

Volunteers

Information Handbook



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Arab Council Australia

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Table of Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION	3
Our Approach.....	3
Our Commitment.....	3
Our Values.....	3
WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?	4
BECOMING A VOLUNTEER WITH COUNCIL.....	4
Volunteer Opportunities.....	5
Applying to Become a Volunteer	6
ENTITLEMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS EXPLAINED	6
Insurance.....	6
Training	6
Travel Reimbursement.....	6
Performance Review	7
Volunteer Recognition	7
ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	7
Accountability	7
Rostered Hours	7
Time Records.....	8
Meal and Rest Breaks.....	8
Leave	8
Other Applicable Policies and Documents.....	8
Code of Conduct – Brief Summary.....	9
APPENDIX 1 - Volunteer Application Form	10
APPENDIX 2 - Volunteer Time Sheet.....	11
APPENDIX 3 - Motor Vehicle Log Sheet	12
APPENDIX 4 - Volunteer Incident Report.....	13

GENERAL INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Arab Council Australia (Council).

Council aims to provide direct relief and assistance to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people and families in our community. We assist in a vast number of ways and our volunteers are fundamental to the successful provision of our much needed services and programs.

Your contribution as a volunteer enables us to reach out to more people who need our help and to provide essential services that will otherwise remain unrealised.

The following information is for your guidance and ensures that our clients receive the best possible service we have to offer.

We encourage you to read this Handbook and hope you will refer to it frequently during your involvement with Council.

Our Approach

We take a strengths-based or asset-based approach in working with people. This approach recognises that each one of us has gifts and talents and we can make a contribution if given the opportunity. It is from this premise that our volunteer program operates; in that we work on linking our volunteers to a range of Council projects depending on their skills, experience and interests. At the same time, we ensure that they are genuinely involved in the development of projects in line with our values.

Our Commitment

Council is committed to developing and delivering services within a culturally and linguistically specific context to ensure the direct relief from isolation, discrimination, suffering, distress and hardship that is experienced by Arab-Australians and people from Arabic-speaking communities in particular (but not exclusively), those settling into and living in New South Wales.

Our Values

Our values are the fundamental beliefs of our organisation. They define who we are. They influence the way we work with each other and the way we serve and engage with our communities. Our values are underpinned by the **FAIR** principles and guide everything we do and strive to achieve.

- Freedom, Rights and Responsibilities.
- Access And Equity
- Inclusion
- Respect And Integrity

Refer to our Strategic Plan for more information

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

It has always been in people's nature to help. Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest intentions of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people.

Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through a community group, project, or a not-for-profit organisation like Council, and is undertaken:

- to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- for no financial payment; and
- in designated volunteer positions only.

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER WITH COUNCIL

Our volunteers are ambassadors of our organisation, reflecting our values across the community.

Our values underpin our work and the way in which we achieve our mission.

Becoming a volunteer brings with it certain commitments and responsibilities for both Council and individual volunteers.

For volunteers, we provide:

- ❑ **Insurance:** All volunteers who perform work on behalf of Council, with the knowledge and authority of Council, are covered by our insurance policies. This includes travel insurance while travelling to/from and during voluntary work.
- ❑ **Out-of-pocket expenses:** We endeavour to ensure that volunteers are not financially disadvantaged by working with us. All authorised activities are reviewed with regard to cost and out-of-pocket expenses can be reimbursed.
- ❑ **Privacy:** Your personal details are treated in the strictest confidence and such information is securely stored. It is accessible to you on request.
- ❑ **Training:** you will be provided with suitable training which may involve hands on experience and or formal sessions.
- ❑ **Job Description:** before you commence your voluntary work, we will provide you with information about your role including description of your duties.
- ❑ **Criminal history checks:** All volunteer roles will require a Criminal History Check, Working with Children Check and/or other checks prior to commencing in the role. Council will organise and cover the cost of checks if current ones are not available.
- ❑ **Recognition:** We will recognise the services of our volunteers in various ways.

The above provisions are outlined in more details in the following pages. Please refer to the relevant sections for more information.

Our expectations from volunteers:

- ❑ **Commitment:** You will demonstrate a commitment to the values of Council and understanding that these will apply to you.
- ❑ **Team work:** You will work with a team. You will be reliable and provide adequate notice when unable to attend your rostered.
- ❑ **Respect:** You will respect and accept direction from designated Council staff and you will maintain a respectful attitude towards clients, staff and other persons who come in contact with Council
- ❑ **Professionalism:** You will maintain a professional and ethical conduct in your dealing with clients, staff, colleagues and all members of the public
- ❑ **Confidentiality:** You will maintain confidentiality at all times. You may have access to information about clients and colleagues and it is expected that you will not disclose the information to any person other than an appropriate Council staff member. You may also have access to other information relating to the operation of Council and its officers. Again, this is to be treated confidentially.

