



Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering
- An EMR HACC CALD Project -

PILOT VOLUNTEER MENTOR PROGRAM

Outline of the Model



Overview/Introduction

Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering is a project funded by the Home and Community Care (HACC) program (a joint Commonwealth and State Government funded program) and coordinated by the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne). One objective of this project is to pilot a volunteer mentor program with two or three HACC funded organisations in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). This document outlines the volunteer mentor model developed.

Acknowledgements

This mentoring model was developed from a number of sources but in particular utilised Volunteering WA's **take2** program – Enhancing Access to Volunteering; the Side by Side Program of Bathurst Information and Neighbourhood Centre (BINC) and Jerry Sherk's Design Guide of Formal/Volunteer Mentor Programs. Special thanks to Volunteering WA and BINC for forwarding information about their programs on CD. A full list of references is attached.

Aim of the Program

This program recognises the contribution that all people can make to volunteering. The aim of the volunteer mentor program is to assist people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in volunteering in HACC services in the Eastern Metropolitan Region by providing a volunteer mentor to guide and support them in their volunteer placement.

This is an ideal way for people who may experience exclusion from volunteering due to factors such as low English proficiency and cultural difference to participate in volunteering in mainstream organisations. There are many benefits of participating in volunteering including increased participation in the broader community, feeling valued, experiencing Australian work culture, improving self confidence and self-esteem, learning new skills, gaining work experience and work references, and improving communication and social skills.

Objectives of the Program

The Objectives of the volunteer mentor program are to:

- Match new CALD volunteers with suitable mentors;
- Provide appropriate training and orientation for the mentor and new CALD volunteer about the organisation and their volunteer role;
- Guide and support the new CALD volunteer in their volunteer placement in a HACC organisation;
- Assist the new CALD volunteer to set goals and identify ways to achieve them;
- Provide appropriate support and supervision to mentors.
- Evaluate the program.

Scope of the Program

Length of the mentoring cycle

As the funding for this project is short term in nature the mentoring cycle in the volunteer mentor pilot will also be short term. This is not ideal as mentoring research suggests that mentoring should occur for at least 6 months to obtain maximum benefit. Alternatively, the objectives of this program are reasonably straightforward and should be met in a shorter time frame. In addition, at individual organisations it is possible that mentors and mentees will have some continued contact after the mentoring cycle ends. The mentoring cycle will take approximately two to three months, depending on how often the mentee attends the organisation to volunteer.

Frequency and type of contact

The mentor and mentee should meet for the first four times that the mentee volunteers, with a follow up contact one month after regular meetings cease. There can be some flexibility in the number of contacts, depending on the individual mentor and mentee and how much progress is being made.

Number of mentors/mentees

The number of mentors and mentees will vary depending on the size of the organisation piloting the volunteer mentor model. Smaller organisations may only recruit small numbers of volunteers and therefore have fewer possibilities to recruit mentors and mentees, while larger organisations are able to recruit more volunteers and therefore should attract more mentors and mentees. It is envisaged that between 2 and 5 mentors will be trained and matched with new CALD volunteers at each organisation.

Volunteering

Voluntary work is an important and valuable activity in Australia. In the most recent survey of voluntary work in Australia the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 34% of the population aged over 18 years volunteer, contributing 713 million hours to the community (ABS 2006).

This project is focused on formal volunteering where the volunteer willingly gives their time and skills to a HACC funded organisation for no financial rewards. These volunteers are given positions that are not designated as paid positions such as delivering meals on wheels, visiting isolated people at home and going on outings with groups.

Volunteering provides an opportunity to become involved in the community. There are many benefits of volunteering and many reasons why people volunteer including: to meet new people, learn new skills, contribute to the community, help others and build self-confidence

Definitions of terms used

Mentor – is the person who is doing the mentoring, i.e. supporting and encouraging another person. In this program the mentor is a volunteer but will be referred to as the *mentor*.

Mentee – is the person who is being mentored, i.e. being supported and encouraged by another person. Throughout this document this person may also be referred to as the *mentee*, *volunteer* or *new CALD volunteer*.

Coordinator – is the person at the organisation where the mentoring is happening who is responsible for the mentor program. This may be the manager of the organisation, volunteer coordinator or other paid worker but will be referred to as the *Coordinator* throughout this document.

What is Mentoring?

“Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to achieve their goals.” (YMCA 2007)

“Mentoring is a formal voluntary arrangement where an experienced individual provides one-to-one support and encouragement over a period of time to another person in order to assist them set and achieve goals; develop their skills; manage their own learning and development; and maximise their potential to become the person they want to be.” (Courtney 2001, p.6)

Mentoring:

- focuses on the needs of the mentee
- fosters a caring and supportive relationship
- encourages mentees to develop to their fullest potential
- is based on mutual respect and trust

- involves a two-way communication process
- provides an opportunity for sharing skills and experiences
- allows future potential to be nurtured

(YMCA 2007)

What are the benefits of being involved in mentoring?

For the mentor	For the mentee (person being mentored)
Provides an opportunity to share their knowledge and skills	Develops skills and knowledge, especially communication skills
Gives them recognition and respect for their knowledge	Provides a sounding board for their questions and ideas
Allows them to assist others – providing a sense of achievement and satisfaction from helping someone and giving something back to the community	Improves motivation and attitude to and acceptance of responsibility for their own learning
Improves their self-image and self-awareness – able to reflect on their own personal development, improving self-confidence,	Builds self-confidence & self-esteem
Develops and improves their skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and listening	Provides new experiences
Provides an opportunity to meet new people, bridge communities, give insight into issues facing people from CALD backgrounds, and inform about other cultures and the migration experience	Provides an opportunity to meet new people and share their own culture and experiences

(From YMCA 2007, Courtney 2001, Rogers 1997, Mentoring & Befriending Foundation no date, Time Bank no date)

Roles

This section outlines the roles of the mentor, mentee and Coordinator.

ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Purpose of role:

The purpose of the VOLUNTEER MENTOR ROLE is to provide support and encouragement for a new volunteer from a culturally and linguistically diverse background to assist them to settle into their volunteer position.

The mentor will provide one-to-one support to the new CALD volunteer on a regular basis for at least the first four volunteer sessions of the new volunteer. The role is time limited. The general role of the mentor is to:

- Share knowledge, experience and skills
- Offer support and enthusiasm
- Provide guidance to enable the new volunteer to settle into their volunteer position

Main activities/tasks

The mentor will:

- Attend training about the program and the role of the mentor (1 hour)
- Welcome and orientate the new CALD volunteer to the organisation and their role;
- Share their knowledge, experience and skills in a supporting and encouraging way;
- Establish trust through genuine interest and concern for the new CALD volunteer;
- Work beside the new CALD volunteer in their placement, provide practical help and guidance with tasks and skills, and assist them to become familiar with their role and the organisation.
- Check frequently how things are going in their role and review the way the mentoring relationship is working;
- Listen to the new CALD volunteer, answer their questions, discuss their concerns and provide assistance if required;
- Identify the volunteer's strengths and praise their achievements;
- Keep in touch with other people in organisation that they are providing adequate support and recognition;
- Help the new CALD volunteer to set realistic goals and identify ways to achieve them;
- Participate in regular review meetings with the Coordinator.
- Complete a log of contact with the mentee (see Appendix) and assist the Project Worker to evaluate the program

Outline of tasks for each volunteer session:

Volunteer Session	Tasks of mentor
First volunteer session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome new CALD volunteer to organisation (with coordinator to make introductions)• Introduce to key staff/volunteers• Orientation to organisation• Discuss position description and mentees support requirements
Second volunteer session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work beside new volunteer to answer questions and assist them to become familiar with their role• Discuss progress of mentoring relationship with Coordinator to ensure that the match is going well, the support is in place and that the experience of mentoring is as they expected (15 mins)
Third volunteer session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor progress of new CALD volunteer• Discuss the exit process for the mentoring relationship
Fourth volunteer session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final contact• Monitor the progress of new CALD volunteer• Complete the mentoring relationship
One month later	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make brief contact (15 mins) with CALD volunteer to monitor their progress and meet with Coordinator to discuss/resolve any issues (15 mins)• Attend an interview with Project Worker to evaluate the program (20 mins)

What Kind Of Person Is A Mentor?

here is no single profile of who can or should be a mentor. A mentor should have the following qualities, skills and experience:

Qualities/experience/skills sought:

- Ability to understand and empathise with the volunteer
- Be respectful of others and non-judgemental, aware of different cultures and life experiences
- Be a person who will enjoy helping the volunteer develop skills and knowledge and be able to share knowledge and experience openly and honestly
- Good communication skills including being an active listener
- Be able to see the volunteer as a separate person with different needs and goals, and must be comfortable with those differences

- Be able to set standards of performance, and have the ability to give the volunteer the assistance and confidence to reach them
- Trustworthy
- Be good with time -management and aware of their own limits
- Reliable and able to make a regular commitment
- Able to motivate others and act as a role model
- Approachable and responsive to the mentee's needs
- Honest and able to give constructive, positive advice
- Respect privacy and ensure all information remains confidential
- Be knowledgeable or able to gain information
- Flexible - willing to change and accept change and adapt to the mentee's needs
- Be aware of and work within the law

In addition, mentors should be existing volunteers at the organisation who are familiar with the organisation's philosophy and how it works. Mentors may be from a culturally and linguistically diverse background but this is not essential. Mentors should have an interest in assisting people from CALD backgrounds.

