are provided that support volunteers undertake their roles.”

Volunteer managers are responsible for providing their volunteers with the necessary resources to carry out their roles effectively. What supplies, technology, and physical space are needed for your volunteers to meet your organisation’s aligned objectives?

Consider the value of investing in the latest tools and technology to help them perform their roles successfully. For example, can a certain software or tool save your volunteers time? If so, you may earn your money back due to the time and effort saved.

Overall, create a supportive environment that encourages your volunteers to keep coming back. Access to appropriate materials, workspaces, and technology strengthens both results and retention.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“A policy and procedure exists for reimbursement for volunteer out-of-pocket expenses.”

While volunteers aren’t paid for their work, they shouldn’t have to pay to work. Are you aware of any out-of-pocket expenses required of your volunteers to participate? As Volunteering Australia points out, these can hinder volunteer involvement, and keep volunteers from returning.

Address these potential expenses when gathering feedback from volunteers. Create policies and processes for when and how you’ll reimburse volunteers’ expenses. Ensure volunteers are aware of these policies, so they feel recognised and appreciated for their contributions.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5



“Staff with volunteer involvement responsibilities are provided with training, supervision and resources to effectively undertake this role.”

Don’t let your volunteers go it alone. They need proper training, support, and guidance to understand the value and importance of their roles. This means they need leadership and supervision. There should be a known coordinator or manager(s) for volunteers.

Are the employees responsible for managing volunteers provided with the necessary resources? Do they have the skills, abilities, and training to lead volunteers safely and successfully?

This could include workshops on best practices for recruiting and maintaining volunteers, as well as seminars about the legal obligations of overseeing volunteers. Volunteer managers should have access to helpful tools and technology, such as an up-to-date volunteer database system and communication platforms. By investing in your volunteer managers, your organisation can manage its volunteer base efficiently and effectively.

Current Ranking: 1 2 3 4 5

Assessing Your Commitment to Volunteer Involvement Standards

WHAT'S NEXT?


Review the Current Rankings of each Criteria and Evidence Checklist. Highlight where you need to improve and the areas you're proficient in. Prioritise your efforts accordingly, starting with Criteria 2.1 and working your way forward. Beginning with your vision will allow you to plan, design, and allocate resources efficiently.

Use this practice to help evaluate your strengths and weaknesses:

- What is your strongest Standard 2 Criterion?
- Which Criterion needs to improve the most?
- What actions are easiest to implement?
- What actions are the most challenging to implement?







How to Implement Standard 2 to Increase Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

Where should you begin?

Let's commit to the cause by exploring Steps 2 and 3 of Volunteering Australia's 10 Steps to Implementing the National Standards. Steps 2 and 3 are recommendations for larger organisations. These steps are relevant to you if:

- You have a governing body of organisation leaders.
- You have the human resources to establish a dedicated team to implement the National Standards.

If your organisation meets these criteria, move forward to take action. If your organisation doesn't, you can skip ahead to Step 4.

Remember: Each step provides recommendations for how to implement the Standards. Feel free to adapt and adjust the tasks to meet your organisation's needs, goals, and resources. Start with Step 2 by reviewing each Task:

Step 2: Gain Leadership Commitment

» Task 1: Create a Presentation.

Put together a presentation to share with your organisation's management team showcasing the value of implementing the National Standards. Use your findings from Step 1 and the principles taught in this Module to guide you.

Here are a few helpful pointers to guide you:

- **Before you can ask for a commitment, commit yourself.** Explore and understand your 'why' — why are volunteers so valuable to your organisation's purpose? Get clear on the details, policies, and processes around their roles.



- **Be specific and measurable.** Highlight how the National Standards can support your specific organisation's objectives. Share measurable outcomes, such as potential increase in volunteer recruitment and retention, smarter volunteer budgeting, and interested contributors.
- **Don't just share *why* — share *what*.** It's easy to point out problems and goals; it's not always easy to propose solutions. In addition to expressing why your organisation should implement the Standards, outline a plan for how you'll implement them. Show them you're ready to take action. (Luckily, many of these steps are outlined for you in this program!)
- **Be positive.** Focus more on how the National Standards can benefit your organisation and less on how you aren't currently meeting them.
- **Recruit outside help.** There's strength in numbers! Call on other volunteer managers or experts to help validate your proposal.

» Task 2: Get a Formal Agreement.

Before moving forward, get a formal agreement from the management team verifying their approval and commitment to the plan. Get it in writing, if you can. This will prove valuable as you take on the role of the leader of the project.

How to Implement Standard 2 to Increase Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

Step 3: Build Your National Standards Team

» Task 1: Recruit Your Team!

Appoint your team members with a clear strategy. First, determine the roles needed for your plan:

- How many members can your team have?
- What skills, knowledge, and abilities do you need on your team?
- Who is most passionate and familiar with volunteer involvement within your organisation?
- What is the estimated time commitment for team members?

Find members who have the experience and expertise, the capacity and the desire to take on the responsibilities of implementing the National Standards. You may even consider recruiting a loyal volunteer to consult with your team.

» Task 2: Train Your Team.

Once you've built your team, it's time to build your members up. Share the National Standards with each member, and ask that they review them before your first meeting.

Make the time during your first meeting to explore each Standard. Review the Criteria together, and open it up for discussion. Encourage members to connect with, and reflect on, each Standard by preparing insightful questions and prompts. The principles and resources from this program will help to guide you!

» Task 3: Develop Your Team's Mission.

Work together to brainstorm your team's core purpose and mission in implementing the National Standards. Find a common goal and vision that you're passionate about. Clearly define how you'll know if your team has succeeded and completed your mission.

As always, capture it in writing. Review your mission at the beginning of each meeting to stay focused on what matters most.

» Task 4: Assign Roles.

- Outline the responsibilities and duties of your team in fulfilling your mission.
- Divide these into actionable tasks, and begin scheduling the logistics.
- Assign roles to each member, or consider letting members volunteer to oversee these tasks. Smart delegation will help speed up and simplify your goals.

» Task 5: Train, Learn, and Review.

Determine how often you'll meet. Use your initial meetings to train and understand the National Standards. Once you build momentum, your meetings will serve as an accountability check, helping the team review their progress. Treat your team as equal leaders, acknowledging and encouraging their input.

Continue to learn, assess, and adapt your efforts accordingly. The National Standards are all about progress. Never stop growing!



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>
- **Peter F. Drucker Quote**
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/452830-unless-commitment-is-made-there-are-only-promises-and-hopes>
- **Volunteering in Australia 2022 - The Organisation Perspective**
<https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Organisation-Perspective.pdf>
- **Commitment to Volunteer Involvement**
<https://volunteeringhub.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Commitment%20to%20Volunteer%20Involvement.pdf>



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Department of Social Services

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.