



COVID-19: Group Volunteering When You Can't Serve in Person

How to continue community engagement while keeping the health and safety of our staff and partners at the forefront.

Planning for a Pandemic

Planning for the impacts of COVID-19 on communities, employees and business operations has been an added focus for most employers recently. In the community sector, leaders are planning alternatives, and postponing or cancelling planned volunteer experiences for staff in response to advice from government and the Ministry of Health.

With the focus on the health and safety of staff and partners, how do we continue to engage with our communities and contribute to this meaningful and often critical work?

It is an important consideration as the communities that we collectively serve still need support and depend on volunteers for that support. The impact of reduced participation will have a significant impact on our voluntary sector. Volunteering Canterbury can match individuals and groups with non-profit community organisations needing support.

Here are a few ideas to fit a variety of needs and circumstances. In all cases confirm your participants (are healthy and that you are following [Ministry of Health guidelines](#)).

Organise a food bank collection

Packed by your staff/group members and arrange delivery to a community group. This will ensure that you can still serve community groups needing assistance.

Share your skills virtually

Use web-based meeting solutions such as Zoom, Skype, Google hangouts or What's App and provide some skills-based support to a non-profit community group. Is there an opportunity to brainstorm and facilitate strategic planning with a non-profit looking for

fresh ideas? Are you able to provide marketing or communications advice, HR guidance, customer service training, report writing guidelines and support, health and safety guidance, policy development and reviews, business and financial planning, executive coaching and mentoring, presentation skills?

Explore other virtual volunteering options

Tech-based, virtual and remote opportunities e.g. Literacy and reading projects, homework help for students including adult learners, helping new migrants to build their CV, Kiwi English conversations, job search advice, mentoring and coaching etc. Many of these solutions enable long-term sustainable commitments and offer meaningful experiences for your volunteers. Search category 'tutoring' for opportunities for individual volunteers such as this on www.volcanmatch.com.

Tackle an "inside" project

Take this time to up skill organisational learning and develop your corporate social responsibility plans. Much like a rainy day, if you can't go "outside," tackle an "inside" project. Use this opportunity to engage your employees in learning about community challenges. Learn about the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) and how these can be leveraged to bring about innovation and change across sectors. Consider bringing in virtual speakers and experts, including Volunteering Canterbury staff, to talk about the value of volunteering.

For up to date information on keeping yourself and your family safe, and preventing the spread of the COVID-19, see the [Ministry of Health](#) website.

*Adapted with thanks from **Points of Life Inc.***