A MENTOR IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, PARENT, SOCIAL
WORKER, COACH OR COUNSELLOR

ROLE OF THE MENTEE/NEW CALD VOLUNTEER

The role of the mentee or new CALD volunteer is to:

- Listen carefully to the information and guidance provided by the mentor
- Undertake tasks as agreed to and directed by the coordinator
- Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions
- Meet with the coordinator to discuss the mentoring relationship
- Be honest in the mentoring relationship
- Be aware that the mentor has other commitments and responsibilities
- Be open to new ideas, willing to change and accept change
- Behave respectfully to others
- Be aware of their rights and responsibilities and complaints procedures
- Keep a log of contact with mentors (see Appendix)
- Behave respectfully towards the volunteer mentor

ROLE OF THE COORDINATOR

The role of the Coordinator is to:

- Promote the mentor program
- Recruit, interview, check and allocate specific tasks to new CALD volunteers
- Recruit mentors
- Provide orientation and training to the mentor & mentee
- Introduce the mentee to the mentor

- Assess and match mentors and mentees
- Provide direction and supervision to the mentor and mentee
- Review the progress of the volunteer and the mentoring relationship
- Draw up volunteer agreements and allocate position descriptions to clarify what the mentor and mentee will do, when and how and the boundaries of their roles
- Help with problems or concerns that may arise
- Keep volunteers, mentors and staff informed about the program
- Organise recognition activities
- Keep a log of contact with mentors and mentees (see Appendix)

Stages in the mentoring relationship

Although each mentoring relationship will be unique and different, there are probably four stages that the relationship will pass through:

Initial stage: The mentor takes a leadership role and the mentee (**new CALD** volunteer) accepts mentor support.

Development stage: The volunteer becomes more confident and begins to develop more skills and knowledge. The mentor becomes aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the volunteer. The mentor gains a better understanding of what is required, what is expected and what is possible. The mentor assists by developing strategies to ensure the volunteer can become an independent volunteer within the agency. Alternatively, the partnership is not working and the parties involved agree to end it at this stage.

Assessment stage: Both mentor and mentee start to think about when a good time to withdraw the support would be. This is done in conjunction with the coordinator.

Completion stage: The mentoring relationship is completed because it has served its purpose and there are no further benefits to be achieved by continuing it.

Recruitment

Participation in the Volunteer Mentor Program is voluntary for both mentors and mentees. For the program to be successful it requires the full support from the Management and Committees of participating organisations and an emphasis on promoting the project to the organisation and individuals.

Finding Mentors

Participating organisations in the volunteer mentor program play a critical role in finding mentors for the program. Mentors should be existing volunteers at the organisation who are familiar with the philosophy of the organisation and how it works. Mentors may come from a culturally and linguistically diverse background but this is not essential. The following steps may be taken to recruit mentors to the program:

- Generally promote the program in the organisation through information flyers
- Approach suitable individuals personally to explain the program, the benefits and challenges and how it will benefit new CALD volunteers
- To recruit CALD mentors involve paid staff from similar backgrounds
- Organise information/training sessions for potential mentors to explain the aim of the program, mentor role, how the program will work and to clarify expectations

Screening

Both mentors and mentees should complete the normal application process to be a volunteer at the organisation including completing an application, reference and police checks, consent and receipt of relevant information. For mentors where this process has been completed previously it is important for the organisation to check that all documentation is up to date.

Potential mentors should be screened by the Coordinator through an interview process. Suitability for the program can be identified through matching of skills and experience with the position description. Mentors should formally consent to their participation in the program (consent form in appendix).

All **new volunteers** from a CALD background should be informed about the volunteer mentor program and encouraged to participate. Mentees should formally consent to their participation in the program (consent form in appendix).

People who are identified as not suitable for the program should be offered other opportunities.

Matching mentors and mentees

Matching mentors and mentees is the role of the coordinator. In this volunteer mentor program it may be difficult to provide the best possible match as the number of mentors and mentees will be quite small. In any case, the coordinator should seek a range of information about the mentors and mentees at interview to ensure that the best possible match is achieved. The better the match, the more likely the mentor and mentee will have a positive experience, influencing their satisfaction levels and ultimately retention with the organisation.

