

Fact Sheet

Other Unpaid Work Arrangements

Volunteering Australia defines volunteering as 'time willingly given for the common good without financial gain.' There are numerous unpaid work arrangements which, whilst they don't fit this definition of volunteering, provide similar benefits to both participants and organisations. The legal obligations and responsibilities of both the organisation, and the individual will vary depending on the specific nature of the work arrangements.

For organisations, it is important to be clear about the nature of unpaid work arrangements to ensure that they are lawful under the Fair Work Act, as well as other legislative requirements such as work health and safety and discrimination. For more information on this, visit www.fairwork.gov.au/unpaidwork or contact the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94

Work for the Dole

The Federal Government's Work for the Dole program places job seekers in activities where they can gain skills and experience that give back to the community and help them find a job. Participation in Work for the Dole does not fall within the definition of volunteering, however there are mutual benefits derived for both participants and community organisations. For further information on this program visit: <https://employment.gov.au/work-dole>

Considerations for volunteer involving organisations

Volunteering WA takes a cautionary approach to both the policy foundations and the practical implications for organisations participating in Work for the Dole programs. There a number of things volunteer involving organisations should consider before taking part in the Work for the Dole program:

- whether involvement in the Work for the Dole program is compatible with the strategic goals, values and priorities of the organisation
- what the benefits to the organisation will be
- whether the organisation already has sufficient experienced volunteers to deliver the services it offers; and whether this will mean displacing long serving volunteers
- that Work for the Dole participants should not replace a paid position
- whether involvement in the Work for the Dole program will divert resources from your core services and objectives
- the risk management and legal issues: ensure that you are fully conversant with your obligations to both Government and Job Search agencies you will be working with as well as individual job seekers
- recognise that Job seekers will come with varying degrees of skills, experience and willingness. Some participants may need higher levels of general or specialist support due to mental health, disability or drug and alcohol issues.
- the cost of record keeping and reporting

- assess the overall cost benefit of engagement in a Work for the Dole program and ensure you are adequately compensated for your work.

Internships & Work Experience

Internships are a formal Work Experience Arrangement that allows individuals to get work experience in a particular occupation or industry. Internships provide a form of on-the-job training within the company or organization and can provide the individual with important skills to help them transition into their chosen employment.

Work performed by interns should not be work that is normally performed by a paid employee, and interns commonly engage in observational and support activities rather than productive activities. Larger organisations may run a formal internship program and will often seek applicants from the student body at relevant educational institutions. Individuals may also approach organisations seeking internships or Work Experience.

Work Experience is generally similar to Internships although is commonly of short duration and may be a less formalized arrangement.

Formal Work Experience can also be arranged via the Department of Employment's National Work Experience Programme which offers work placement opportunities to job seekers and provides support to the participating employers.

For more information about this program: <https://www.employment.gov.au/national-work-experience-programme>

For further information on unpaid work, internships and work experience: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/unpaid-work>

Student and Vocational Placements

Student or Vocational Placements provide an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge they have gained through study and help them transition from study to work. They may be a requirement for a course of study the person is undertaking and in these cases the placement will be approved by the educational institution. The criteria for these placements will vary according to the educational institution as well as the course of study.