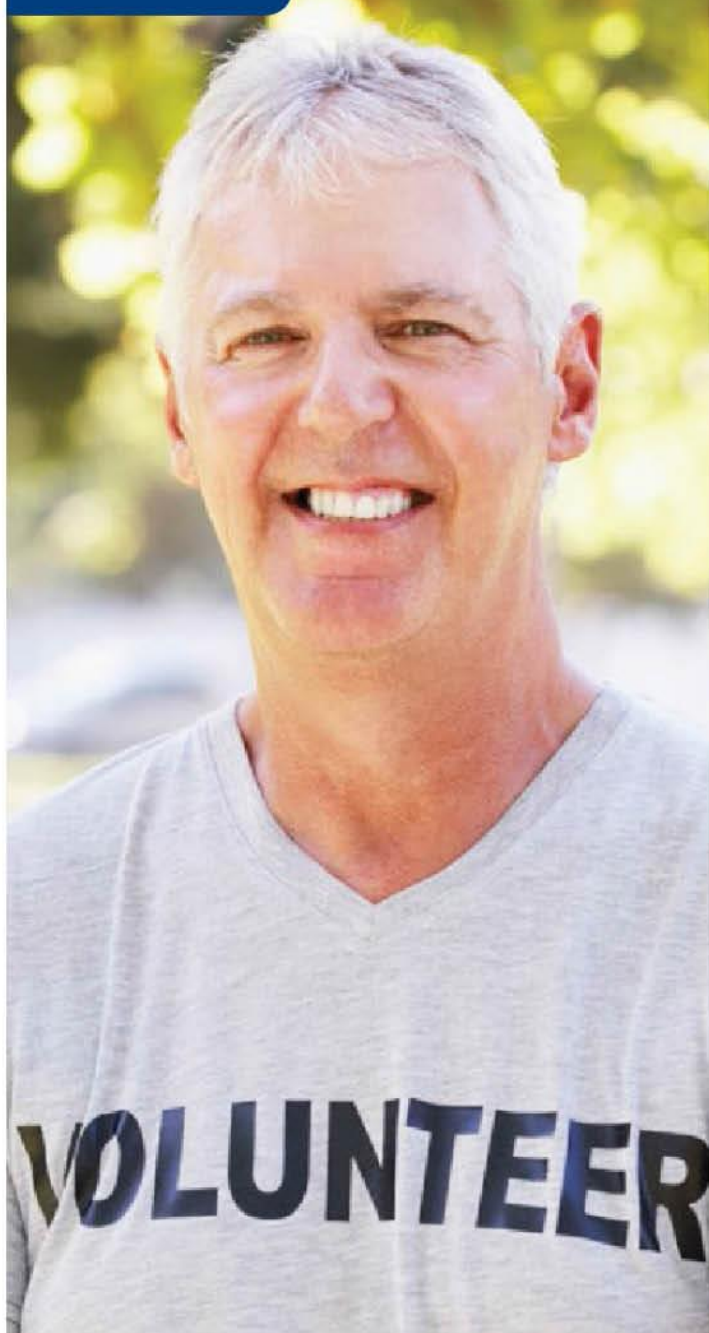




Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion



Volunteer Information Book

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Welcome

A warm welcome is extended to you, as you consider joining the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) volunteering community.

DCSI is committed to ensuring that volunteers are encouraged, supported, and their contributions are acknowledged and valued.

As a volunteer, DCSI would like you to share the department's vision:

"...to work with those who, through circumstance, may be poor, vulnerable, at risk of harm or isolated, to connect them to choices and opportunities. This mission is a privilege and a responsibility. It means working together, and with others, to connect individuals, families and communities to choices and opportunities."

Volunteering activities contribute significantly to this vision.

This information book provides a brief overview of what to expect when volunteering with DCSI and anticipates some of the questions which may be asked by volunteers before they begin volunteering with us.

The compilation of information is intended to be used in conjunction with more detailed information which volunteers receive during their orientation, training and in the course of their association with us. Volunteers are encouraged to take the time to familiarise themselves with this information. More assistance is available from your Volunteer Manager.

DCSI is committed to providing support and opportunities to volunteers, where all individuals feel welcome and are able to contribute meaningfully and safely.