Expectations are outlined in more details in the following pages. Please refer to the relevant sections for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities

We have two types of volunteers at Council:

- ❑ **Regular Volunteer** is any person registered as a volunteer with us and has been regularly rostered to assist on a weekly/fortnightly basis for no more than 21 hours per week; and
- ❑ **Occasional Volunteer** is any person registered with us to attend for volunteer service from time to time.

We have a range of projects happening at any given point in time. The main objective of all our projects is to assist people in the community who require our help. Some of the projects that we may need volunteers for:

- Sanadi Foundation: Supporting people affected by cancer, through:
 - Social and physical activities
 - Telephone support
 - One to one emotional and/or practical support
 - Information sessions
 - Fundraising activities
- Home visits and/or social activities for older people
- Events including fundraising events
- General clerical and administration

Applying to Become a Volunteer

Before commencing as a volunteer, you will need to fulfill the following requirements:

- Complete an application form (see appendix)
- Attend an interview
- Provide two referees
- Provide a copy of your driver's license
- Obtain (or agree to these being conducted) a current criminal record clearance and/or Working with Children Check (if you don't have these available and you are assigned a role with Council, we will pay for the cost)

ENTITLEMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS EXPLAINED

Insurance

All volunteers who perform work on behalf of Council, with the knowledge and authority of Council, are covered by our insurance policies. This includes travel insurance while travelling to/from and during voluntary work.

It is the responsibility of volunteers to ensure that they have the relevant insurance cover on their vehicles and that this cover is current.

Council does not cover damages to personal property.

Training

Once you have been interviewed for voluntary work, your references have been checked and have received satisfactory criminal history and/or working with children clearance, we will contact you to arrange a suitable training day.

This training will involve hands on experience, face to face or online sessions in addition to compulsory Work Health & Safety training, relevant Council policies and procedures, your role as a volunteer as well as other training relevant to the role you have been assigned.

Once you have started volunteering and have completed three months of service with a minimum of eighty hours of service, you may wish to suggest to your line manager any relevant training that can be beneficial to you.

Travel Reimbursement

Volunteers using their vehicle in the course of their duties eg, food parcel deliveries, home visit etc., are entitled to reimbursement for approved travel costs.

To get reimbursed, you will be required to complete a Motor Vehicle Usage Log form and submit it to the relevant Manager at the end of your working day.

Travel Allowance rate paid to staff will be paid to volunteers and is in accordance with the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award.

Travel reimbursement will be paid once per fortnight on Council's scheduled payday.

Performance Review

In addition to giving regular feedback, we have a formal performance review system in place.

Your performance review could take place in the middle of your agreed term of volunteering and also at the end of the agreed time frame.

This is for your personal development and also for us to keep a record of your compatibility to your volunteering position.

In instances where there are issues with performance, your line manager will initially meet with the volunteer to discuss the situation. Part of this meeting will include developing measures to maintain high quality services.

It must be noted that performance review is not an occasion where misconduct or a breach of Council policies and procedures are discussed. These are dealt with as outlined in the Code of Conduct section of this handbook.

Volunteer Recognition

We appreciate your time and efforts with the community and believe that you should be acknowledged for this. We endeavour to recognise all substantial contributions of effort given by you in different ways. Some of these are:

- Recognition of Voluntary Service Certificate
- Work experience Certificate
- Award certificates for longevity of service
- Verbal references for long term volunteers

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Accountability

All volunteers will initially report to the Volunteer Coordinator and then to the manager in charge of the project to which a volunteer is assigned.

All managers are accountable to the Chief Executive Officer and ultimately to Council's Board.

Rostered Hours

A maximum of 21 hours per week will be assigned to you as a volunteer.

You will need to adhere to your nominated hours of work. These hours shall be displayed on a roster in a place conveniently accessible to all workers at least one to two weeks prior to the commencement date of the first working period in any roster.

If you wish to change your hours of work, please advise your line manager of the new arrangements prior to making the changes.

Time Records

We endeavour to continue providing the highest standards of service and we expect you to adhere to our policies and procedures in regards to keeping time records of your attendance by completing a time sheet.

Time sheets must show starting and finishing times including meal breaks.

These daily records are also required for insurance purpose and will be kept in good order with the manager in charge of the project.

A copy of the time sheet is included in this handbook

Meal and Rest Breaks

You are entitled to at least 30-minute lunch break after working five hours continuously. You must advise your manager if you need to have more than one hour for a meal break.

You may wish to take morning or afternoon breaks. These can be negotiated with your line manager.

Leave

We require that you provide us with prior notice when you need time off from your agreed period of volunteering. If you need more than one day off, we would appreciate that you let us know one week beforehand to give us time to organise for another volunteer to take your duties for that period. Of course, this rule does not apply to illness.

In the case of illness, we ask you to telephone Council and speak to the relevant manager. Advise the manager of any prior commitments you may have with clients so that he/she can follow up.

Other Applicable Policies and Documents

- Role description
- Gift and Benefit Policies
- Code of Conduct Policy (Summary is available on next page)
- Police and Children Check Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- WHS Policy
- COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
- Strategic Plan

Code of Conduct – Brief Summary

These are set standards that outline acceptable behaviour we expect from Council people, including staff and volunteers. The standards make it clear to all people of what is expected of them, and reduces confusion and possible conflict.

