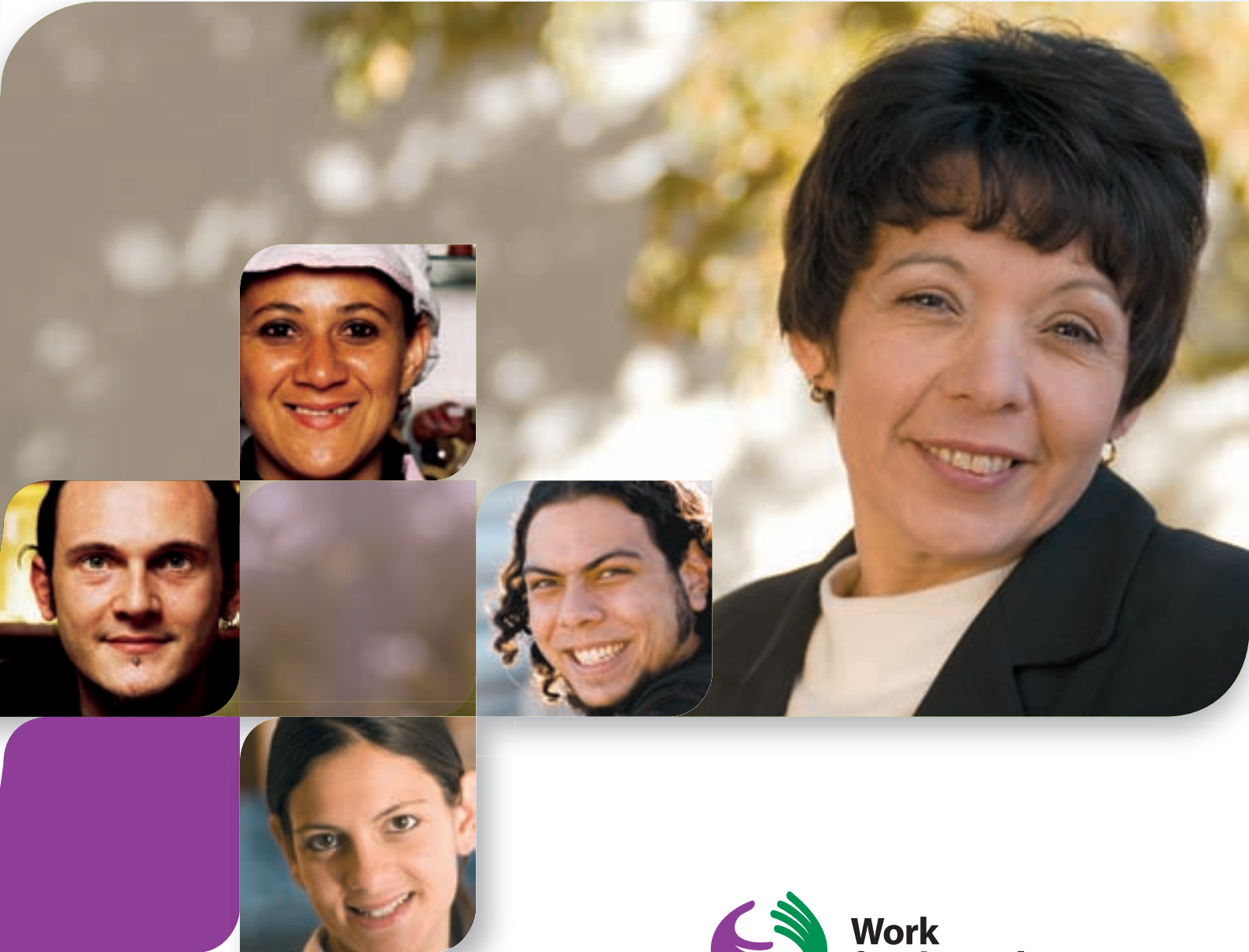




Australian Government

A guide for sponsor, host and volunteer organisations

Work for the Dole and Community Work



**Work
for the Dole**

AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

A guide for sponsor, host and volunteer organisations

Work for the Dole and Community Work

What is Work for the Dole?

Work for the Dole is an Australian Government employment programme that provides work experience for unemployed people.

