

A competency framework for health volunteer management



Volunteers play an extremely important role in delivering safe, high quality care to consumers within Victorian health services. This would not be possible without appropriately skilled leaders of health volunteer engagement.

Whether they are part time or full time, or based in a large or small health service, these leaders are passionate about making sure that volunteers are supported to be the best they can be. They are committed to ensuring that volunteer welfare is at the forefront of everything they do, while also meeting the strategic needs of health services.

Leaders of health volunteer engagement have advocated for a competency framework that acknowledges their unique scope of practice and the skills and knowledge they require, and that considers diversity of health services and volunteer programs. Identifying the specific competencies required to manage volunteers within diverse health services is important in establishing a professional development pathway for leaders of health volunteer engagement, and in identifying how they can be better supported by their organisations. This is essential in ensuring continued strength and innovation within health service volunteer programs, and in developing health volunteer management as a distinct profession.

In 2019/20, La Trobe University, in collaboration with the Leaders of Health Volunteer Engagement (LOHVE) network, undertook a piece of work examining the scope and complexity of the role of leaders of health volunteer engagement (inclusive of volunteer managers and coordinators) within the health sector. This work aimed to:

- **Identify the competencies required to manage volunteers within Victorian health settings**
- **Develop a competency framework for leaders of health volunteer engagement.**

This framework is intended to be used as a resource for health service human resource management teams, individuals responsible for leaders of health volunteer engagement, and for professional development providers. It is also intended to be a resource for leaders of health volunteer engagement (people responsible for the management and coordination of volunteers and volunteer programs within the health setting). This framework can be used to:

Guide the development of education and training opportunities for leaders of health volunteer management

Assist leaders of health volunteer engagement in determining professional development needs, both at the individual and team level

Inform the development of position descriptions for leaders of health volunteer engagement, based on the desired requirements of a role

Determine the level at which a role should be considered, as a reflection of the competencies required and the characteristics of the health service or volunteer program

Assist leaders of health volunteer engagement in determining professional development needs, both at the individual and team level

This framework is also intended to provide a basis for the recognition of health volunteer engagement leadership as a distinct profession, and the subsequent development of an award base for health volunteer engagement leadership.

Overview of the framework:

The framework presented outlines the expected competencies for leaders of health volunteer engagement across the seven key domains identified by Safrit et al (2005):



There are five distinct levels of competency, which are aligned with Levels 2-6 of the *Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers*. These levels are progressive, in that competencies at level 1 are implied for Level 2a, with a Level 3b expected to exhibit all the competencies across the various levels.



Structure of the framework:

Section 1: Overview of levels of competency

Provides an overarching summary of the various levels of competency, in relation to key skills, experience and attributes required at each level (which are aligned with the respective levels of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers award.

Section 2: Detailed competencies

Provides a detailed breakdown of the competencies required within each domain at the various levels (Levels 1-3b). Competencies listed at each level are aligned with the respective levels of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers award. Listed competencies also reflect and incorporate guidelines for best practice volunteer management, in particular the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement developed by Volunteering Australia.

