

## Do you need a work permit to volunteer?

### Who can volunteer in New Zealand

- **Anyone can! If you hold a student, visitor, or work visa you can volunteer in New Zealand, providing you will not receive any gain or reward for the activity that you volunteer for.**
- If your volunteer role gives you any money or reward, you must have a visa that allows work. If not, you could break your visa rules.
- Gain or reward means anything you get that has money value, like payment or benefits. This includes things like money, services, meals, or a place to stay.

### Examples

- *If you were required to wear a uniform as 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.*
- *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.*

### What is a volunteer

A volunteer gives their time to help others without payment. A volunteer is not an employee and therefore is not covered by employment law (with the exception of Health and 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:

- A volunteer receiving money for expenses they incurred when performing volunteer work.  
*e.g. you are asked to purchase some biscuits for a volunteer morning tea and you are paid back for this cost.*

### Not in New Zealand yet?

Volunteering Waikato does not find voluntary placements 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  
[www.immigration.govt.nz](http://www.immigration.govt.nz)

Employment NZ  
[www.employment.govt.nz](http://www.employment.govt.nz)