



Do You Need a Work Permit to Volunteer?

We are often 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? WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER?

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

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 Canterbury occasionally receives requests from people 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 visitor visa.

SOME EXAMPLES

1. If you were required to wear a uniform as a 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.

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 activities;
- any personal satisfaction a volunteer may get from the role.

PLEASE NOTE:

Volunteering Canterbury 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