

Review of the Best Practice Guidelines for VIOs July 2022

Summary

The Best Practice Guidelines (BPGs) are one of Volunteering New Zealand's initiatives to support and develop managers and coordinators of volunteers in New Zealand. They build on the work completed during the development of the Competencies for Volunteer Managers and Best Practice toolkit.

This review (by Impetus Consulting Limited) examines how well the Best Practice Guidelines meet current needs and identifies gaps that a refresh of the BPGs should address.

Key Recommendations:

- Redevelop the BPGs to better meet the needs of small to medium-sized community organisations
- Update the content to align with changes across the volunteering landscape
- Reflect the New Zealand context with a focus on diversity and inclusion

The volunteering landscape in 2022:

- New Zealand has a high rate of volunteering, 49.8% of us volunteer
- New Zealand has 115,000 not-for-profits and charities. Of these 20,000 have incomes below \$1000 and 89% have no paid employees
- We have an aging and shrinking volunteer workforce: 14% of volunteers do over half of the volunteer hours
- Decrease in available time to volunteer has led to the demand for flexible, short-term volunteering options
- Misalignment between VIOs need for long-term roles and volunteers wanting short-term opportunities
- New Zealand is demographically diverse, but the volunteer community isn't
- The Covid-19 pandemic saw an increase in community demand for services
- Digital volunteering provides flexibility with new opportunities for using volunteers' skills.

Implications for Volunteer Involving Organisations:

- Managers and organisations need innovative methods of working with and connecting people
- Volunteer managers need to tailor roles and communications to different audience needs
- Increasing use of technology to meet the demand for flexible, short term volunteering options
- Upskill and invest in digital skills to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Value of Volunteering New Zealand Best Practice Guidelines

- Existing BPGs are an aspirational set of targets and pointers to improve a volunteer programme. They cover four areas with 20 practices using a five-point scale.
- Volunteering practice has changed since they were developed, hence the need for a review
- Refreshed BPGs should be targeted at small to medium-sized organisations. Larger organisations have professionalised volunteer management; smaller ones have fewer staff and money, and therefore need more support.

What volunteer managers and VIOs need from the BPGs:

- Credibility: linked to evidence-based practice
- Content: update to include current environment and language e.g. Sustainability, diversity & inclusion, technology
- Usability: redevelop BPGs as an online tool.

International examples tell us when reviewing guidelines we should:

- Engage broadly across sectors
- Create accessible tools and resources
- Make resources free to use
- Ensure BPGs match the current volunteering environment.