It is hoped that your connection with DCSI will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Opportunities for involvement

Volunteers make an immense contribution to our society. This section provides information about volunteering opportunities with DCSI.

Helping people with a disability

Government disability services provide a state-wide range of community and accommodation services to people with a disability.

For more information about volunteering opportunities within government disability services, contact the Volunteer Manager at either Strathmont Centre (Oakden) on 8266 8539 or Highgate Park (Fullarton) on 3872 1400.

Get involved in Domiciliary Care

Domiciliary Care helps people with reduced ability to care for themselves, helping them to stay living in their own homes close to loved ones, family and their local community. Volunteer consumer committees meet regularly to provide advice and consultation for service improvement.

For more information about volunteering opportunities with Domiciliary Care, contact their Volunteer Coordinator by phoning 08 8132 6015.

Volunteering to help with disaster recovery

Volunteers play a vital role in the recovery effort following disasters such as floods, droughts, storms and bushfires.

Volunteers may register to assist in recovery operations by contacting Volunteering SA&NT on 1300 782 322 or via their website at <http://www.volunteering.sa.org.au/>.

Help support the Women's Information Service

Volunteers at Women's Information Service (WIS) work with women from all different walks of life, and currently WIS have two areas of volunteering:

1. WIS Shopfront and Community Engagement

WIS shopfront volunteers provide information and referrals to women who call the WIS phone line or visit the WIS city location in person. There are also opportunities to volunteer at community events on WIS stalls and to provide talks about WIS to student groups.

2. Family Court Support

WIS Family Court Support volunteers attend court with women who don't have friends or family to provide support. Many of the cases involve a history of domestic violence and the court process can be daunting and difficult to navigate. WIS volunteers provide information about the court and its processes, sit with the woman before and during the hearing and provide a listening ear.

For more information about volunteering opportunities at Women's Information Service, contact them by phoning 08 8303 0590 or apply on line by visiting <https://app.betterimpact.com/Application/?OrganizationGuid=93e74152-57e1-438f-9fd7-2679c569a498&ApplicationFormNumber=1>

Other volunteering opportunities

There are many other volunteering opportunities available across South Australia. Volunteer work is available in community services, education, emergency services, sport and recreation, health, tourism, the arts, the environment and more.

To find out more about how you can become a volunteer and help others, contact Volunteering SA&NT by phoning 8221 7177, emailing reception@volunteeringsa-nt.org.au or visiting www.volunteeringsa-nt.org.au.

About volunteering

Volunteering can provide the chance to meet new people, share knowledge and experience and learn new skills, while giving something back to the community.

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is a person who undertakes an activity, unpaid, that aims to benefit the community. This can include formal activity through an organisation, as well as more informal community participation, such as helping an elderly neighbour with their grocery shopping.

Volunteers do not replace paid staff but add value to the important diverse work that DCSI business units perform.

Volunteering with DCSI can enrich the life of disadvantaged people by:

- helping break down the barriers to service delivery
- utilising a diversity of skills for community interaction
- assisting in the delay or prevention of public dependency
- developing extensive networking both informally and formally
- advocating for clients when they identify needs and problems
- protecting organisations when criticism is unjustified
- improving the quality of life for clients
- assisting people to participate in activities to help ensure social inclusion.

Perhaps most importantly volunteers can strengthen and empower people to remain in control of their own lives and future.

What is expected of you?

Volunteers are invited to think about what skills, knowledge, experience, and time commitment they can bring to volunteering within DCSI and how they would like to be involved.

Volunteer Managers will then work with volunteers to consider and plan how their knowledge, skills and personal attributes can be matched to volunteer roles and tasks available. Through this approach, both the needs of the volunteer and the agency, have the best chance of being fulfilled.

As a volunteer you will be expected to:

- contribute to teamwork in a flexible, fair and reasonable manner which contributes to harmony amongst volunteers, staff and services
- adhere to confidentiality and privacy principles
- treat people with respect and courtesy
- be reliable and accountable
- work within the parameters of the task and your ability
- participate in training as required and support meetings
- participate in supervision inclusive of periodic review.

