Volunteer Coordinator interview questions

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What to expect

Volunteer Coordinator interviews usually combine a conversation about your experience with practical scenarios and systems questions. Employers want to see that you can manage people, rosters, compliance and reporting without losing the human side of volunteering.

- **Process and systems:** Questions about how you recruit, screen, onboard and roster volunteers, and which software you use to keep records accurate.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask you to tell a story about a time you handled a difficult volunteer, a roster crisis, or a conflict between volunteers or clients.
- **Scenario and judgement:** Hypothetical situations such as a last-minute roster gap or an unhappy volunteer, testing how you prioritise and problem-solve under pressure.
- **Compliance and safety:** Questions about checks, training, WHS and record-keeping, because volunteer coordinators carry responsibility for safety and funding acquittals.
- **Client and volunteer-facing:** Questions about communication, recognition and retention, showing you can keep volunteers engaged and handle sensitive interactions.

Typically a first interview with a hiring manager or program coordinator, sometimes followed by a second conversation with a volunteer or team member. You might be asked to walk through a roster challenge, discuss a time you handled a difficult volunteer, or describe how you keep records audit-ready. Some organisations include a short practical task such as drafting a recruitment message or reviewing a roster for gaps.

1. Walk me through your process for recruiting and onboarding a new volunteer, from first enquiry to first shift.

Why they ask

This tests your organisation, compliance awareness and understanding of the volunteer lifecycle. Employers want to hear that you have a repeatable process, not an ad hoc approach.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the process step by step: initial enquiry and screening, role matching, checks and induction, training, first shift, and follow-up. Mention the systems you use and how you keep records.

> **Example answer**
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> *“When someone enquires, I start with a short phone call to understand their skills, availability and what they want from volunteering. I match them to a role that fits and send them the position description. Then I arrange the necessary checks, such as a Working with Children Check and National Police Check, and log everything in Better Impact. I book them into the next induction session, which covers our policies, WHS and the specific training for their role. Once their checks clear, I add them to the roster and check in after their first shift to see how it went. If something is not working, I adjust the match or offer a different role.”*

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage a volunteer whose performance or availability was not meeting the program's needs.

Why they ask

This looks at your people management and your ability to have a difficult conversation while keeping the volunteer engaged and the program running.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the task you needed to address, the action you took, and the result. Be specific about what you said and how you followed up.

Example answer

“I had a volunteer who was rostered for a weekly shift at a community centre but had missed three weeks in a row without letting us know. The program relied on that shift, and other volunteers were covering at short notice. I asked to meet with them privately and started by asking if everything was okay, because I wanted to understand the reason. They explained that their work hours had changed. We looked at the roster together and moved them to a fortnightly Saturday shift that suited them better. I also set up a simple text reminder the day before their shift. They stayed with the program for another year, and the missed shifts stopped.”

3. You have a roster gap for a weekend event and most volunteers are unavailable. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and your ability to solve a practical problem without letting the event fall short.

How to structure your answer

State how you would assess the situation, list your options in order of speed and impact, choose one, and explain how you would follow up afterwards to prevent a repeat.

Example answer

“First I would check the roster to see exactly which roles are uncovered and whether any tasks can be combined or done by one person instead of two. Then I would contact volunteers who have said they are available for short-notice shifts, starting with those who have done the role before. If that does not fill the gap, I would ask program staff whether they can cover or whether we can adjust the event setup. If we still come up short, I would be honest with the event lead about what is possible and focus on the roles that are essential for safety and client care. After the event, I would review the recruitment pool and build a small casual roster of people who are happy to be called at short notice.”

4. Which volunteer management systems have you used, and how do you keep records accurate for funding reporting?

Why they ask

This checks your technical fit and your understanding that volunteer hours and outcomes often need to be reported to funders.

How to structure your answer

Name the systems you know, then explain your routine for data entry, checking and reporting. Give a concrete example of a report you produced.

Example answer

“I have used Better Impact, Volgistics and Rosterfy, as well as Excel and Salesforce for reporting. My routine is to set aside time each week to enter hours and update contact details, rather than leaving it all to the end of the month. I run a quick check for missing or inconsistent entries before each report. For example, I produced quarterly reports for a grant-funded program that needed to show volunteer hours, roles and client contact. Because the data was up to date, I could pull the report in a day and the acquittal was submitted on time.”

5. How do you ensure all volunteers have the necessary checks and training before they start?

Why they ask

This is a compliance and safety question. Employers need to know you can keep the organisation and its clients safe, and that you understand the checks required in Australia.

How to structure your answer

Explain the checks and training you require, how you track them, and what you do if something is missing. Mention specific checks such as Working with Children Check, National Police Check and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant.

Example answer

“I start by having a clear checklist for each role, so I know whether it needs a Working with Children Check, a National Police Check, an NDIS Worker Screening Check, or first aid. I log the expiry dates in the volunteer management system and set reminders ahead of time. No volunteer goes on the roster until their checks are verified and they have completed induction, which covers WHS, privacy and our code of conduct. If a check is delayed, I follow up with the volunteer and let the program staff know so they can plan around it. I also run refresher training each year for things like manual handling or emergency procedures.”

6. How do you handle a situation where a volunteer and a client have a disagreement or misunderstanding?

Why they ask

This tests your interpersonal skills and your ability to de-escalate while protecting both the volunteer and the client relationship.

How to structure your answer

Describe how you would listen to both sides separately, stay neutral, find the facts, and decide on a resolution. Explain how you would follow up and prevent it from happening again.

Example answer

“I would speak to the volunteer and the client separately first, so each person feels heard and I can get a clear picture of what happened. I would stay neutral and focus on the behaviour or the misunderstanding, not on taking sides. If it was a simple miscommunication, I might bring them together with a staff member present to clear the air. If the issue was more serious, I would follow our complaints procedure and involve my manager. Either way, I would document what happened and check in with both parties a week later. In one case, a volunteer had misunderstood a client's cultural greeting, so we arranged a short cultural awareness session for the whole team, which prevented similar issues.”