

Common Languages Guide

The Common Languages Guide outlines a generally accepted glossary of terms and definitions widely used in the volunteering sector. Volunteering Australia, as the national peak body for volunteering in the country, encourages the use of the Common Languages Guide for consistency across the sector.

Please note: The guidance provided, including the application, phrasing and capitalisation of words, are deliberate.

volunteers

noun

Those who give their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

Volunteering Australia

noun

Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the Australian community.

State/Territory volunteering peak body

noun

There are seven State and Territory volunteering peak bodies that deliver state/territory and local volunteering programs and initiatives in accordance with the Government's priorities.

Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO)

noun

Any organisation/company/department that engages volunteers may be known as a Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO).

Volunteering Support Service (VSS); Volunteer Support Organisation (VSO); Volunteer Resource Centre (VRC)

noun

Volunteering Support Service, Volunteer Support Organisation or Volunteer Resource Centre are place-based organisations that promote, resource and support volunteering in local communities. They empower people to volunteer and help ensure that their experience is positive and safe. They help the thousands of community organisations that rely on volunteers to recruit, retain, manage and recognise those volunteers.

volunteering

verb

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

formal volunteering

verb

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way.

informal volunteering

verb

Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain, taking place outside the context of a formal organisation. This includes assisting people in the community, excluding one's own family members. For example, looking after children, property or pets; providing home or personal assistance; or giving someone professional advice.

manager/s of volunteers

noun

The person/s who are responsible for the recruitment, induction, training and supervision of volunteers, and who provide ongoing support for volunteers in an organisation.

spontaneous volunteers

noun

People who are not affiliated with recognised volunteer agencies, and may not have relevant training, skills or experience, but seek out or are invited to contribute their assistance to various volunteering opportunities.

spontaneous emergency volunteers

noun

People who seek or are invited to contribute their assistance before, during and/or after an emergency, and who are not affiliated with recognised volunteer agencies, and may or may not have relevant training, skills or experience.

corporate volunteering

verb

Where paid staff from a corporate or small or medium sized business engage in unpaid work for a community organisation during work hours for a wider societal benefit, and for the benefit of the volunteer and for the business.

employee volunteering

verb

Employee volunteering involves the contribution of time, talent, skills and resources by the workforce for a wider societal benefit.

employee volunteering program

A program where paid employees are given work time and/or payment by their employer to volunteer with another organisation such as a charity. The activities undertaken by Employee Volunteering Programs have been categorised into two main types:

- Skills-based volunteering
- Short-term team volunteering

skills-based volunteering

Where individual employees, with professional qualifications and/or experience, offer their skills and expertise to Volunteer Involving Organisations to implement particular projects to enhance community capacity (e.g. web design, development of risk management/business continuity plans, evaluation frameworks, marketing plans, financial management/account systems advice, landscaping).

The definition of a skills-based volunteer has broadened to include those who volunteer outside of an employee volunteering capacity (e.g. people between work, unemployed, retired/semi-retired).

short-term team volunteering

Where groups of employees volunteer together on a task to assist Volunteer Involving Organisations; usually these tasks are physical in nature and short term (examples are: makeovers of buildings/gardens, environmental restoration, practical assistance with events). Team-based projects may also include short-term, strategic planning projects, visioning, technology hack-a-thons, marketing research, etc. Oftentimes, practical, hands-on activities are being supplemented by these types of team-based giving.

virtual volunteering or online volunteering (e-volunteering)

verb

Virtual or Online volunteering allows skilled and passionate individuals to work with organisations remotely. Volunteer tasks are completed online, and interaction is through a digital platform or via email.

episodic volunteering

verb

This refers to those who volunteer on a periodic or recurring basis, as opposed to an ongoing capacity. It could include people who are engaged in project-based volunteering.

micro-volunteering

verb

This describes an individual, or group of volunteers who complete small tasks that contribute to a larger project. Often these can benefit charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

international and/or cross-national volunteering

verb

International volunteering is when volunteers contribute to projects or activities outside of their home countries or across national borders.

group volunteering

noun

People who assist communities in groups, as opposed to individually, by giving their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

youth volunteering

noun

Young people (those aged 15-24), who give their time willingly for the common good and without financial gain.

student volunteering

verb

This type of volunteering is undertaken by students, and can assist with building skills, experience, knowledge and interest.

family volunteering

verb

Family volunteering is undertaken by family members, and allows for family members to enjoy the benefits of volunteering while spending quality time with each other. Family volunteering can be a practical way to express values to children and young people.

voluntourism

verb

This is a combination of volunteering and tourism, and can be a popular form of international travel that allows individuals to engage in volunteering abroad.