Work for the Dole provides:

- structured activities to improve participants' employment prospects and vocational skills, and encourage more active and effective participation in the workplace
- activities that involve local communities, and provide value for money to the Australian Government
- work experience to enhance participants' ability to work as part of a team, take directions from a supervisor, work independently, communicate effectively, and be motivated and dependable, and
- flexible work experience opportunities for mutual obligation and voluntary participants and participants with barriers to employment, to help them re-engage with their community and workplace.

Work for the Dole is an approved activity for mutual obligation.



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What is mutual obligation?

Mutual obligation is based on the principle that unemployed job seekers who are supported financially by the community should:

- actively seek work
- constantly strive to improve their competitiveness in the labour market, and
- give something back to the community that supports them.

The objective is to encourage greater self-reliance and motivation by having job seekers take responsibility for, and be more focused on, searching for jobs and preparing for work activities.

Job seekers have a mutual obligation once they have been unemployed for six months.

Job seekers, parents and those on a restricted work capacity aged 18 to 49 who do not start another mutual obligation activity within seven months of becoming unemployed may be required to participate in Work for the Dole.

Any job seeker on Youth Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment or Disability Support Pension may volunteer to do Work for the Dole.

What are Skills in Demand?

Skills in Demand are occupations in demand in your area as identified by DEWR and Job Network members. Community Work Coordinators (CWCs) will be provided with a list of Skills in Demand that need to be addressed by Work for the Dole activities. Each activity should address at least one Skill in Demand. A minimum of 20 per cent of an activity must cover one or more of the Skills in Demand.

Changes from 1 July 2006

From 1 July 2006 the Australian Government is making some important changes to the income support system to help people move into paid work.

These changes include a balance of support through improved services, increased financial incentives and some new obligation requirements. There are more places in employment services, a new compliance system and new eligibility rules for income support customers (particularly parents, people with disability, mature age, and long-term unemployed job seekers).

For more information on the changes, visit australia.gov.au/movingintowork.

Community Work Coordinators

What do CWCs do?

CWCs work with other community and not-for-profit organisations to develop quality Work for the Dole activities that benefit participants and the community. CWCs approve, manage and monitor Work for the Dole activities and Community Work placements, and manage Training Credits.



Sponsor and host organisations

What are sponsor organisations?

Sponsor organisations work with CWCs to provide work experience opportunities for participants in not-for-profit or government organisations or community work placements. Participants cannot be placed in private organisations.

What do sponsor organisations do?

Sponsor organisations can develop Work for the Dole activity proposals to submit to CWCs for approval. If you become a sponsor you might provide the following services to help manage a Work for the Dole activity:

- a safe work environment and on-site supervision for participants
- a risk assessment, with the help of your CWC
- necessary training
- recording and reporting on participant attendance
- giving the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and the CWC access to the participants and the activity for monitoring purposes
- keeping records of expenditure to justify payments from the CWC
- letting the CWC know if a participant leaves an activity as soon as possible so that they can arrange for another participant to start.

Your functions will be agreed between you and your CWC. CWCs can help you develop your activity proposal if you need help.

What are host organisations?

As a sponsor organisation, you may want to place participants in another organisation, which will provide the work experience placement. This is known as a host organisation. Host organisations must be not-for-profit. They supervise participants on a day-to-day basis. Sponsor organisations perform administrative functions on behalf of host organisations.

What can sponsor organisations get out of Work for the Dole?

As a sponsor organisation you can access people and funding to conduct community activities that you otherwise may not have been able to. You and your CWC can negotiate what level of responsibility you have as a sponsor and an appropriate Work Experience Funding allocation.

What funding can sponsors access for Work for the Dole activities?

Work Experience Funding is paid for items related to the costs of running a Work for the Dole activity, including:

- hiring a supervisor for the duration of the activity
- providing materials (such as wood, sand or paint)
- leasing equipment (such as a mini bus to transport participants to an activity site or a bobcat digger to clear a project site), and
- providing protective clothing (such as gloves, hard hats or work boots).

CWCs will give sponsors information on Work Experience Funding. This funding for an activity will be on a proportional basis that reflects the functions performed by each organisation in managing the activity.

The Activity Application must indicate the costs of an activity, which organisation will perform which functions and the allocation of funding for each organisation.

