

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

The City of Sydney (City) recognises the significant contribution of volunteers within our community.

The City's volunteers forge a strong bond between the City, the community, the business sector and relevant stakeholders it serves by, encouraging and increasing:

- Community participation and social connection;
- The delivery and augmentation of existing programs;
- Access to resources and information;
- The development of links between the City of Sydney and the community; and
- Responsiveness to community needs.

This document is designed to provide guidance on how volunteers should be engaged, inducted and managed.

Scope

The policy applies to people who volunteer their services to the City.

This policy does not apply to:

- students or interns on formal vocational placements.
- community members engaging in community engagement or community participation activities, including events.
- volunteers working for other organisations that are donating their time.
- members of the City of Sydney's Advisory Panels or people who provide expert advice to the City on specific matters.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Volunteer	A person who gives their time to the City, without financial remuneration and for the benefit of the community at the direction of City employees.
Conflict of Interest	A conflict of interests exists where a reasonable and informed person would perceive that a volunteer could be influenced by a private interest when carrying out their volunteering (Refer to Code of Conduct).

Principles

The principles of volunteering at the City are:

- Volunteering is undertaken freely, by choice.
- Volunteering is an inclusive activity open to all who are able and suitable.
- Volunteers freely contribute their time, effort, knowledge and skills and develop formal and informal networks, while gaining experience and social inclusion.

- Volunteers are provided with appropriate induction, training, instruction and supervision to undertake volunteer activity.
- Volunteers are provided with a healthy and safe working environment.
- Volunteers have their contribution to the community recognised.
- Not place volunteers in roles that were previously held by paid employees or have been identified as paid jobs.
- Ensure volunteers are not required to take up additional work during industrial disputes or employment shortages.
- Ensure volunteers are not used in positions of responsibility for security issues, and/or health and safety issues.

Procedures

The following procedures are designed to ensure that the City's volunteers are appropriately recruited, screened, inducted and supervised in a way that ensures they operate within the City's legislative, policy and procedural frameworks.

Engaging a Volunteer

Volunteers are managed locally by the business unit and are engaged with the approval of the business unit manager. The relevant business unit manager will determine if their unit can accommodate and supervise a volunteer, and will allocate a supervisor responsible for the volunteer/s.

Recruiting and onboarding a Volunteer

Prior to the recruitment/engagement of a volunteer, the business unit manager must specify what pre-employment checks are required for a volunteer to work in their unit, including Criminal Checks and Volunteer Working With Children Checks (see below). These checks must be sighted by the business unit manager before the volunteer commences work with the City.

Volunteers are on-boarded and their records are retained in the City's central recruitment and onboarding system (City People).

Checks for Volunteers Working in Child Related Sectors

In line with the City's Child Safety Policy and Procedures, volunteers in identified child related sectors may need to obtain a Volunteer Working With Children Check clearance prior to commencing volunteer work.

Business unit managers must refer to the City of Sydney Child Protection Policy and Procedure to determine volunteer roles that require a Volunteer Working with Children Check clearance.

For guidance, the Office of the Children's Guardian has identified that volunteers in the following areas would require a Volunteer Working with Children Check clearance:

- Child Care Centres
- Out of School Hours Services
- Youth Services
- Transport Services for Children
- Entertainment for Children
- Cultural, recreation, sporting or community services that involves providing programs for children
- Any location where the volunteer may be supervising children or young people.

Business unit managers are responsible for ensuring all existing volunteers' Working With Children Checks are current and that these checks are recorded in the City People system. The Recruitment team is responsible for verifying the volunteers' Working With Children Check.

Business unit managers must also check the Working With Children Check status of any existing volunteer transferring to their business unit.

Inducting a Volunteer

Upon commencement volunteers must be made aware of the City's key policies, procedures, Code of Conduct and Child Safe Code of Conduct obligations through an induction program, which is coordinated by the host business unit.

The induction program may be tailored to the individual volunteer activity. Induction must include relevant work health and safety training.

Supervising Volunteers

Business unit managers must ensure appropriate levels of supervision, training and management are provided to volunteers. Volunteers should receive regular feedback and acknowledgement but are not performance managed in the way that City employees are.

Business unit managers will also ensure regular support is provided to volunteers and ensure all volunteers have a healthy and safe workplace.

Ceasing of Volunteer Arrangements

A volunteer arrangement can be ceased by a volunteer or the City at any time. The City requests one week's notice and will attempt to give the same notice period, considering the circumstances. All volunteers must return any property and files (electronic or otherwise) belonging to the City prior to leaving.

Volunteers are expected to act in accordance with relevant City's policies, procedures, Code of Conduct and Child Safe Code of Conduct. If any volunteer acts in a manner which does not uphold these standards, the volunteer arrangements with the City may be terminated. Business unit managers may seek advice or assistance from People and Culture if needed.

Provision of Insurance

The City provides volunteers with public liability cover and personal accident cover. Motor vehicle cover is provided for meals on wheels volunteers only. Details of insurance cover can be obtained from the City's Risk Management Unit.

Use of Private Vehicle

Any volunteer who is required to operate a vehicle as part of their volunteering duties must provide the business unit manager with proof of their current driver's license.

If using a private vehicle as part of their volunteer role, the volunteer must provide evidence of their motor vehicle third party and comprehensive insurance details.

Volunteers are responsible for any parking or traffic offences they commit by not complying with the NSW road laws. The City will not provide reimbursement for any such fines.