The competency framework

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF LEVELS OF COMPETENCY

Level 1 – Maintenance	Level 2a – Development	Level 2b – Advanced Development	Level 3a – Strategic	Level 3b – Advanced Strategic
<p>A leader of health volunteer engagement (LOHVE) who coordinates a small group of volunteers.</p> <p>LOHVEs operating at this level: Have relevant computer and administrative skills and/or experience. Supervise day-to-day activities of a small group of volunteers within activities with well-defined objectives, under the supervision of a more senior leader of health volunteer engagement (level 2 or 3). Share accountability for decision making with a senior leader of health volunteer engagement (level 2 or 3).</p>	<p>A leader of health volunteer engagement (LOHVE) responsible for supervision of a small volunteer workforce relative to the size of the health service.</p> <p>LOHVEs operating at this level: Are proficient in administrative and human resource management processes and have relevant experience in these areas. Autonomously organise and oversee day to day activities of volunteers within clearly defined parameters, standards, budgets and time frames. Use standard policies, procedures or instructions related to volunteer program activities to guide decision making.</p>	<p>A leader of health volunteer engagement (LOHVE) responsible for management of a medium sized volunteer workforce relative to the size of the health service.</p> <p>LOHVEs operating at this level: Have several years of experience in volunteer engagement. Provide leadership within volunteer programs or activities, and coordinate volunteer activities with other activities across the health service. Are responsible for the scheduling and implementation of major volunteer initiatives within defined budgets and policy guidelines. Use negotiation skills to encourage successful adoption of operational activities, and to gain workforce cooperation Employ judgement in selecting appropriate actions related to the volunteer program, within the broad parameters of the role.</p>	<p>A senior leader of health volunteer engagement (LOHVE) responsible for strategic management of a volunteer department/service.</p> <p>LOHVEs operating at this level: Have extensive experience in volunteer engagement and have relevant qualifications. Coordinate and provide leadership across several activities within a volunteer department or service Supervise volunteer program staff at levels 1 and/or 2 to undertake operational tasks Negotiate with staff and volunteers to gain commitment to the volunteer program, and manage progress Are accountable for managing significant projects or functions relating to the volunteer program Independently design work programs, control budgets and manage allocation of resources related to the volunteer program Employ analytical methods to recommend modification or adaptation of techniques and methods that relate to the volunteer program, and that have impacts on the health service.</p>	<p>A senior leader of health volunteer engagement (LOHVE) responsible for strategic management of a large, complex volunteer department or service.</p> <p>LOHVEs operating at this level: Have specialised knowledge resulting from years of experience in volunteer engagement, with qualifications relevant to the health or volunteer sector. Are accountable for the integrity of the volunteer program, and the achievement of significant standards of performance. Integrate a range of associated operations as part of volunteer program delivery. Determine standard systems, methods and procedures relating to the volunteer program, and employ extensive analytical skills in interpreting volunteer program service needs, guidelines, conditions and achievability of results Strategically advocate for the volunteer program where there are competing objectives and priorities within the health service.</p>
<p>Competencies within this level align with Grade 2 of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers</p>	<p>Competencies within this level align with Grade 3 of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers</p>	<p>Competencies within this level align with Grade 4 of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers</p>	<p>Competencies within this level align with Grade 5 of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers</p>	<p>Competencies within this level align with Grade 6 of the Victorian Public Health Sector Classification System – Managers and Administrative Workers</p>

SECTION 2: DETAILED COMPETENCIES

Competency 1: Recruiting and selecting volunteers

Leaders of health volunteer engagement recruit and select volunteers to meet the needs and strategic priorities of health services.

Key areas	Maintenance		Development		Strategic		
	2a	2b	3a	3b			
Implement recruitment processes	You use existing recruitment materials and guidelines to assist with recruitment of volunteers	<p>You develop or source written role descriptions that clearly outline the expectations and boundaries of the volunteer role.</p> <p>You develop networks and partnerships across different organisations and agencies to source potential volunteers.</p>	You implement a process to recruit volunteers for the volunteer program.	<p>You supervise staff within the volunteer program at levels 1 and/or 2 to implement recruitment processes.</p> <p>You understand contemporary trends that relate to volunteer recruitment and use these to develop a recruitment plan that addresses current needs and barriers associated with volunteer recruitment, and review and amend this in accordance with changing organisational needs.</p> <p>You develop and review policies and procedures related to volunteer recruitment, in accordance with organisational needs and risk management processes.</p>	<p>You have a long-term, proactive strategic plan for volunteer recruitment with defined performance indicators, that ensures the volunteer program is representative of the diversity of the health service and considers how volunteers can be engaged in diverse ways.</p>		
Match volunteers to roles	You use existing recruitment materials and guidelines to assess the needs, skills and preferences of volunteers, and determine their fit for a specified role.	You develop and implement targeted recruitment campaigns, including community outreach, to source volunteers for areas of organisational need based on needs analysis.	You use your judgement to match potential volunteers to areas of organisational need and best fit across the health service.	<p>You advocate within the health service for engagement of volunteers in areas they can impact patient experience and improve organisational function.</p> <p>You liaise with health service staff and departments to develop innovative volunteer roles to better reflect the needs, skills and preferences of volunteers.</p>	<p>You liaise with health service staff, executives and consumers to develop innovative volunteer roles that are aligned with the strategic priorities and needs of the health organisation.</p>		