The following criteria may be used to match mentors with mentees:

- The type of support required as identified by the mentee and coordinator
- Similarity in interests, social activities and past work experience
- Potential for having a positive relationship
- Geographical proximity (depending on organisation)

- Similarity in volunteer roles
- Whether there are any types of people the mentor/mentee would prefer not to be matched with
- The primary motivations of the mentor, why they want to undertake the role and the potential of the mentoring relationship to fulfil these motives
- Similar cultural background

If the organisation has a number of mentors and mentees to be matched, a “get to know you day” could be organised to assist the matching process.

Another helpful approach is to draw up a matching matrix such as the following hypothetical example:

Mentee	Andrew	Ben	Caitlin	Drew
Geographic Location	Box Hill			
Age/Sex	Male 21			
Cultural Background	Chinese			
Language	Cantonese			
English Proficiency	Good			
Education	Tertiary Student			
Related Background	Works part time in sales			
Requested role	Support planned activity group			
Hobbies & Interests	Hiking, movies			
Description of mentee	“Energetic and well organised, needs some training in specific role”			
Other	Would like mentor from Australian background to improve English.			

Management & Support

Monitoring/Supervision

It is beneficial to have a structured process for monitoring and supporting the mentors and volunteers in their roles:

- In the initial stages, monitoring of the mentoring relationship is important to identify any issues in a timely manner ensure the match is working well and meeting the aims of the program or to make any necessary changes early on.
- It is also important at the end of the mentoring relationship to allow the mentor and mentee to “debrief” and effectively complete the relationship.
- Feedback from the mentor and volunteer will provide information on what is working well in the mentoring program, enabling the coordinator to review roles and responsibilities and make necessary adjustments.
- Monitoring also provides an opportunity to reinforce that the work the mentor and volunteer are doing is valued.

Monitoring and support is the responsibility of the coordinator and involves:

- Contact with both the mentor and mentee to discuss their experiences and resolve issues
- Completing a log of meetings with mentors and mentees (see Appendix)
- Reinforcing training for both mentor and mentee, particularly the organisation’s policies and procedures and people to contact if problems arise
- Informing mentor and mentee about the organisation’s activities and how they can be involved
- Reviewing the mentoring program based on feedback from mentor and mentee

The typical pattern of contact should be:

Volunteer Sessions of mentee	Tasks of coordinator
First volunteer session	Introduce mentor and mentee and welcome mentee to organisation
Second volunteer session	Meet with mentor and mentee individually and in person to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• check how things are going• if program is meeting their expectations• assess the individual’s goals and motives and reinforce the roles in the relationship• resolve issues• offer support
Fourth volunteer session	Follow up after last contact preferably in person or by phone individually with both mentor and mentee to discuss:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they felt about the mentoring relationship • Support from staff (or otherwise) • Views about the program in general • Debrief about the mentoring relationship • Policy on future contacts with mentor or mentee • The future and support required to achieve their goals
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Recognition

An important aspect of managing and supporting mentors and mentees is to recognise their participation in the program (in addition to usual recognition activities). This could include:

- A special recognition event for mentors and mentees at the end of the program
- Special certificates
- A thank you letter

Confidentiality

Clear guidelines about confidentiality are required to enable the mentor and mentee to build trust and have a healthy relationship. All mentors, mentees and paid workers involved in the program must:

- Respect any discussions with others as **information given in confidence**. If information is of concern or requires further action it should be reported to the coordinator.
- Recognise that it is the coordinator's role to monitor and support the volunteer mentor program and that the mentor and mentee can discuss anything about the mentoring relationship with the coordinator. The coordinator is also bound by confidentiality requirements.
- Recognise that the focus of the mentoring relationship is to support the mentee in their volunteer placement. The mentoring relationship is not a place to discuss deep **personal issues**.
- Seek permission from the mentor or mentee to discuss confidential or personal information with a **third party** outside of the volunteer mentor program.

Boundaries

Clear guidelines about boundary issues are required to enable the mentor and mentee to build trust and have a healthy relationship. All mentors, mentees and paid workers involved in the program must:

- Respect each other's time and keep to the guidelines regarding how long and how often mentors and mentees meet or contact each other.
- Respect each other's personal information and only share personal information where they feel comfortable or it is relevant to the mentoring relationship. If mentors or mentees are unclear then they should discuss this further with their mentoring partner to come to an agreement.
- Not lend or give money, gifts or favours to mentors, mentees or paid workers.

Grievance Procedures

The normal grievance procedures of the organisation can be used in the mentoring program and should be made clear to both the mentor and mentee at the start of the mentoring relationship.

