

# Recognising Volunteers

When volunteers are recruited to your organisation it makes the utmost sense to make every effort to retain them. A crucial part of retention is recognising the effort and value of your volunteer workforce.

Volunteer recognition can take many forms, from informal gestures on the job, right through to formal recognition events. The ways in which volunteer involvement is recognised is important. Whilst some volunteers may like one type of recognition, another may feel it has little worth. Understanding volunteer motivations may help to inform what type of recognition may be appropriate for that volunteer. For example, if a volunteer is hoping to obtain employment, they may value opportunities to receive training or gain written references for their resume.

It is also important to ensure volunteer recognition is appropriate not only to the role, but that it is respectful of cultural values and perspectives.

The value of volunteer recognition should also be considered at an organisational level. All staff should understand the importance of volunteer recognition and how they can show recognition in daily activities.

Some ways that volunteer organisations may recognise their volunteers are:

- Encouraging volunteer participation in team planning
- Providing training opportunities
- Providing opportunities for additional responsibility
- Enabling volunteers to 'grow' on the job
- Including volunteers in special events
- Including volunteers in coffee breaks
- Recommending volunteers to prospective employers
- Celebrating achievements and efforts
- Providing letters of reference
- Where appropriate, sending birthday cards
- Allocating notice board space to celebrate volunteer involvement
- Organising awards with certificates, plaques or medals
- Honouring volunteers during National Volunteer Week and/or on International Volunteer Day

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