



# Best Practice Guidelines

FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS

Version 2.0 February 2015

**ORGANISATION NAME:**

**DATE:**

**PARTICIPANTS:**

# Best Practice Guidelines

## FOR VOLUNTEER-INVOLVING ORGANISATIONS



For many New Zealand organisations, the involvement of volunteers makes the difference between being able to achieve their mission and objectives, and not achieving them. Volunteers, therefore, are a precious resource. Behind every great volunteer programme, there is someone who makes sure the right people are in the right roles, doing the right thing, at the right time.

Since late 2009, Volunteering New Zealand has been undertaking a major initiative dedicated to the support and development of managers and coordinators of volunteers.

We have been unmasking the often-invisible role of managers and coordinators, and promoting the importance of what they do to make volunteering happen. There is considerable diversity among volunteer-involving organisations in New Zealand. The need for the wider organisation to be engaged with what volunteers do,

and how they are supported, cuts across them all.

There is much to celebrate about volunteering in New Zealand. Not least, the near \$7 billion impact on our nation's GDP, announced by government in 2014. We also have the real prospect of this increasing as our baby-boomer generation apply their experience and talents to their *un-retirement* (divesting themselves of some of their paid workplace responsibilities to take on the rewards that are reaped through unpaid, productive employment).

*Where would your organisation be without your manager of volunteers?*

In 2014, New Zealand achieved a rating of 5th in the world for giving, up from the 8th placing we held when the first version of these Guidelines was launched in 2012. We also reached the number one spot on Harvard University's Social Progress Index.

Clearly there are many volunteer-involving organisations working creatively and collaboratively, towards amazing outcomes. In these organisations, volunteers and paid staff are respectful and supportive of each other's work – building productive teams where people with responsibility for volunteering have a key strategic voice. The best way to learn from these high-performing organisations is by sharing their stories and innovations.

That's where these revised **Best Practice Guidelines** come in...

## What are the Best Practice Guidelines?

They are designed to be a thinking process tool; a way to 'think aloud' about your people, your organisation and its goals.

The Guidelines are a way to:

- identify your current 'reality'
- identify what you want the future to look like
- unleash your potential by working together as a team on WHAT changes you want and HOW you're going to make them.

In essence, the Guidelines are an **aspirational set of targets and pointers** designed to support your

management team to get the best out of the volunteer programme, and enhance your organisation's attractiveness to volunteers and paid staff alike.

**They give you the opportunity to celebrate your successes and set goals for the future.**

1. We expect that your team will spend approximately 90 minutes completing these Guidelines in their entirety. That's around 25 minutes on each of the four parts. Of course, you can choose to spend longer on some parts, and others might not take you that long! The most important thing is to not let yourselves get bogged down in details, or start 'over-thinking'

your responses. If this happens, take a break and think about what the roadblock is: Can't think of examples? Check your annual report, your website or do a quick whiteboard brainstorm. Sometimes you get so caught up in 'doing what you do' that you can't see your achievements.

2. Think the questions don't apply to you? Have a 5 minute 'blue sky thinking' time. Would you like these things to apply to you? Could it be a goal to, for example, make sure people with responsibility for volunteers have access to a budget? Could you create the first steps of a plan toward it?
3. Finding that the team has actually stumbled across a disagreement or unresolved issue? Stop working on the Guidelines and decide instead to

work together on righting this. You won't be able to effectively complete the Guidelines if there's conflict amongst the team.

Volunteering New Zealand has been building up a **best practice bank**, where you can find examples of other New Zealand organisations putting principles and learning into practice through use of the Guidelines. You'll be able to see what they're doing, how they're making it work and why they're bothering in the first place. We have put together a Best Practice Toolkit: the Guidelines, Goal Planner, Work Performance Indicator, Team Performance Analysis and an Exemplar (with answers from real organisations, so you can see what other people are thinking about what Best Practice looks like and how to get there).

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## Definitions and Notes

### Staff:

In the Guidelines, the word 'staff' is used to refer to both paid and volunteer team members.

### Best Practice:

In the Guidelines, we have followed the Oxford Dictionary definition of 'best practice', described as "professional procedures that are accepted as being correct or most effective".