Competency 2 - Volunteer orientation and training

Leaders of health volunteer engagement induct and train volunteers to ensure safety of volunteers and quality of care within health services.

Key areas	Maintenance		Development		Strategic	
	2a	2b	3a	3b	3a	3b
Facilitate initial training and induction	<p>You ensure that current policies and procedures related to volunteer compliance checking are adhered to.</p> <p>You induct volunteers into the organisation and provide basic training for specific roles using existing processes and guidelines.</p>	<p>You develop and contribute to the formulation, implementation and ongoing review of volunteer induction and training programs.</p> <p>You provide flexible options for volunteers to access training and induction, that consider diversity in relation to culture, availability and literacy.</p>	<p>You oversee and contribute to health service staff to train and induct volunteers within their areas.</p> <p>You develop innovative approaches to train volunteers.</p> <p>You have a process in place to formally evaluate volunteer training and induction programs against adult learning principles.</p> <p>You develop and implement plans, policies and procedures associated with volunteer training and induction.</p>	<p>You support other health services to provide volunteer training where needed.</p> <p>You advocate for the consideration of volunteers in wider health service training and induction processes.</p> <p>You develop a comprehensive training and induction program that covers both patient and volunteer safety and ensure that this is being implemented by volunteer program and health service staff.</p>		
Facilitate ongoing training	<p>You have a process for identifying where volunteers require or desire additional training and know how to facilitate this.</p>	<p>You formulate and implement a professional development plan for volunteers, based on their skills, needs and interests, and changes in organisational policy and procedure.</p>	<p>You ensure that volunteer program staff are implementing professional development opportunities for volunteers, in accordance with the program professional development plan.</p> <p>You advocate within the health service for additional professional development opportunities for volunteers.</p>	<p>You incorporate ongoing professional development for volunteers into volunteer program strategic plans.</p>		

Competency 3 – Resource development

Leaders of health volunteer engagement develop resources to ensure that the volunteer program can meet organisational needs.

Key areas	Development		Strategic	
	2a	2b	3a	3b
Development of financial resources	You allocate financial resources to ensure that volunteer program activities are carried out efficiently and effectively, within an externally managed budget.	You manage the volunteer program budget in compliance with organisational requirements.	You prepare, interpret and independently manage financial budgets related to the volunteer program, for approval and adoption by senior management. You have a comprehensive understanding of how funding is allocated in the health sector, and the implications of this for accessing funding for the volunteer program. You plan operational budgets to accommodate for expansion of the volunteer program.	You develop financial control systems, budget guidelines and reporting mechanisms so that the health service executive and board have a complete understanding of the financial viability and efficiency of the volunteer program. You develop strategic business plans to support the expansion and continued resourcing of the volunteer program, and advocate for these at health service executive level.
Development of volunteer program resources	You contribute to the development of written resources related to the volunteer program and assist with preparation of reports.	You prepare plans and procedural documents related to the volunteer program, for approval and adoption by senior management. You develop high-quality written resources to promote the volunteer program, and coordinate reports related to the volunteer program	You develop volunteer program policies and procedures that are aligned with the health service's organisational priorities and operational plans, and best practice guidelines for volunteer management (e.g. the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement).	You develop a long-term, proactive strategic plan for the volunteer program that is aligned with the health service's organisational priorities and operational plans, and best practice guidelines for volunteer management (e.g. the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement).

