

Volunteer Opportunity Details – Guidance Notes

Introduction

When completing this form it's worth remembering that this is a chance to "sell" your organisation to prospective volunteers, so keep your content interesting, easy to understand and to the point. It may take around fifteen minutes to complete the form, but it could attract people who give hundreds of hours to your organisation so it could be time well spent.

Before recruiting volunteers, your organisation needs to have a clear understanding of what tasks they are to do. Organisations that can offer interesting and productive tasks will find it easier to attract and keep volunteers. Different people will, of course, find different tasks interesting but the design of the volunteer opportunity is important.

Completing the Form

Question 1

First of all, you need a title to describe the opportunity. There's no need to have a volunteer in the title – simply say befriender, driver, advisor, web designer, treasurer etc.

Question 4

Next, think about why your organisation needs a particular person to volunteer. Focus on the need to be met – focus on the intended result. Sum this up in no more than 35 words.

For example avoid – Receptionist wanted to answer phones, take messages and room bookings. An alternative approach would be "People coming to the Mental Health Centre are often embarrassed, confused and uneasy. We need a receptionist to welcome people and make them feel as comfortable as possible."

Other examples are:-

Adult Literacy Tutor

Many people from all walks of life are unable to take advantage of the full benefits of our society because they are unable to read or write. Would you like to change this?

Girl Guide Leader

Many girls grow up without the self-confidence and other skills to become competent, successful adults. Guide leaders can help change this – could you be one?

Clothes Sorter

Help raise money to combat disease and poverty in underdeveloped countries by sorting out donated clothes for our charity shop.

Driver

Some senior citizens live with little or no contact with other people. We need you to pick them up in a minibus and bring them to our Centre for companionship, care and attention.

Teller/Cashier

People on low incomes often fall into very high interest loans or worse still loan sharks. Our credit union gives them an alternative and we need tellers/cashiers to staff our office.

Question 5

Next think about a longer message about the opportunity. You have up to 150 words to describe what a volunteer would do – the potential benefits for the volunteer – and the potential benefits to the end user be it a person or the environment. You don't need to include information about training or support, as these topics are dealt with further on.

Example

“Positive Steps is accepting applications from people to join a team of Literacy Tutors who enable adults, free of charge, to improve their reading and writing.

Tutors can make a significant difference to peoples' reading/writing skills levels and past Tutors say it has helped them meet new people, make new friends, feel part of a group. They also report a high feel good factor when adults make good progress.

Past adult learners have said the following: “It's great – I can now help my kids with their homework” and “I've got the bug for learning and I hope to go to college soon” and “At last I don't need to pretend I can read the newspaper!”

Tutors work with individuals or small groups of up to three and take them through a structured learning programme.”

Some examples of what motivates people to volunteer are given below. You might want to use some of them in your answer to Question 5. Quotes from existing volunteers and users can be very powerful as well.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| * try out a new career | * learn a new skill/rebuild an old one |
| * to feel useful | * improve community life |
| * do something useful | * to enjoy spare time |

Question 6

An example would be “Tutoring takes place in the Positive Steps Centre, 26 High Street, Newtown. It is close to the train bus stations. Bus nos. 10 and 16.”

Question 7

Tick one box only. For example an Adult Literary Tutor opportunity would tick the “Tutoring/Support Learners” box. A Girl Guide Leader opportunity would tick “Youth Work”.

Question 8

Again select one box only. An Adult Literary Tutor would tick the “Education/Literacy” box. This will also be used to categorise your opportunity on the Volunteer Centres website.

Question 9

If there are specific restrictions please say why. Care needs to be taken that people are not being discriminated against because of their age or gender.

Question 10

We realise it is difficult to give a precise answer to this question, but it would be useful for us to have a rough idea on how many volunteers you feel you need for the particular volunteer opportunity.

Question 11

For example "The ability to read and write are essential tutor skills. Adults learn more when tutors are supportive, offer encouragement and are focused on the task."

Question 12

If you do not want the volunteer opportunity to appear on our website, please tick the box. If you do tick the box, we will make the information available to prospective volunteers who visit our office.

Question 14

Example answers are two hours per day; one hour per month etc.

Question 20

For example "All people need to participate in our Tutor Start Up programme. Run over four weeks (4 x 2 hour sessions), it covers topics including how adults learn best; motivational skills; helpful tips plus input from existing tutors and adult learners. Once tutoring you will be paired with an existing tutor until you feel confident enough to 'go it alone'. This tutor "buddying" will also help you to identify any areas where you need to further develop your skills."

Question 25

For example "Positive Steps repays tutor travel expenses, public transport or car (current mileage rate = 30p), every week."