



VOLUNTEERING & CENTRELINK

Volunteering is not only a great way to help your local community, it could also help you to meet your Centrelink mutual obligations.

WHERE CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?

For a volunteer role to be counted towards your mutual obligation requirements, you must volunteer for either a not-for-profit organisation, or a government sector agency. The work of the organisation must have a community focus. The organisation must also hold appropriate insurance to cover volunteers.

The organisation must be approved by Centrelink as an appropriate Voluntary Work Organisation. You can ask upon application whether the organisation is approved or not. If they are currently not an approved organisation, you can request for them to apply via the [Services Australia](#) website.

WHAT KIND OF VOLUNTEER ROLE?

For a volunteer role to be eligible to be counted towards your payment requirements, it must meet all of the following conditions:

- occur without payment other than for out of pocket expenses
- not be undertaken in your own home (some remote volunteer roles with approved organisations are permitted)
- not primarily promote a particular religious or political view
- not involve working for an organisation of a family member, or for your own organisation
- not involve violence towards people or damage to property
- not undertake tasks which would normally be done by a paid employee, including a casual or part-time paid employee
- not reduce hours usually worked by a paid employee or reduce customary overtime of an existing worker

ONCE YOU'VE FOUND A VOLUNTEER ROLE

Once you have found a suitable volunteer role, you will need to complete and submit the *Verification of Voluntary Work* form, located on the Services Australia website (or SVSA can provide the website link).

This form can be completed on your computer or smartphone, or printed out and completed by hand. A representative from the organisation you are volunteering for will need to fill out page 2 of the form. Once completed you will need to submit the form to Centrelink.

If you report through a digital services contact centre (e.g. JobActive), you may need to include the following information:

- the name of the organisation you volunteer at
- the organisation's ABN
- the number of hours you volunteered
- a contact name at the volunteer organisation
- a phone number or email for the volunteer organisation

You will also have to make a declaration that the volunteering you are reporting is eligible. If you have evidence to confirm your volunteering like a time sheet or letter from the organisation this can be uploaded too.

JOB SEEKERS

If you are receiving the JobSeeker Payment, you may be able to participate in volunteering as part of meeting your annual activity or mutual obligations requirements.

Whether or not you will be able to volunteer to meet your requirements will be determined by your employment services provider or the digital services contact centre. They will assess whether voluntary work may be beneficial to your search for paid employment, for example volunteering may be a way to:

- gain work experience
- build your resume
- make connections
- work as part of a team
- take directions from a supervisor
- work independently
- communicate effectively
- improve motivation
- develop new skills, or
- access training opportunities.

If you currently have a points target, your volunteer work can be counted for:

- 5 points for 5 hours (maximum of 10 points per month) if you have sourced the volunteer work independently.
- or up to 15 points per week for 15 hours, if the volunteer work has been sourced by your provider.

If you do not have a points target, you can discuss with your Centrelink provider as to whether you could use volunteering as one of your required activities, and how many hours you should aim to complete per week.

JOB SEEKERS 55YRS+

Job seekers aged 55+ can elect to meet their mutual obligations by participating in 30 hours per fortnight of either volunteering, paid work, self-employment, or a combination of these options.

If you're between 55-59yrs you can contribute up to to 15 hours of volunteer work per fortnight towards your mutual obligation requirements. If you receive the JobSeeker payment for longer than 12 months you can volunteer for the full 30 hours per fortnight.

If you are 60yrs+ you can meet the full 30 hours per fortnight for your mutual obligation requirements through volunteer work.

PRINCIPAL CARERS AND PARTIAL CAPACITY TO WORK

In some circumstances principal carer parents and those with an assessed partial capacity to work (people with an illness or disability that prevents them from working for 30 hours per week without ongoing support within the next 2 years) can fulfill their mutual obligation requirements by participating in voluntary work either by itself or in combination with approved study or paid work for a combined total of at least 30 hours per fortnight. The voluntary work must be approved by your employment services provider or the digital services contact centre (e.g. JobActive). While you are undertaking voluntary work by itself or in combination with other activities to meet your requirements, you must remain connected to an employment services provider.