Competency 4 – Program Maintenance

Leaders of health volunteer engagement supervise or manage teams of people and program resources.

Key areas	Maintenance		Development		Strategic		
	2a	2b	3a	3b			
Management of people	You roster and place volunteers to ensure volunteer program activities are carried out efficiently and effectively.	<p>You coordinate volunteers to ensure that volunteer program goals are met, and current policies and procedures are adhered to, under the supervision of a senior manager.</p> <p>You autonomously organise and oversee day to day activities of volunteers.</p> <p>You assist volunteers and/or staff with problems and recommend actions to be taken.</p>	<p>You take a leading role in inspiring and motivating volunteers.</p> <p>You have a system in place to track performance and satisfaction of volunteers, and to manage and resolve conflict between volunteers, volunteer program staff and health service staff.</p>	<p>You supervise volunteer program staff at levels 1 and/or 2 to undertake operational tasks within the volunteer program.</p> <p>You train and support health service staff in how to manage or work with volunteers.</p> <p>You develop and implement policies and procedures to guide performance management and conflict resolution with volunteers, volunteer program and health service staff, which you modify or adapt where required.</p>	<p>You advise and counsel volunteer program staff and health service staff on human resource issues related to the volunteer program.</p> <p>You advocate for change within the health service in relation to how staff view and work with volunteers.</p>		
Communication with people	You communicate regularly with volunteers to ensure that they are engaged and satisfied.	<p>You employ a series of methods to communicate with volunteers, that promote team engagement and team cohesion.</p>	You communicate regularly with senior health service management in relation to the volunteer program.	<p>You employ diverse strategies to communicate information related to the volunteer program to diverse audiences within the health sector (volunteers, clinical staff, senior executives).</p>	You develop a whole of organisation communication plan/strategy relating to the volunteer program, which you modify or adapt where required.		
Data management	You manage program resources in accordance with existing policies and procedures, under the supervision of a senior volunteer manager.	<p>You use data management software to manage and allocate program resources.</p>	<p>You have systems in place for the storage and management of data related to the volunteer program; and implement methods to store and organise program resources.</p>	<p>You develop and modify policies and procedures for the storage and management of volunteer program resources, that are aligned with organisational policies and procedures.</p>	<p>You develop business plans for improving data storage and management.</p> <p>You advocate for upgrades and improvements to volunteer program data storage and management resources.</p>		

Key areas	Maintenance	Development		Strategic	
		2a	2b	3a	3b
Quality and safety auditing	You are aware of the policies, standards and requirements guiding volunteer management in the health sector and adhere to these in your work (inclusive of those within your health service and the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement).	You ensure that plans and procedural documents related to the volunteer program are aligned with relevant health service policies and guidelines, and best practice guidelines for volunteer management (e.g. National Standards for Volunteer Involvement).	You undertake risk assessment for volunteer roles and monitor volunteer program activities and roles to ensure that they are aligned with relevant health service policies and guidelines, and best practice guidelines for volunteer management (e.g. National Standards for Volunteer Involvement).	You ensure that staff within the volunteer program are adhering to policies, standards and requirements guiding volunteering and volunteer management in the health sector. You regularly undertake a comprehensive audit of the volunteer program against organisational policies and best practice guidelines for volunteer management (e.g. the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement) and develop a continuous improvement strategy for your volunteer program based on this.	You advise executive-level health service staff on issues relating to quality and safety within the volunteer program, and advocate for changes at the organisational level that will improve quality and safety within the volunteer program.

Competency 5 - Volunteer recognition and support

Leaders of health volunteer engagement support volunteers within their roles and ensure they are recognised within the health sector.