Volunteer Conduct

Volunteers work together and with paid staff to connect recipients of services to a range of choices and opportunities. This role has responsibilities which place volunteers in a unique position of trust, requiring standards of ethical behaviour that reflect community expectations.

DCSI values the contribution of volunteers in supporting the delivery of vital client services and, therefore, requires volunteers to be committed to our key principles.

The following principles underpin an ethical approach:

- democratic values
- service, respect and courtesy
- accountability
- professional conduct standards.

Volunteers will be expected to conduct themselves in a way which will not reflect adversely on the agency and the clients we serve. Volunteers will be expected to declare any conflict of interest and, if uncertain, consult the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers should not accept gifts, benefits or favours which may influence their objectivity with clients.

Although volunteers are not bound under the Public Sector Act in the way that employees are, volunteers are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector. Therefore, it is important that volunteers are familiar with the content of this Code.

Business units and your Volunteer Manager will have copies of the Public Service Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector and more information is available from The Office of the Public Sector. For further information, go to <http://publicsector.sa.gov.au/policies-standards/code-of-ethics/>.

Notification of abuse or neglect

As a volunteer you may come into contact with challenging client family situations. If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formulated in the course of your volunteer work, you have an obligation to notify your Volunteer Manager. This is a legal responsibility and you are liable to a penalty if you do not report concerns of abuse or non-accidental injury inflicted upon a child.

Your role in this situation is not to investigate or prove abuse happened, but limited to reporting reasonable suspicion. Do not interview the child as this may interfere with the process, be beyond the role of a volunteer, and could increase the chance for you to be a witness in a criminal court to give evidence.

The social worker involved or the Volunteer Manager will be available to talk with and you can call the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 1478 to discuss the concerns further.

Before starting

Once you've made a decision to volunteer, there are several steps to becoming part of the DCSI volunteering community.

Interview

Prior to commencing voluntary work you will be interviewed to ascertain your suitability for and interest in the tasks that you will be given to undertake. The interview process also provides the opportunity for any questions that you may have to be answered.

Your interview will most likely take place at the location close to where you live or elect to become a volunteer.

Screening – Criminal History Checks

Before beginning as a volunteer with DCSI, you will be required to undergo a criminal history check, through the DCSI Screening Unit.

DCSI policy includes the criminal history check of all persons seeking to do voluntary work in positions which have regular direct contact with clients.

Volunteers who sit on boards and committees may not be required to have a criminal history check.

Prospective volunteers will have responsibility to sign an appropriate consent form to conduct a check. A past mistake does not necessarily preclude potential volunteers being involved but certain offence types may preclude direct involvement with clients. The *Volunteer Operational Guidelines* have more detailed information.

DCSI's Screening Unit provides a centralised and consistent approach to the screening and assessment of criminal history records for all DCSI volunteers in accordance with DCSI obligations in relation to vulnerable people. Should you require any further information or have concerns about the criminal history checking process you could contact the Screening Unit on 1300 321 592 or screening@dcsi.sa.gov.au.

Screening may involve referee checks, which could include non-family members, such as an employer or organisations you have volunteered with previously.

Orientation

Orientation programs will cover a range of topics and provide access to relevant information which includes:

- policy
- operational guidelines
- overview of DCSI and the operational divisions including organisational chart
- team roles and responsibilities
- confidentiality
- cultural awareness
- work health and safety.

Induction

Volunteers will have access to an induction process to ensure they are familiar with the location they work and are able to perform tasks in a positive successful way. Induction may involve experienced volunteers and staff working jointly with a Volunteer Manager to cover a range of topics which include:

- task description
- reporting lines
- safety
- claim forms
- administrative procedures
- use of facilities and vehicles
- first aid locations, emergency exits and fire procedures.

All volunteers will be expected to participate in induction sessions with their Volunteer Manager or other delegated person.

This is an excellent time to share with staff and fellow volunteers your own past experiences, skills and knowledge, including what you expect from volunteering with DCSI. It allows a good opportunity to be familiar with the mandated tasks and wide involvement of DCSI, its services and systems, and its mandate to provide support to vulnerable and disadvantaged people living in the community through the commitment of both staff and volunteers.

