

Inviting cultural diversity in volunteering

MIGRANT INFORMATION CENTRE (EASTERN MELBOURNE)

Would you like to invite cultural diversity in volunteering in your organisation?

Your answers to some of these questions may help you to identify where to start:

- ? Do we have an open and inclusive atmosphere that makes it easy for people to join in?
- ? What values do we promote? Do we allow for difference? Do we welcome difference?
- ? Are our services relevant to people from diverse cultural backgrounds?
- ? Does our volunteer pool reflect the cultural diversity of our target area?
- ? What messages do we give – in our written material? In our office environment? In the makeup of our staff?
- ? What are our practices? Are elements offensive or attractive to people from other cultures?

(Adapted from Vangelista, A 1999, Multicultural Volunteering, *Australian Journal on Volunteering*, Vol 4, No 1, Feb 1999, 31-38)

In this information sheet:

- How will you benefit?
- What should you include?
- How to get started
- Presenting a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Resources to find out more

Your volunteer policies provide the foundation for your volunteer program and the way you involve volunteers

(National Centre for Volunteering 2002, *Get it right from the Start*, London, p.4)



You will:

- ◆ Be provided with a new source of volunteers with unique and different skills
- ◆ Be able to plan and deliver more culturally appropriate services
- ◆ Be able to promote HACC services to CALD communities more easily, improving access to those services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- ◆ Build a greater awareness of other cultures in the community
- ◆ Be given new ideas and approaches for your service planning and delivery
- ◆ Have greater opportunities for innovative activities and partnerships with ethno-specific communities and organisations
- ◆ Meet the Volunteer Principles of respecting the rights, dignity and culture of others and promoting human rights and equality (outlined in National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit Organisations, Volunteering Australia)

How will your organisation benefit?



home and community care

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED

The information provided in this sheet was adapted from a number of sources and was prepared as part of the Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering Project, funded by the EMR HACC Office of DHS and coordinated by the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne).

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What should we include in our volunteer policy to invite cultural diversity?

- 👍 A commitment to valuing diversity
- 👍 An organisational environment that welcomes people from other cultures – removing the barrier of exclusion will help individuals to feel accepted and included
- 👍 A culturally aware approach in all aspects of your work including recruiting, supporting and managing volunteers from culturally diverse backgrounds
- 👍 A recognition of difference - encouraging and responding to individuals' different wants and needs

Here's an example of an inclusive volunteering policy:

Our organisation is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. We believe that we have much to learn and profit from diverse cultures and perspectives, and that diversity will make our organisation more effective in meeting the needs of all our stakeholders.

We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

We will regularly evaluate and monitor our progress towards diversity. (National Centre for Volunteering 2002, Get it right from the Start, London, p.8)



GETTING STARTED

- ▶ Consult widely with staff, management and volunteers
- ▶ Set up a representative steering group
- ▶ Gain support from your manager
- ▶ Reflect the needs of the organisation
- ▶ Keep it simple and in plain English
- ▶ Use positive images
- ▶ Translate into key community languages
- ▶ Incorporate diversity statements into other policies and procedures
- ▶ Promote the policy widely internally and externally
- ▶ Revise your policies every year

Presenting a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment

- Use inclusive language in your policies and procedures
- Use images of people from other cultures in your reception and office areas, promotional materials, newsletters and website
- Translate promotional material and flyers in key community languages and display in your office and on your website
- Employ people from other cultures
- Display signs in other languages and say "welcome" on your website
- Display a language map and interpreter card symbol and advertise that interpreters are available
- Invite culturally diverse communities to tour your organisation
- Visit culturally diverse communities in your area, distribute material about your organisation and tell them what you do

Need more resources?

Volunteering Australia—www.volunteeringaustralia.org—especially the *Start Smart Toolkit* and *Practical Guide for Involving Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Language Backgrounds*

Volunteering England—www.volunteering.org.uk—especially *Get it right from the start* in the *Good Practice Bank*

Eastern Volunteer Recruitment Project—www.evrp.org.au—especially the *HACC Volunteer Management Resource Kit*

Attend the Good Practice Forum on Thursday 29 May 2008 - email sporteous@miceastmelb.com.au for more info