Key areas	Maintenance	Development		Strategic	
		2a	2b	3a	3b
Management of emotional wellbeing	You know where to refer volunteers within your organisation if you think they need some emotional support.	You actively engage with volunteers to ensure that their emotional wellbeing needs are met, through activities such as follow-ups and post-incident debriefing.	You have a risk management plan addressing volunteer wellbeing within the health service.	You develop policies and procedures to support volunteer wellbeing within the volunteer program.	You work strategically across the organisation to identify risks to volunteer wellbeing and recommend modifications to organisational policies and procedures where required.
Volunteer appreciation	You ensure that volunteer appreciation and recognition activities are conducted on a regular basis.	You ensure that health service staff are recognising the work of volunteers within their departments.	You use a variety of strategies to demonstrate and recognise the impact of volunteers and their roles within the health service. You nominate volunteers for internal/external awards. You develop criteria for and administer volunteer awards within your health service.	You ensure that volunteers are recognised at the executive level within health organisations.	You have a detailed and innovative volunteer recognition strategy, which you modify where appropriate.

Competency 6 - Volunteer program advocacy

Leaders of health volunteer engagement can demonstrate the impacts of health volunteer programs, and advocate for health volunteer programs.

Key areas	Maintenance		Development		Strategic		
	2a	2b	3a	3b	3a	3b	
Measure and communicate impacts of volunteer programs	You can produce basic descriptive reports outlining volunteer numbers and program outputs.	You can identify and communicate the broad impacts of volunteer programs to health service staff and senior management, using a variety of methods.	You develop a set of key performance indicators related to the volunteer program, and track and review these on a regular basis.	You use qualitative and quantitative data to link impacts of the volunteer program with organisational priorities and strategic objectives.	You develop and implement a data collection strategy, analyse data, and produce comprehensive reports that demonstrate the impact of the volunteer program.		
Advocate for volunteers and the volunteer program	You use existing methods of communication to promote the volunteer program within your health service (e.g. newsletters) You understand the importance of volunteers within your health service and can communicate this to others within the health service.	You actively promote the volunteer program both within and external to the health service, using a variety of strategies. You apply for awards for the volunteer program, both within the health service and externally.	You actively promote health volunteer management as a legitimate profession, and advocate for volunteering and volunteers. You use marketing and communication to build the brand of the volunteer program within the health service.	You advocate for the volunteer program within the development of organisational policies and procedures. You work with executive level management to gain recognition for the volunteer program.	You advocate for involvement of the volunteer program within new organisational initiatives and programs.		

Competency 7: Professional development

Leaders of health volunteer engagement have a good understanding of contemporary issues related to the health and volunteer sector and undertake professional development opportunities.

Key areas	Maintenance		Development		Strategic	
	2a	2b	3a	3b		
Contemporary issues relating to health volunteer management	You know why recruitment and retention of volunteers is important.	You can identify the trends influencing management, recruitment and retention of volunteers.	You have a broad knowledge of the key trends influencing management, recruitment and retention of volunteers specifically within the health sector.	You contribute to, and actively influence improvements and development of external policies, procedures and legislative requirements guiding recruitment and management of volunteers and volunteer program staff, both within the health and volunteer sector.	You have specialised knowledge of the local and global demographic and societal trends influencing management, recruitment and retention of volunteers within the health sector.	
Professional development and networking	You have a clearly defined position description and can review this to identify professional development activities to address these needs.	You undertake targeted internal and external professional development activities to ensure skills relevant to the profession. You attend, and actively contribute to, sector network meetings or professional conferences.	You are a member of professional networks related to volunteering or volunteer management, and network with other volunteer managers.	You provide leadership and mentoring to other volunteer managers. You refine your position description, and those of your staff, to reflect the changing needs of the health service or volunteer program.	You advocate for professional development activities within and external to the organisation, both for yourself and members of your staff. You advise management and senior staff on professional development needs within the volunteer program. You provide leadership within professional conferences and network meetings, in terms of advising on key issues and trends relating to the health volunteer sector.	

