Including Volunteer Contributions in Grant Applications

Writing grant applications can be a resource intensive process, but there are many organisations and

The Narrative

Granting bodies want to understand your organisation and be satisfied that any financial contribution will have the desired impact. Many grant applications will require information about your organisation and its governance, about your impact in the community, and about expected outcomes from the project.

Throughout this narrative, including how your organisation involves volunteers can help to demonstrate:

- more effective and efficient delivery of projects;
- that you are actively including a diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge in project delivery; and,
- you have a commitment to building and strengthening community connections and relationships.

You may also wish to quantify the value of including volunteers. Robust cost-benefit modelling has demonstrated that an investment in volunteering yields a positive and significant return in terms of net benefits to the community. Online calculators are available that can help you to estimate the value and impact of volunteer involvement in your project, such as VolunteeringWA's Volunteer Benefits Calculator.

The Budget

Many grant applications allow for the inclusion of in-kind contributions in the budget. If you are planning to involve volunteers in the delivery of the project, their contribution should be included here. To calculate this, you will need to apply an equivalent hourly rate to the volunteer involvement.

However, while including volunteers represents an in-kind contribution, it is vital to also calculate and include the additional costs of supporting and resourcing that volunteer involvement. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Staffing costs for a dedicated volunteer manager.
- Training for the volunteers.
- Office resources such as IT equipment and overheads.
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.

Recordkeeping and Acquittal

If your grant application is successful, you will be required to report back to the funding body. If volunteer involvement has been included in the project, you should have processes and systems in place to record their contribution, including the number of volunteer hours contributed to the project. It may also be worth keeping at a high-level information on things such as:

- The type of work undertaken by volunteers
- Feedback from the volunteers on their involvement and the benefits
- The diversity of the volunteers involved

Whilst this information is useful for the grant acquittal process it can also provide narrative for other reporting on the organisations' performance including your Annual Report.