Information and Training

For Mentors

Information sessions for mentors should include the following

- Information about the project and the volunteer mentor program pilot – broad project outline, aim and objectives of mentor program, benefits and challenges
- Cultural awareness exercises/information
- Definition of mentoring and brief outline of the roles of each participant – mentor, mentee and coordinator
- Information about the application/selection process
- Exercise – who mentored you?
- Qualities of good mentors – realistic and unrealistic attitudes, expectations and practices
- Outline of the expectations of the mentor role – specific tasks, boundaries, confidentiality
- Outline of and training in skills required- effective communication, listening (paraphrasing, summarising, clarifying), how to be encouraging, checking and reflecting using small group activities and role plays
- Outline support and monitoring mechanisms in the program
- Identify competencies required and process involved – starting the mentoring relationship; identifying needs of mentee; informing, enabling and supporting mentee; maintaining and improving the mentoring relationship; problem solving; ending the mentoring relationship; monitoring and evaluating.
- Step by step contact with mentee and keeping a record
- Sign participation agreement
- Give out handbook for mentors

Evaluation of Information for Mentors

At end of information session ask the mentors:

- Was the training session useful (level of usefulness)
- Which part did you find most useful/least useful?
- Were there aspects of the training that could be left out
- Were there aspects of mentoring that we could include in the training
- Identify further training requirements

For Mentees

Information about the volunteer mentor program could be incorporated into existing volunteer orientation training or relayed to new CALD volunteers individually in the volunteer application process. The information should include:

- Information about the overall project
- A definition of mentoring and how the mentoring program works
- Outline of the roles of mentor, mentee and coordinator
- Confidentiality and boundary requirements
- Clarification of any aids, communication or other requirements of the volunteer

Program Evaluation

The general questions to be answered by the evaluation are:

1. Can mentoring provide a means of broadening the base of volunteering and community activity?
2. How effective is volunteer mentoring?
3. What model of good practice was identified?

Specific evaluation of the volunteer mentor program to answer these broad questions should incorporate:

- Outcome analysis of each relationship
- Outcome analysis of the program as a whole based on program criteria including aim, objectives and roles
- Evaluation of the improvements for the mentee
- Assessment of the program and the mentoring relationship by participants

Methodology

Several methods can be used to collect this data:

Ongoing evaluation:

An important aspect of the evaluation is for participants to record their thoughts about the mentoring relationship and program regularly throughout their participation. This provides a more reliable record than recalling information at a later date. Ongoing record keeping can include:

- Mentors and mentees keeping a journal/diary or log of contacts – when/where contact was made, what contact involved/discussed, how they felt about the contact, future plans
- People from CALD backgrounds may prefer to give this type of feedback verbally and not necessarily in English as they may not have confidence in their English writing skills
- Arrange for group meetings of mentors to provide an opportunity to share ideas and experiences.
- Contacts with coordinator recorded on log including nature of contact, subject of contact, issues discussed, way forward

Assessment of program by participants

In addition to ongoing evaluation, participants in the mentor program (mentors, mentees and coordinator) will be interviewed or asked to complete a questionnaire covering the following areas:

Mentor:

- How did you see your mentor role?
- What do you think you helped with?
- How did you see the mentee change over the course of the program?
- How well did the coordinator support the program?
- How did you feel about the mentoring relationship?
- What did you like/dislike about the program?
- What improvements would you make?

Mentee:

- How did you see the mentor's role?
- What do you think they helped with?
- How did you see yourself change over the course of the program?
- How did you feel about the mentoring relationship?
- How did you see the coordinator's role?
- What did you like/dislike about the program?
- What improvements would you make?

Coordinator

- Did the mentoring program achieve its goals for participants?
- How did the mentors adapt to their role?
- What issues arose and how were they resolved?
- What did you like/dislike about the program?
- What improvements would you make?

Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering

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Pilot Volunteer Mentor Program Participation Agreement

This agreement relates to participation in the pilot volunteer mentor program as part of the Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering Project.

Name of organisation: _____

Name of volunteer: _____

Position (please tick): Mentor New Volunteer

I understand and accept that my participation in the pilot volunteer mentor program includes:

- Specific responsibilities in addition to my usual volunteer role.
- Being bound by the confidentiality requirements of the program.
- Being involved in the evaluation of the program including participating in an interview or survey about the program.

Volunteer:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Coordinator:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Inviting Cultural Diversity in Volunteering
VOLUNTEER MENTOR PROGRAM - Log of contacts

Name: _____ Role: _____ Organisation: _____

Date	Type of contact (eg.phone, meet)	Who contact was with & their role	Nature of contact (eg. regular meeting, issue concerned about,)	Outcome/plan	Time Spent

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