National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015)

noun

The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (2015) are recognised as the best-practice guide for volunteer involvement in Australia. The Standards are the intellectual property of Volunteering Australia.

2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report

noun

The 2016 State of Volunteering in Australia report details the trends, demographics, challenges and successes in the volunteering sector in Australia.

National Volunteering Conference

noun

The National Volunteering Conference is Volunteering Australia's premier biennial volunteering leadership event, to advance volunteering through knowledge sharing and discussion.

National Volunteer Week (NVW)

noun

National Volunteer Week is the annual celebration to acknowledge the generous contribution of Australia's volunteers.

National Student Volunteer Week (NSVW)

noun

National Student Volunteer Week (NSVW) is a week of events, activities and campaigns that promote student volunteering led by higher education providers and schools across Australia.

International Volunteer Day (IVD)

noun

International Volunteer Day (IVD) is an annual event auspiced by United Nations Volunteers, aimed at raising awareness on the important role volunteers play in responding to challenges facing the world.

International Volunteer Management Day (IVMDay)

noun

International Volunteer Managers Day (IVMDay) is the annual celebration of the profession of volunteer leadership across the world.

GoVolunteer

noun

GoVolunteer is an initiative of Volunteering Australia, aimed at matching people who are interested in volunteering with appropriate volunteering opportunities. The website uses a national database of volunteering opportunities.

VIKTOR

noun

VIKTOR is Australia's comprehensive volunteering platform that was built by the volunteering sector to connect Volunteer Involving Organisations, business, Universities, Volunteering Support Services and volunteers to benefit our communities. VIKTOR feeds the largest database of volunteers and organisations in Australia. This national volunteering database is the single source for a huge network of apps and websites that connect to VIKTOR, including SEEK Volunteer, Volunteer Profile and the GoVolunteer App.

Volunteer Information Records Administrator (VIRA)

noun

VIRA is a volunteer management tool that allows Volunteer Involving Organisations to record volunteers' personal details, contribution in hours, services provided, recognition, reimbursement, and training undertaken.

International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)

noun

The International Association for Volunteer Effort or IAVE, exists to promote, strength and celebrate volunteering in all ways it happens throughout the world.

Australasian Association for Managers for Volunteers (AAMoV)

noun

The Australasian Association for Managers of Volunteers (AAMoV) is the professional association for individuals across all sections of the community who are involved with managing volunteer programs within the Australasian region, including Australia and New Zealand.

Victorian Volunteering Support Network (VVSN)

noun

Victoria's state-based network of Volunteering Support Services who support local, place-based solutions in response to community need.

Volunteer Centre Network (VCN)

noun

New South Wales state-based network of Volunteering Support Services who support local, place-based solutions in response to community need.

WA VRC Network

noun

Western Australian state-based network of Volunteering Support Services who support local, place-based solutions in response to community need.

Federal Government

noun

Also known as the Commonwealth Government or Australian Government, is the term used for the Government of Australia.

States and Territories

noun

Australia's partially self-governing, administrative divisions.

engage or involve volunteers

Volunteers are 'engaged' or 'involved' in a wide variety of activities or initiatives that support the community. They are not utilised or used, which suggests that volunteers are being taken advantage of or exploited.

volunteer recognition

This encompasses recognising the volunteer contribution, and ensuring the value and impact of the voluntary involvement is understood, appreciated and acknowledged.

volunteer roles

Volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles which contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.

recruitment and selection

Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies, policies and procedures are planned, consistent and meet the needs of the organisation and volunteers.

leadership and management

The governing body and senior employees/volunteers lead and promote a positive culture towards volunteering and implement effective management systems to support volunteer involvement.