If a Work for the Dole participant is placed with a host organisation, the organisation may receive a portion of the Work Experience Funding where they incur direct costs as a result of the participant's placement. Sponsor organisations should let host organisations know that this funding is available to them.

What do Work for the Dole participants do?

Work for the Dole participants sign an agreement to undertake work experience activities for a period of time dependent on a number of factors, including their age and benefit. This table outlines the participation requirements.

Very Long-Term Unemployed job seekers will have a review with their Job Network member around the end of a second period of Intensive Support Customised Assistance to determine their future service needs. At this review, Job Network members may decide if job seekers on Youth Allowance or Newstart Allowance (aged under 60) have a pattern of avoiding work. If so, job seekers will have to participate in Full Time Work for the Dole. This means participating in Work for the Dole for 50 hours a fortnight for 1100 hours (normally for 10 months). In cases like this, people will also have to keep looking for work and continue their usual regular contact with their employment service provider and Centrelink.

Age group / benefit	Minimum participation requirements
Participants with mutual obligation	
18 to 20 on full rate of Newstart / Youth Allowance	24 hours each fortnight for six months
21 to 39 on full rate of Newstart / Youth Allowance	30 hours each fortnight for six months
40 to 49 on full rate of Newstart Allowance	12 hours each fortnight for six months or 24 hours each fortnight for three months
Parenting Payment recipients—whose youngest child is 6–15 years	12 hours each fortnight for six months or 24 hours each fortnight for three months
18 to 49 on full rate of Newstart Allowance with a restricted work capacity of 15–29 hours per week	12 hours each fortnight for six months or 24 hours each fortnight for three months
Very Long-Term Unemployed	
18–59 years and on full rate of Newstart or Youth Allowance assessed by Job Network member as demonstrating a pattern of work avoidance	50 hours per fortnight for 44 weeks
Voluntary participants	
50 years and over on full rate of Newstart Allowance	24 hours per fortnight for 13 weeks or 12 hours per fortnight for 26 weeks
Disability Support Pension recipients; Personal Support Programme participants; and Parenting Payment recipients whose youngest child is less than six years	24 hours per fortnight for 13 weeks or 12 hours per fortnight for 26 weeks

Participants are placed in Work for the Dole activities managed by CWCs and sponsor organisations. While they are taking part in Work for the Dole, participants receive an additional payment each fortnight to help with costs such as transport.

Participants can volunteer to do extra hours to finish their placement earlier, so talk to your CWC if you think your proposed activity is suitable for flexible hours. Work experience activities are usually expected to be undertaken during standard working hours, however other arrangements may be possible. Participants may also volunteer for Community Action Groups, to help in activities such as cleaning up after a bushfire. This means that in an emergency situation, resources may be directed temporarily to activities that meet specific and urgent needs.

How can the community help?

Local organisations can support Work for the Dole by providing financial or in-kind support to Work for the Dole activities. Examples of this include the help of qualified trades people to give advice and specialist supervision or donations of materials or money for activities.

What does the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations do?

The department purchases Work for the Dole services on behalf of the Australian Government. It also promotes the delivery of quality work experience opportunities for eligible job seekers and provides the administration framework and tools for CWCs, sponsors and job seekers.

The department safeguards sponsor and host interests and maximises the benefits of the Work for the Dole programme by:

- conducting meetings with sponsor organisations
- ensuring that CWCs meet their Service Guarantee to sponsors, hosts and job seekers, and
- conducting surveys of sponsor satisfaction.

What types of activities are conducted by sponsors?

Activities will generally be approved if they demonstrate benefit to both participants and the community, as well as value for money. Some of the activities sponsors have conducted include:

Caring for people

- Helping to provide services to visually impaired people at a community centre.
- Designing and building sailing boats for use by people with disabilities and helping them learn to sail.
- Working with an Indigenous community to provide medical receptionist and other support services in a community medical centre.

Caring for our heritage

- Restoring an old jail in line with Heritage Council guidelines and converting it into a community centre.
- Building and exhibiting an operational replica of an historic aircraft.
- Recording local history, including research and interviews, taking photographs, and locating old photographs and drawings for illustration.
- Restoring a Pearl Lugger in line with museum standards to preserve maritime history.