These policies apply to all Council people and failure to abide by these standards may lead to an end to volunteering within Council.

In addition to the overarching Code of Conduct, we also have in place Child Safe Code of Conduct which applies to all Council people when working with children.

You will receive training in the Code of Conduct during orientation and you will receive copies of relevant policies.

Below, is a **brief summary** of the standards:

- Model Council values in your defined duties to the best of your ability.
- Report behaviour that may be contrary to the Code of Conduct and required standards of behaviour.
- Comply with mandatory reporting requirements, including but not limited to, mandatory reports of domestic and family violence, reportable incidents involving children and vulnerable people or other regulatory requirements.
- Inform yourself and comply with all Council policies and procedures relevant to your position.
- Uphold the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and transparency in the conduct of duties.
- Treat others with respect, dignity, fairness, and courtesy.
- Represent Council in a professional manner. This includes ensuring that your attire is appropriate and respectable.
- Never act in a discriminatory, harassing, or violent way towards others.
- Never use your position to gain an advantage over or exploit Council or the vulnerability of others.
- Always strive for the highest health, safety and environmental standards in all facilities, sites, and work areas.
- Not accept money from clients except where the money is for a predetermined fee of a particular activity or service.
- Not perform work duties when affected by drugs or alcohol.
- Never participate in, or assist others to participate in, any illegal and/or criminal activities.
- Never destroy or take for personal use any items belonging to Council

PLEASE REQUEST THE FULL POLICY FROM ADMINISTRATION

APPENDIX 1 - Volunteer Application Form

The information you provide in this form will help us become familiar with you and your interests. This information will be kept confidential; it is for our records only. Someone will contact you to arrange an interview.

1. Your details

Title (Mr/Ms etc) _____ Name _____ DOB _____

Street Address _____

Suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Tel (h) _____ Tel (w) _____ Mobile _____

Email _____ Occupation _____

2. How well do you speak and write English? _____

3. How well do you speak and write Arabic? _____

4. **Work Experience** Briefly please tell us your work experience and attach a copy of your Resume if you have one available.

5. **Your reasons for volunteering** Please tell us why you would like to do voluntary work (Attach a separate sheet if necessary)

6. **Areas of involvement:** This is a list of some of the activities that we might have available. Please tick as many as you like

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office/clerical work | <input type="checkbox"/> Home visits | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors social activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanadi (separate application) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | | |

7. **Availability:** What days and times are you available? _____

8. Declaration

By signing this application form, I agree to be bound by the aims, policies and procedures of Council and have read and understood Council's requirements of volunteers.

Signature _____ Date _____

1. This document does not constitute an offer but is issued only to invite applications.
2. Council reserves the right to reject any application on whatever grounds it deems acceptable at its entire discretion. No correspondence will be entered into in respect to a declined application.
3. You will be asked to provide a current national criminal record clearance from the police. If one is not available, Council can assist and will pay for the cost. Approval of your application is conditional to receiving a satisfactory criminal record clearance.
4. Should your role with Council involve working with children, approval of your application is conditional on the Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance. If you do not have a recent clearance, we can assist you with applying for WWCC.

APPENDIX 2 - Volunteer Time Sheet

Name: _____ Fortnight: _____ to _____

Project: _____ Unit: _____

Day	Date	Time Signed In	Time Signed out	Lunch break		Rostered hours	Actual working Hours	Comments
				From	To			
Mon								
Tue								
Wed								
Thu								
Fri								
Sat								
Sun								
Mon								
Tue								
Wed								
Thu								
Fri								
Sat								
Sun								
Total Hours								

Volunteer Signature: _____

Manager Signature: _____

APPENDIX 4 - Volunteer Incident Report

1. Volunteer Personal Details	
Name:	Project:
Site:	Line Manager:
2. Incident	
Date of Incident:	Time of Incident: <input type="checkbox"/> am <input type="checkbox"/> pm
Time started duties:	<input type="checkbox"/> am <input type="checkbox"/> pm
Exact location of incident:	
Incident resulted in: (please tick)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Injury to Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to Council Property
<input type="checkbox"/> Injury to client	<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to Other Property
<input type="checkbox"/> Injury to Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Near-miss (Dangerous Occurrence) Only
Description of Incident (Describe the activity, the incident and how it occurred)	
Other documentation attached: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name of Witnesses:	
Volunteer Signature:	Date:
Line Manager Signature:	Date received:

3. First Aid Report		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Injury or complaint:		
Treatment Provided:		
Is time off required? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<input type="checkbox"/> Back to volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/> To Doctor	<input type="checkbox"/> To Hospital

4. Plant, Equipment or Property	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
Description of Damage:	

Management Action
What action could have prevented the incident or is needed to prevent recurrence?

Volunteer Signature:	Date:
Line Manager Signature:	Date: