

# Inclusive volunteering Engaging First Nations people

- Volunteering may not be a familiar term or concept. Consider the language used when engaging First Nations volunteers e.g. 'helping out', 'giving back to community'.
- Have a flexible approach to volunteering and to what degree a person is involved, which may fluctuate, as family and community commitments will always take precedence.
- Be willing to adapt and provide options to try out a volunteer role, before making a commitment and completing necessary documents.
- Create a space of being welcomed and culturally safe. Cultural awareness isn't the same as cultural safety.
- Admitting fault to cultural unsafety can be hard and confronting but admitting to faults and identifying there is need for improvement, is another key step in creating cultural safety.
- Potential volunteers are looking if organisations have a Reconciliation Action Plan in place, for cultural safety.
- People need to be viewed as individuals, not as a homogenous 'Aboriginal' group.
- Developing volunteer roles needs to be a collaborative process to suit the interests, needs, goals and strengths of the individual.
- Be aware of current issues affecting First Nations people. First Nations people are connected by their identity and issues affect all.
- Actively connect and build relationships with First Nations organisations and key people. Reach out and develop meaningful connections with First Nations communities in local regions.
- Educate yourself about, and when applicable, celebrate significant dates for First Nations people.
- Be creative engaging First Nations volunteers, are there potential roles outside regular weekday 9am-5pm hours?
- Use various methods to share volunteer related information (a combination of first languages, recordings and visuals).
- Aboriginal communities need to know that they don't need all the skills to volunteer, they may have some, but can learn other skills when undertaking the role.
- Listen and learn, have people had issues before when volunteering? Use this as a way to be open to questions and conversations to ensure volunteer engagement is genuine, respectful and meaningful.
- People want to see themselves in organisations through other First Nations volunteers, staff, on websites, social media posts and in advertising. This helps create cultural safety.