Caring for the environment

- Building picnic areas, campsites, lookouts, walking trails and safety fences in a state forest recreational area.
- Regeneration and revegetation of an old sand mining site and critical koala habitat to promote eco-tourism.
- Fencing bushland and building shelters to form a protected site for endangered mammals.
- Helping to build fire breaks and fire trails to reduce bushfires in an old growth forest.

Caring for the community

- Building a new house and landscaping the grounds for sale, generating a profit for local charities.
- Building an observation tower for a community surf life-saving club.
- Helping in emergency situations such as natural disasters.



What activities are not eligible?

Work for the Dole activities must not displace existing paid workers or simply replace existing services. They should be new and in addition to tasks currently undertaken.

CWCs can provide more information and help you to understand these requirements.

What do I have to do to be a sponsor organisation?

If you want to sponsor a Work for the Dole activity you should talk to your local CWC, who will help you develop your activity proposal or consider your proposal for approval if already developed.

Once your proposal is approved, you will enter into a contract with your CWC which sets out the terms and conditions of the approved Work for the Dole activity.

What insurance obligations apply to sponsor and host organisations?

Sponsor and host organisations must maintain insurance for the period of the Work for the Dole services delivery covering:

- public liability
- appropriate insurance cover for staff, premises and equipment, and
- third party insurance for motor vehicles.

Sponsor organisations must also comply with their relevant state/territory workers' compensation legislation.

What insurance coverage does the Australian Government provide for participants?

The Australian Government provides participants with the following insurance cover during their placement:

- personal accident and medical expenses not covered by Medicare, and
- participants' public and/or products liability arising out of negligent acts that cause personal injury to third parties or damage to third party property.

Can I get help to develop my application?

CWCs provide advice about your responsibilities as a Work for the Dole sponsor and can help you to complete your proposal.

When CWCs assess proposals they must consider whether:

- the proposal meets the needs of the local community and the participants
- the sponsor organisation is able to monitor and support the progress of participants during their placement, and
- the sponsor organisation is able to provide the service on a cost-effective basis.

CWCs will provide you with written advice within 14 days if your application is unsuccessful.

Where do I go for more information?

Full details on becoming a Work for the Dole sponsor are available from your CWC. You can also phone the Sponsor Hotline on 13 62 68 or visit workplace.gov.au.

What is Community Work?

Community Work is an initiative of the Australian Government, where people can work with an approved volunteer organisation, meet mutual obligation requirements, earn Training Credits, and improve their skills and employment prospects.

Community Work involves voluntary work undertaken by job seekers and income support recipients who are registered with and monitored by a CWC.

Community Work must:

- be of benefit to the community and the Community Work participant
- not result in any financial payment to participants over and above a participant's income support, and
- only occur in designated volunteer positions.

Why do people volunteer for Community Work?

Community Work provides work experience to people on income support. If a job seeker approaches you seeking a Community Work placement in your organisation, it will usually be because they have a genuine interest in the services and/or goods your organisation provides to the community. They may also be interested in the work experience you provide and how it might improve their chances of gaining ongoing paid employment.

Apart from providing a worthwhile service to the community and your organisation and gaining valuable work experience and developing new networks, a person may choose to do Community Work for a number of reasons, including:

- to meet a mutual obligation, and/or
- to receive a Training Credit.

What are Training Credits?

Training Credits help income support recipients access education or training to improve their employment prospects. Participants can earn up to \$800 in Training Credits at the completion of their Community Work participation hours.

Can my volunteer organisation place Community Work participants?

Requirements

If your volunteer organisation would like to place a Community Work participant, you must:

- be a not-for-profit organisation, such as a charity, church or religious group, local community association or service organisation, and
- have public liability insurance cover of at least \$5 million.

The Australian Government covers participants for personal and medical expenses not covered by Medicare, and participants' public and/or private liability.

How do I register?

You can register at volunteerssearch.gov.au or govolunteer.com.au. Placements registered on these web sites or with a Volunteer Resource Centre are automatically approved for Community Work.



What are the obligations of my organisation?

Your organisation is not under any obligation to take part in Community Work. If you don't want to take on a particular Community Work participant you should let the volunteer know before their placement begins so that they can find another organisation.

If you do agree to take on a participant you should be willing to talk to their CWC once a month to confirm the participant's attendance. This ensures that the hours worked by a participant are recorded for the purpose of meeting their mutual obligation and for accessing Training Credits.