### Ranking Your Progress:

1-5 Scale

- 1= no evidence
- 2= little evidence
- 3= sometimes evident
- 4= mostly evident
- 5= always evident

### Capturing Diversity:

We recognise that across New Zealand, volunteer-involving organisations are incredibly diverse. These Guidelines have been designed as a set of overarching principles that can be applied to any New Zealand volunteer-involving organisation. Regardless of what your organisation, club or group looks like, concepts such as – a broad understanding of what everyone else is doing and valuing the work of managers of volunteers – apply to us all.

## Behind the Scenes

Our thanks go to the wonderful volunteer-involving organisations that piloted the first Guidelines in 2012, and now the second (2015) version.

We worked closely with first 6, then 12 championing organisations for 15 months to develop the revised Guidelines and complementary tools. Thanks to Te Omanga Hospice, Bishop's Action Foundation, LandSAR, Neonatal Trust, St John, Community Law NZ, Volunteering Otago, New Zealand Newcomers Network, Youthline Otago, New Zealand Football, Auckland War Memorial Museum and Riding for the Disabled. We are also grateful for the contributions made by our volunteer working groups, who developed the initial Guidelines from concept to reality, and helped turn Version 1 into Version 2.

These Guidelines drew inspiration from the book *CEOs Who Lead the Way: 12 Key Actions of Volunteer Programme Champions* by Betty Stallings.

Here are the 30 organisations who contributed their time and experience to the initial pilot project that resulted in the Guidelines Version 1.

Aotearoa Cultural and Volunteer Exchange  
Auckland Regional Migrant Service  
Auckland War Memorial Museum  
Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc.  
Hockey New Zealand  
National Council of Women New Zealand  
Netball Manawatu  
New Zealand Coastguard  
New Zealand Fire Service  
New Zealand Newcomers Network  
Parent's Centres New Zealand Inc.  
Pregnancy Help  
Presbyterian Support Upper South Island  
Ranui Baptist Community Care (Auckland)  
Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind  
Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Inc.  
St John  
Save the Children New Zealand  
Te Omanga Hospice (Lower Hutt)  
The Neighbourhood Trust (Christchurch)  
Toy Library Federation of New Zealand  
Upper Hutt City Library  
Victim Support  
Vision West (Auckland)  
Volunteering New Zealand  
Wellbeing North Canterbury  
Wellington Community Law Centre  
Wellington Somali Council  
World Vision New Zealand  
YMCA Central

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do we use the Guidelines?

The Guidelines are designed to be used as an organisational self-assessment tool. They are a combination of:

- tips and recommendations (columns 1 and 2)
- space for you to apply these to your organisation (columns 3, 4 and 5).

You will get the best out of the Guidelines if you work through them as a team, with as many members of your organisation involved as possible. The Guidelines are also designed to be something you can go back to, review and reuse over time.

### We've got a manager of volunteers, why do we need guidelines for the whole organisation?

Volunteering doesn't happen in a vacuum; volunteers and managers of volunteers are part of the wider unit that is the organisation. Contributions of volunteers, and contributions of those with responsibility for them, enable the organisation to achieve all that it says it is going to achieve. For these contributions to be really effective, and for the organisation and the volunteers to get the best out of each other, the whole organisation needs to be engaged with what volunteers do and how they are being supported.

### Where's the bit about how to manage volunteers well?

Because these Guidelines are directed at the whole group, club, or organisation and its wider relationships with volunteers and managers of volunteers, we have chosen not to include specific detail about best practice management of volunteers. You will be able to find information about best practice in managing volunteers on Volunteering New Zealand's website at [www.volunteeringnz.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz). You will also find a link to the *Competencies for managers of volunteers*.

### They seem a bit of a stretch...

That's right! Best practice is something we have to constantly strive towards. We might be doing some things really well, but still have lots of room to improve in other areas. The Guidelines can help your organisation work out where it needs to go, and set goals for how you are going to get there.

### **We don't pay our manager of volunteers, so what do we do when the guidelines talk about payment?**

There are some sections of the Guidelines that will not be appropriate for entirely volunteer-run organisations, as they talk about, for example, payment of managers of volunteers. If your organisation is 100% voluntary, you might like to skip over sections relating to payment of managers. However, it is important for a set of Best Practice Guidelines to include a section on reimbursement of managers of volunteers. This is not to create a division between paid and volunteer managers of volunteers, or to imply one is better than the other – it is because:

- in organisations where managers of volunteers work alongside other paid staff, best practice involves paying them the same as people with comparable responsibilities, and;
- best practice involves understanding that management of volunteers is a specially skilled and important role, as opposed to a low-level or unskilled role.

