



Fact Sheet: Do you need a work permit to volunteer?

We often are asked whether someone who is a visitor to New Zealand, or who is on a student visa, can volunteer in New Zealand.

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER IN NEW ZEALAND?

Anyone can! If you hold a student, visitor, or work visa you can volunteer in New Zealand, providing you will not receive any gain or reward for the activity that you volunteer for.

If your voluntary role does involve any gain or reward, unless you have open work conditions on your visa, you will be in breach of your visa.

Gain or reward is defined as anything that can be valued in terms of money *i.e. any payment or benefit*. This would include if you were to benefit from the provision of any payment, services, meals or accommodation.

Volunteering Waikato often gets requests from people who are overseas offering to volunteer in return for accommodation and meals. We are not able to accommodate this request as the volunteer would be in breach of their visitors visa.

SOME EXAMPLES:

1. *If you were required to wear a uniform as part of your role, and you were provided with that uniform by the organisation, you would not have received any gain or reward and would not be in breach of your visa.*
2. *If you were given a clothing voucher in exchange for your voluntary activity, then you would have received a reward and you would be in breach of your visa.*

WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER?

A volunteer is not an employee and therefore is not covered by employment law (with the exception of Health & Safety law). It is often obvious when someone is a volunteer, for example, volunteering once weekly for a charity or community with no expectation of payment.

Payment does not include:

- Reimbursing the volunteer for the expenses they incurred when performing volunteer work.
- Any personal satisfaction a volunteer may get from the work.

PLEASE NOTE:

Volunteering Waikato generally does not find voluntary placement for people who are currently overseas.

If you are coming to New Zealand, we are very happy to meet with you once you are here.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Immigration New Zealand
Phone 0508 558 855

www.immigration.govt.nz

Department of Labour

www.dol.govt.nz

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