You have the right to terminate a Community Work placement at any time.

What is the role of the CWCs in Community Work?

CWCs administer Community Work placements and will monitor the participant's time with your organisation.

The CWC will contact you once a month to make sure that your Community Work participant has started work, confirm their hours of attendance and will give the participant a timesheet to record hours to make reporting easier.

What activities can my organisation offer Community Work participants?

Your organisation can offer a Community Work placement provided that:

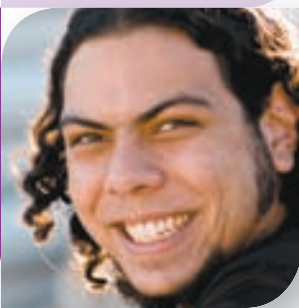
- the placement is of benefit to the community and the Community Work participant
- your organisation meets the requirements stated in this booklet, and
- the Community Work placement does not involve inappropriate activities (for example political or religious lobbying) or danger to the participant.

Community Work participants have found satisfaction in volunteering with organisations in areas such as:

- conservation
- sports administration
- animal welfare
- migrant support
- medical research
- collection and sale of goods
- libraries
- schools
- museums
- community radio
- aged care
- publishing.

More information

For more information on Community Work, visit workplace.gov.au or phone the Employment Services Hotline on 13 62 68.



Service Guarantee for sponsor, host and community work organisations

You will receive ongoing services provided by your CWC for the Work for the Dole and Community Work programmes. CWCs must provide these services without discrimination or prejudice and in a professional manner.

As a potential Work for the Dole sponsor organisation, you can expect your CWC to:

- provide accurate and informative advice about the Work for the Dole programme and the role of the sponsor organisations
- explain the requirements of the programme
- inform you about funds available, for example to pay for a supervisor or materials
- provide prompt informative written feedback on the reason they cannot accept or further develop your proposal.

As part of the Activity Application process, your CWC undertakes to provide helpful and active assistance in developing your activity proposal including:

- help in identifying OH&S risks and how they will be managed
- providing you with accurate advice about the range of things you need to consider in developing an activity proposal and meeting the criteria for approval, for example building approvals
- negotiating activity budgets
- considering all applications in a fair, equitable and timely manner, and
- providing informative written feedback on the outcome of your activity applications within 14 days.

If your activity has been approved, your CWC undertakes to:

- promptly enter into a contractual arrangement with you for the provision of work experience activities
- make timely payments to you in accordance with your contract and within programme requirements
- monitor the progress of your activity, including budgets, risks and planned outcomes (in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the programme) and take appropriate action where necessary.

As a sponsor or organisation that hosts a placement where the CWC is the sponsor, you can expect your CWC to:

- quickly (and equitably) refer eligible participants and replacements when participants leave
- collect and maintain data relating to job seeker participation in a timely manner
- support you in the placement and management of participants including resolving job seeker questions and issues
- take appropriate action in relation to job seeker participation
- provide you with ongoing support in the delivery of work experience opportunities.

As a Community Work Organisation, you can expect your CWC to:

- provide accurate and informative advice about the Community Work programme and your role
- explain the requirements of the programme
- collect and maintain data relating to job seeker participation in a timely manner
- resolve job seekers' questions about the programme.

You can expect high quality service at all times.





Employment and Related Services Code of Practice

The Employment and Related Services Code of Practice is part of your CWC's contract with the Australian Government and tells you how they will deliver services to you.

You can expect:

- high quality service
- professionalism and integrity
- confidentiality and privacy
- personalised and courteous service
- consideration of your needs and background
- fairness in dealing with all clients
- clear and timely communication.

Your CWC or Centrelink office should be able to give you copies of the Code of Practice. It is also available at workplace.gov.au.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you should raise this first with your CWC.

If you are still not satisfied, you should phone the DEWR Customer Service line on **1800 805 260**. You will speak to a DEWR Customer Service Officer in the capital city of the state or territory you are calling from. This person will endeavour to resolve your concerns quickly, fairly and sensitively.

Or write to:

Customer Service Officer
Department of Employment and
Workplace Relations
GPO Box 9879
IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY

For more information about Work for the Dole and Community Work visit workplace.gov.au or phone the Employment Services Hotline on 13 62 68.

