

Volunteer Program Policy

The value of volunteers to organisations such as North Yarra Community Health has long been recognized. Volunteers provide one way of building bridges between the health centre and the community. The Board of Management of NYCH considers volunteers an integral part of its community development strategy aimed at encouraging the participation of community members in their own health care, the care of others, and the running of their services.

Volunteers are people who undertake work within NYCH without payment, of their own free choice and for the benefit of the community. Volunteers do not replace paid staff, nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.

Whilst contributing their time and skills in completing projects and tasks, volunteers will gain knowledge, experience and satisfaction from their involvement with NYCH to the greater good of the community it serves.

The volunteer participation program is intended to:

- enhance or expand services provided for participants and clients of NYCH
- enhance links with local communities
- provide opportunities for members of the local community to be actively involved in NYCH
- empower volunteers and enable them to make informed choices about voluntary activities
- enable volunteers to meet their own needs for enrichment and work satisfaction, whilst meeting human and social needs of the community
- create and foster interest in volunteering

Selection

The process of selection begins with the prospective volunteer completing the *Expression of Interest Form*, and this should be forwarded to the Volunteer Program Manager.

Pre-Placement Checks

NYCH will obtain from each volunteer the names of two persons as confidential referees and will contact these two referees to discuss the role of NYCH and the work to be performed by the volunteer.

Previous employers will be contacted where NYCH considers this would be helpful in making an assessment of the volunteer's suitability.

For certain volunteer positions or tasks, a police check on the volunteer will need to be organised by NYCH. The volunteer will be asked to provide consent prior to such a check being made.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers have the Right to:

- Undertake satisfying and worthwhile tasks at NYCH
- Be treated with respect as a co-worker by other NYCH staff
- Be provided with an appropriate job description setting out tasks, responsibilities, expectations, and the name of the supervising NYCH staff member
- Relevant orientation on NYCH policies and procedures, staff and services
- Undertake tasks in a safe working conditions
- Be covered by insurance whilst working for NYCH
- Be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses
- Make suggestions for improvement and be consulted on matters which affect their work
- Refuse unacceptable tasks and access the NYCH grievance process for volunteers in cases of conflict

Volunteers have the Responsibility to:

- Adhere to NYCH policies procedures and guidelines and to promote the interests of the health centre
- Treat clients and staff with respect
- Treat all personal information as confidential, and sign an undertaking to this effect
- Only undertake those tasks which can be performed effectively and reliably
- Be accountable for quality of work and accept evaluation by NYCH staff of work done
- Commit to working as a reliable member of a service team and give reasonable notice of non-attendance because of illness or other emergency
- Be prepared to learn, attend training and ask for support when needed
- Sign a commitment contract and abide by its undertakings
- Acknowledge the responsibility of NYCH to make thorough pre-placement checks, as part of the selection process for volunteers

NYCH has the Right to:

- Select volunteers and terminate volunteer employment at its absolute discretion
- Expect respect for clients and absolute confidentiality from volunteers

- Expect cooperation between volunteers and staff
- Expect tasks to be undertaken as set out in the job description
- Be given agreed notice periods in respect of non-attendance because of illness or other emergency, or to cease volunteer work

NYCH has the Responsibility to:

- Provide equal opportunity in selection for persons wishing to volunteer
- Undertake pre-placement checks on all volunteers
- Organise a trial reflection period prior to confirmation of commitment
- Assign a staff member to orient, organise training and to supervise each volunteer
- Provide a clear, written job description, setting out purpose, tasks, responsibilities, accountability and supervisor for each volunteer
- Ensure that supervisors provide clear direction and feedback to each volunteer
- Ensure that volunteers are treated with respect as co-workers by NYCH staff
- Ensure that volunteers and NYCH are covered adequately by appropriate insurance policies
- Ensure that, in general, volunteer access to confidential information is restricted
- Ensure that clients of the service are aware of the identity and role of volunteers and have access to a complaints procedure
- Authorise a written reference to be provided if requested by volunteers who have completed a minimum period of work with NYCH

Insurance

NYCH will provide appropriate insurance to protect the organisation and its volunteers, namely:

- *Public Liability or Public Risk Insurance* which covers NYCH where premises are being used by a volunteer or other person who suffers an injury or who causes property damage
- *Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance*, which covers volunteers for accidents whilst engaged in NYCH business irrespective of cause or fault

Use of Private Vehicles by Volunteers

Volunteers who use their own vehicles on NYCH business will be reimbursed for travel costs on a mileage basis. A diary note must be kept recording date, start and finish kilometres, and purpose of travel. Travel claims must be submitted to the supervisor fortnightly, who should as a general rule approve the travel prior to its being undertaken.

Volunteers should note that damage or accident to their vehicle whilst it is being used on NYCH business will not be covered by NYCH insurance policies.

Referral to Other Agencies

If there is no appropriate placement available within NYCH, volunteers may be offered the option of:

- Placement upon the NYCH Volunteer Register for a future opportunity; and/or
- Referral to Volunteer Victoria, which maintains a data base of organisations seeking volunteers and assists potential volunteers to access information, clarify areas of interest and discuss volunteer opportunities.

*Volunteering Victoria, Volunteer Information Service
4th Floor, Ross House, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000
Telephone 9 650 5541*

References For Volunteers

NYCH will provide on request a written reference for volunteers who have completed at least 6 (six) months of their placement contract with NYCH, although by agreement between the supervisor and the Volunteer Program Manager a written reference may be provided earlier. A copy will be placed upon the Volunteer's Confidential personal record.