

Volunteer work

Checklist

What should you take into account as organisation if you plan to have a volunteer do volunteer work? What do you need to take into account as a volunteer if you want to volunteer? We list the most important steps.

STEP 1: Is it volunteer work?

Verify that the activities can be considered volunteer work. It must be an activity:

- ✓ that is carried out unpaid and without obligation;
- ✓ that is performed on behalf of one or more persons, who are not the volunteers themselves, of a group, or organisation, or of society as a whole;
- ✓ that is organised by an organisation that is not the family or private context of the volunteer;
- ✓ and that is not performed by the same person and for the same organisation under an employment contract, a service contract (or an appointment as a permanent employee).

STEP 2: May the organisation make use of volunteers?

Verify that the organisation can make use of volunteers. This is only possible if it has one of the following forms:

- ✓ Any de facto association;
- ✓ Or non-profit private or public legal entity.

STEP 3: Verify that the volunteer is allowed to do volunteer work.

A number of restrictions apply:

- ✓ Persons under the age of 16 may not be a volunteer.
- ✓ Certain people must first obtain permission from the department that is paying them before they can volunteer at the organisation. This includes persons who are receiving unemployment benefits, a subsistence income or a sickness benefit.

- ✓ The restrictions on persons who already perform similar work under an employment contract for the same organisation. This also applies to persons charged with a mandate or who are members of an administrative body of a non-profit.

STEP 4: Fulfil the obligations (as client)

The client must fulfil a number of obligations:

- ✓ Take out insurance for the volunteer.
- ✓ Provide information about the tasks he/she will perform.

TIP: There is a [Flemish volunteer work insurance policy](#). This insurance is intended for organisations for which taking out their own insurance is not compulsory or is less evident:

- ✓ De facto non-profit associations without paid personnel, led by at least 2 persons, and not affiliated with an umbrella association
- ✓ Start-up non-profits that do not yet have a legal personality, or that acquired such less than 3 months before the application
- ✓ Non-profits without personnel (we view personnel as employees for whom you file a DIMONA declaration).
- ✓ Departments of umbrella organisations, but these can only insure specific activities free of charge, since their umbrella organisation itself already has an insurance obligation.

Before the volunteer starts working for the organisation, he/she must be informed about the following:

- ✓ The selfless purpose and legal status of the organisation. In the case of a de facto association, the identity of the person in charge of the association must be revealed;
- ✓ The insurance contract that the organisation has concluded for volunteer work. If it concerns an organisation that has no third-party liability for fraud, gross negligence or ordinary, non-accidental minor errors caused by a volunteer, the applicable liability regime for the damage caused by the volunteer, and any coverage of this liability, must be arranged by means of an insurance contract.
- ✓ The possible coverage of other risks associated with volunteer work by means of an insurance contract. The risks must be identified;
- ✓ The possible payment of an expense reimbursement for volunteer work and, where applicable the nature of this expense reimbursement and the cases in which it is paid must be specified;
- ✓ The fact that the volunteer is bound by an obligation of discretion and, where applicable, to professional secrecy.

STEP 5: Arrange for the compensation;

As a volunteer you can receive a **flat-rate expense reimbursement** or **compensation for your actual costs**. Such compensation is not mandatory. These are the rules:

- ✓ In 2021 the flat-rate allowance is maximum 35.41 euros per day and 1416.16 euros per year. These limits apply per volunteer, regardless of whether you work for one or multiple organisations. The maximum reimbursement is higher for certain sectors (outside the arts sector).
- ✓ Occasional gifts at St. Nicholas, Christmas or New Year are not included in the maximum amounts for flat-rate expense allowances if they do not exceed a total of 40 euros per year and per employee, plus 40 euros per dependent child.
- ✓ The organisation may also reimburse actual costs. In this case, the volunteer must provide supporting documentation (train tickets, cash receipts, ...). The kilometre allowance amounts to a maximum of 0.3707 euros per kilometre for journeys by car and 0.24 euros per kilometre for travel by bicycle (amounts valid until 30 June 2019).
- ✓ A volunteer may not receive flat-rate and real expense reimbursements during the same calendar year, (even if he/she works for different organisations). In addition to transport costs, the volunteer is allowed up to a maximum 2,000 times the amount of the kilometre allowance for the car together with flat-rate allowances.