Training

Volunteers benefit from training and development activities. Training may be required to assist volunteers perform their volunteer duties, provide them with information in relation to a program they will be involved in delivering or to meet legislative obligations. Volunteers should be made aware of any training requirements and/or opportunities available to them and assist with the identification of training needs.

Use of government equipment and services

Volunteers have the same responsibilities as paid staff when using government equipment and services. All instructions in the use of specific equipment must be complied with including the reporting of any faulty equipment to ensure safe working environments.

Government vehicles and travel

Driving vehicles is a significant hazard which needs to be managed carefully.

Please be careful at all times when travelling. This applies particularly when negotiating difficult terrain, in adverse weather conditions and in vehicles with which you are unfamiliar.

All government vehicles need to be driven in accordance with the government's Fleet SA policy. Suitability to drive a government vehicle depends on assessment by a staff member, proof of licence, and completion of the relevant DCSI processes, including completion of the [DCSI Specific Non Public Sector Driver and/or Non Public Sector Passenger Vehicle Use Agreement](#) – please see your Volunteer Manager for more details.

In addition, neither staff nor volunteers can drive a departmental 4WD vehicle without having completed an accredited 4WD training course and shown proof of certification.

Volunteers on DCSI business are permitted to travel in government vehicles if they are formally registered as a DCSI volunteer.

Email security

Access to electronic mail and internet technology is available to volunteers when relevant. The Information Technology Security Policy can be found on the DCSI intranet site under 'policies' or ask your Volunteer Manager for a paper copy. All staff and volunteers are expected to comply with the proper use of email, internet and intranet sites. You will be accountable for any non-compliance. Volunteers are expected to use resources correctly and in an ethical conscientious manner.

Out of pocket expenses

Although volunteers should not receive payment for their tasks they should not be out of pocket as a result of carrying out assigned tasks.

Reimbursement is to be arranged and agreed to with the Volunteer Manager prior to any expense being incurred. Your Volunteer Manager will make available the expense claim forms used to make a claim or assist you find the form on the intranet site, and ensure you are aware of the procedure for claiming expenses.

Please read any local operating procedures and the *Volunteer Operational Guidelines* previously referred to prior to making a claim for expenses.

Please note: Out of pocket expenses do not include: parking infringements, speeding fines or any other traffic offences.

Your health, safety and wellbeing

Work health and safety (WH&S)

Volunteers and DCSI staff have the same responsibility and accountability under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* as workers. This means the department has a duty of care and is responsible to provide volunteers with a safe working environment. It also means you, as a volunteer, have a responsibility to work safely, and observe any safety measures or policies that are in place, including DCSI's WH&S policies and procedures.

Some volunteer activities require basic instruction or formal training before they can be undertaken, for example, using specialised equipment. Whilst many activities don't require formal training, if you are unfamiliar with an activity, you will need to be shown by an experienced DCSI staff member.

You will be encouraged to assist DCSI to identify any potential risk (reporting of any hazards, accidents or near misses as a part of the overall hazard management process). DCSI welcomes your input and is committed to consultation with volunteers and staff.

You should seek out from the Volunteer Manager the local policy and procedures regarding health and safety. Your induction should inform you who the WH&S representative is and other staff such as designated Fire Wardens and First Aid Officers.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions of your Volunteer Manager for help relating to WH&S information – remember, your safety is of utmost importance.

Volunteer rights and insurance cover

Whilst the *Volunteers Protection Act 2001* gives legal protection from personal liability to volunteers doing voluntary work for an incorporated community organisation or government organisation, it does not cover additional matters such as personal injury.

To ensure protection in relation to personal injury, volunteers are covered under DCSI's insurance through SAICORP – (the insurance division of the South Australian Government Financing Authority) – for any loss of life, injury to person, or damage to property cause or suffered whilst carrying out DCSI approved volunteer activities, except in the cases of:

- defamation
- liabilities covered under compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance
- volunteers affected by alcohol or recreational drugs
- volunteers acting outside of or contrary to activities approved by DCSI.

If an accident occurs, it needs to be reported to a DCSI staff member as soon as possible. You then need to complete a Medicare or private health cover claim, after which the government meets any non recompensable expenditure with regard to:

- medical costs (with the exception of any Medicare 'gap' payments)
- reasonable rehabilitation costs.