Reimbursement of Expenses

For volunteers who regularly volunteer their time, the City may reimburse agreed personal costs incurred by the volunteer providing the:

- Expenses claimed have prior approval by the relevant business unit manager and may include:
 - Motor vehicle expenses;
 - Public transport costs; which does not include public transport from home to the volunteering activity or the return trip home
 - In limited circumstances, parking fees; and
 - Other approved program and project costs which may be incurred from time to time.
- Cost was incurred on behalf of the City while carrying out the City's activities and must be demonstrated by supporting documentation for example, receipts.
- Reimbursement has no connection to the volunteer's income-producing activities or services rendered to the City in a professional or commercial capacity; and
- Payment does no more than reimburse the volunteer for expenses actually incurred, or to be incurred.

Provision of Non-Cash Benefits

In some circumstances, the City may provide volunteers with reasonable non-cash benefits such as meals, clothing, and token items of recognition.

Recognition of Volunteers

Recognising the contribution of volunteers motivates and enhances their experience. In addition to regular verbal recognition, managers of volunteers should consider implementing the following methods of recognition:

- An event (morning or afternoon tea or lunch), for example during National Volunteers Week, at Christmas time or in recognition of International Volunteers Day
- A framed certificate or token recognising milestones, such as five-year contributions, signed by the Chief Executive Officer
- Annual letters of thanks
- Nomination of national awards through Volunteering Australia; and/or
- Other established and/or suitable recognition schemes as deemed appropriate.

Volunteers can request a statement of service in writing to payroll@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Responsibilities

Business Unit Managers will:

- Ensure appropriate levels of supervision, support and management are provided.
- Appoint volunteers in accordance with the principles of anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity.
- Provide a safe workplace for all volunteers.
- Ensure relevant background checks, including criminal check and Volunteer Working with Children Checks, are specified at the time that a volunteer position is created and undertaken before a volunteer is engaged.
- Ensure there is no conflict of interest between the volunteer's personal interest, pecuniary, non-pecuniary and the City's volunteering activities.

- Provide a general induction and activity specific training where appropriate.
- Provide information on the City's Work Health and Safety procedures, including correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required.
- Inform volunteers of their responsibilities.
- Maintain a full and accurate record of volunteers in accordance with the City's Records Management Policy and Privacy Management Plan.
- Provide insurance coverage for volunteers in accordance with the City of Sydney Insurance Manual.

People & Culture unit will:

- Provide sufficient oversight of volunteer procedures as appropriate.
- Maintain records of all volunteer information in City People and/or the required records management systems.
- Verify Working With Children Checks, where relevant.
- Provide content and advice for volunteer induction.

Volunteers will:

- Follow the reasonable directions of their supervisor.
- Comply with the City's values, policies, procedures and Code of Conduct.
- Comply with the City's Work Health and Safety guidelines, including correctly wearing/using personal protective equipment (PPE) when provided/issued.
- Perform volunteer activities in accordance with the agreed role description and working arrangements.
- Attend induction and participate in training activities as required.
- Manage information and data in compliance with the City's Records Management Policy and Privacy Management Plan.
- Arrive on time and report their absence from volunteer work as soon as possible to their supervisor to ensure that alternative arrangements may be made.
- Promptly report to their supervisor existing issues in relation to, or any changes to licences, health or personal circumstances that might impact on their capability to effectively perform a volunteer role.
- Ensure all media enquiries are directed to the City's media team. Volunteers are not authorised to answer any questions or make any comments to the media.
- Before commencing work, provide a current volunteer Working with Children Check clearance and date of birth for verification, where this has been identified as a requirement of the role in accordance with the City's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Provide one week notice of an intention to cease volunteering with the City, where possible.

Consultation

This policy has been reviewed in consultation People & Culture, Legal and Governance, the Health and Safety Committee and Social Policy & Programs.

References

Laws and Standards

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Australian Taxation Guide-Volunteers and Tax-NAT 4612 (List related legislation and standards)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 NSW
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 NSW
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW)
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 NSW
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 NSW
- Volunteering Australia, National Standards for Volunteer Involvement 2015
- Work Health and Safety Act/Regulation 2011

Policies and Procedures

- Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Procedure - Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training
 - Appendix A: Child Safe Code of Conduct - Employees
 - Appendix B: Child Safety Training Program
- Child Safety Procedure – Reporting Child Safety Concerns
- Child Safety Procedure - Managing Risks to Child Safety in Service Environments – *in development*
- City of Sydney Insurance Manual
- Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- EEO and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Internet Policy
- IT Systems Security Policy
- Privacy Management Plan
- Records Management Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

Review period

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Approval Status

The Chief Executive Officer approved this policy on 25 August 2023

P. M. Barone

Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	19/02/2011	Endorsed by the Executive	2010/285874
Reviewed	03/07/2012	Endorsed by the Executive	2010/285874
Reviewed	10/11/2015	Endorsed by the Executive	2015/042642
Reviewed	21/08/2019	Endorsed by the Executive	2019/444850
Reviewed	27/02/2023	Updated to include a Responsibilities section and references to the Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safety procedures. Endorsed by the Executive.	2019/444850
Reviewed	25/08/2023	Policy and Volunteer Procedures combined into one document to remove duplication and assist managers. Endorsed by the Executive.	2019/444850
Commence Review Date	25/11/2025		
Approval Due Date	25/08/2026		

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Chief People & Culture
Owner	Chief People & Culture
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	Chief Executive Officer