

Barriers to volunteer-involvement for regional organisations

Volunteer-involving organisations in regional, remote, and rural areas can face unique challenges in finding and retaining volunteers. This resource explores some of these challenges and offers strategies to help overcome them.

Barriers and challenges

Succession planning

Many regional organisations have long-standing, dedicated volunteers - but when they leave it can result in huge gaps that are hard to fill.

Recruitment

Finding new volunteers in smaller communities can be difficult, and promoting volunteer opportunities can be challenging.

Retention

Some volunteers may only want to help out for a short amount of time, may move on to a different role or paid work, or may not have spare time to volunteer around work or school.

Volunteer management

Organisations may not have a paid volunteer manager, or the person managing volunteers may not have a lot of experience.

Red tape

People may want to volunteer but not be aware of the paperwork, screenings and onboarding process that they might need to do first.

Not enough people to volunteer

Many organisations work in areas where there are low populations, so they aren't many people they can ask to volunteer.

Doubling up with other volunteer programs

Some organisations offer similar services and compete for the same volunteers where they might be able to work together instead.

Ways to improve volunteer involvement

Offer flexible schedules

See if volunteers could help out your organisation at different times, on weekends, or even from home.

Local partnerships

Reach out to local schools, businesses, and service-providers and see if they are interested in volunteering. You may want to offer one-off or group volunteer opportunities.

Help people to gain work experience

Volunteering can be a valuable way to young people, or people who are changing careers, to gain work experience. Offer roles that develop skills and can help them find future employment.

Local media

Share information about your volunteer opportunities in local newspapers, radio, information boards, and at community events.

Word of mouth

Ask your current volunteers to reach out to their friends and family and see if anyone else would like to become a volunteer for your organisation.

Social media

Connect with younger people by sharing and promoting your volunteer opportunities on social media.