When making a claim you will need to state that you were volunteering at the time, as the insurance cover is administered differently to Workcover. Civil liability (with provisions) is covered by the volunteers' indemnity legislation. Officer bearers and committee members are also covered under the *Volunteer Protection Act 2001* or SAICORP.

Equal opportunity

DCSI believes that everyone should have the opportunity to make a positive contribution through volunteering.

As an employer, DCSI has a legal and ethical responsibility for providing volunteers with an environment that is free of bullying, humiliating, undermining or threatening behaviour.

In line with the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, no one is to behave in such a way that is or could be deemed discriminatory, or to treat others unfavourably on the grounds of sex, race, impairment or age. The Act applies equally to volunteers as it does to department staff.

Disputes and grievances

Should a dispute arise, it is important that problems are brought to light early and resolved using the correct process and procedures. In the first instance it should be worked through with the Manager of the location. Depending on the circumstances, further assistance and advice may also be sought from your Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers have the right to express grievances, dissatisfaction and concerns with the volunteer program or department and to have their grievances heard, respected and dealt with in a professional, efficient and fair manner.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides limited counselling and support services for assistance with a challenging issue.

Through the program, volunteers are entitled to one (1) free session with an EAP Counsellor if the issue relates to a workplace incident or event.

The volunteer can contact the EAP service provider direct to arrange an appointment by calling PPC Worldwide on 1300 361 008 or talk to the Manager, Workforce Health and Safety on 8415 4191.

Note: Any discussions or information provided will be treated in confidence and with sensitivity

Diversity

DCSI is fortunate to have attracted a culturally and socially diverse (people with disabilities, different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, age and gender) paid and volunteer staff that offer a rich array of expertise, skills and knowledge.

In the course of your volunteering duties you will interact with people from a variety of these backgrounds. Therefore, being able to work with all people is an essential element of DCSI operations.

Respecting the identity of others is also important to both volunteers and staff when delivering services to the community. Valuing diversity is extremely important in providing a full range of services to the many clients we serve from different cultural and social backgrounds.

What do I do in case of an emergency?

Volunteers are expected to make themselves familiar with evacuation procedures and participate in any practice drills from time to time. Follow instructions from the warden in your area and always remain at the designated assembly area until otherwise instructed.

Priorities will vary according to the emergency but a first priority is to protect life and ensure that any people in danger are warned. Provided life is not in danger take reasonable measures to help secure essential work you are involved with and take your personal items with you to the assembly area.

Your induction at the location you are involved with will provide the detail of their evacuation / emergency response procedure.

Smoke Free Workplace Policy

DCSI recognises that active and passive smoking is hazardous to health, and that all those who enter DCSI premises (staff, volunteers, students and researchers as well as clients, contractors and visitors) should be protected from the involuntary inhalation of tobacco smoke.

The new Smoke Free Workplace Policy prohibits smoking at all government facilities, including all buildings, structures, outdoor areas and government vehicles. This includes on-site car parks, and therefore you cannot smoke in any vehicles (including private cars) if they are located on-site.

All volunteers are encouraged to comply with the Smoke Free Workplace Policy. Consistent breaching of the policy may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Support is available to those who wish to quit smoking, and further information about the policy is available on the DCSI intranet or from your Volunteer Manager.

Standards of practice

DCSI is committed to business practice consistent with the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

Volunteers will be expected to carry out their roles in a manner consistent with these standards and can be expected to be managed in a manner consistent with those standards.

To download a copy of the National Standards visit:

<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/2015/05/the-new-national-standards-for-volunteer-involvement/>

Some useful resources

The following resources are available on the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion website at www.dcsi.sa.gov.au

- [DCSI Volunteer Policy](#)
- [DCSI Volunteer Charter of Mutual Obligation](#)
- [DCSI Volunteer Operational Guidelines](#)
- [Engaging Older Volunteers Project – Research Report, July 2007](#)
- Resources to Engage Older Volunteers: hints for volunteer program managers
- Engaging Older Volunteers Project – contingencies for engaging older volunteers in emergency recovery

Other useful websites

- Office for Volunteers: www.ofv.sa.gov.au
- Volunteering SA & NT: www.volunteering.sa.gov.au
- Volunteering Australia: www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au