In Best Practice organisations...

*1. Volunteers are seen as a central part of the organisation. It is recognised that without their contribution, the organisation would not achieve its goals.*

<b>How do best practice organisations do that?</b>	<b>In our organisation, we currently do the following things towards these goals...</b>
1.1 Making sure people with responsibility for volunteers have a voice at all levels of our organisation.	
1.2 Aiming for a culture of appreciation by acknowledging the ways volunteer involvement helps our organisation achieve its goals. We do this by talking about our volunteers and sharing their inspiring stories: via official reporting channels; via social media, official website etc; via annual events and celebrations.	
1.3 Making sure the contribution made by volunteers is reflected in the organisation's strategic plan and goals.	

**We rate our progress against these goals...**

1 = POOR 5 = EXCELLENT

**In our organisation, we will work on doing the following things towards these goals...**

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**How do best practice organisations do that?**

**In our organisation, we currently do the following things towards these goals...**

- 1.4 Making sure people with responsibility for volunteers are treated the same as any other management staff in the organisation.

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- 1.5 Promoting an understanding that 'volunteering', and our reasons for doing it, vary from person to person, e.g. *mahi aroha* (work for love) and faith-based volunteering.

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- 1.6 Ensuring that the way things are done in our workplace reflects and promotes awareness of, and respect for, diversity.

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**We rate our progress against these goals...**

1 = POOR 5 = EXCELLENT

**In our organisation, we will work on doing the following things towards these goals...**

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In Best Practice organisations...

*2. The whole organisation works to involve and recognise volunteers.*

<b>How do best practice organisations do that?</b>	<b>In our organisation, we currently do the following things towards these goals...</b>
2.1 Encouraging all staff in the organisation to get to know and involve our volunteers in respectful relationships.	
2.2 Expecting that all staff can explain why the organisation involves volunteers, and the benefits of this.	
2.3 Offering training and education to all staff about how to effectively work with volunteers.	
2.4 Effectively promoting our programme to people of diverse age, gender and ethnicity, recognising that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understanding and practice of volunteering varies across cultural and ethnic groups</li><li>• diverse volunteer teams reflect our diverse client / user groups.</li></ul>	



**We rate our progress against these goals...**

1 = POOR 5 = EXCELLENT

**In our organisation, we will work on doing the following things towards these goals...**

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In Best Practice organisations...

*3. It is understood that a strong and dynamic volunteer programme needs a supported and resourced manager.*

<b>How do best practice organisations do that?</b>	<b>In our organisation, we currently do the following things towards these goals...</b>
3.1 Recruiting competent people into volunteer management roles.	
3.2 Making sure all staff and the executive (board, etc.) understand what is involved in the manager of volunteer's role.	
3.3 Paying people with responsibility for volunteers a salary comparable to other managers with similar responsibilities within the organisation.	
3.4 Treating people with responsibility for volunteers as equals with other staff, and as skilled professionals in their area of expertise.	
3.5 Encouraging and supporting our people to access professional development and peer support opportunities.	



**We rate our progress against these goals...**

1 = POOR 5 = EXCELLENT

**In our organisation, we will work on doing the following things towards these goals...**

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In Best Practice organisations...

*4. People with responsibility for volunteers have sufficient resources to effectively do their job.*

<b>How do best practice organisations do that?</b>	<b>In our organisation, we currently do the following things towards these goals...</b>
4.1 Making sure that people with responsibility for volunteers have sufficient time available to them to provide proper support to the volunteers, as well as to complete their other tasks.	
4.2 Making sure people with responsibility for volunteers have access to a budget for the volunteer programme, both to make sure costs are covered and to enable further development.	
4.3 Making sure people with responsibility for volunteers have opportunities to contribute to the development of annual organisational budgets.	
4.4 Having good communication – making sure people with responsibility for volunteers have the communication tools they need to effectively carry out their role e.g. task management and / or customer relationship software.	
4.5 Ensuring that volunteer effort is measured and acknowledged in the organisation’s reporting.	

**We rate our progress against these goals...**

1 = POOR 5 = EXCELLENT

**In our organisation, we will work on doing the following things towards these goals...**

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**Comments / actions:**

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If you have feedback on these Best Practice Guidelines, or would like to tell us how you are using them, please contact:

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