

Volunteering with a community information and support centre

Many hands make light work.
Will you put your hand up?



... helping local communities help local people

Who are we?

Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic) is the peak body representing local community information and support services is the peak body representing local community information and support services.

Our local services assist people experiencing personal and financial difficulties by providing information, referral and support services including emergency relief.

Without our 3,000 volunteers lending a hand, we couldn't exist. Our local centres are staffed by in excess of 250 paid staff and over 3,000 volunteers.

We provide free services to over 300,000 people every year.

Volunteering options

There are various ways to volunteer at local centres. The roles include:

Community Support Workers

Administration

Governance

Detail about the role of **Community Support Workers** is on the next page.

Administration volunteers usually participate in reception and general administration duties.

Those involved in **governance** tend to sit on the Committee of Management, the body of people who have been given authority and responsibility to manage the affairs of the organisation.

Community Support Workers

Community Support Workers (CSWs) volunteer on a rostered basis at times agreed upon between themselves and their chosen CISC. CSWs need to be enthusiastic, open to diversity, respectful of other people's values, and willing to learn, consult, and find creative solutions.

As part of a team working within agency guidelines, the role of a Community Support Worker may include:

- Interviewing people who need assistance with a range of issues
- Advocating on behalf of clients where appropriate
- Sourcing information via databases, the internet, directories and pamphlets
- Providing practical assistance by distributing food or food vouchers, filling out forms or referring and making appointments with other services
- Record keeping, writing case notes and recording statistics
- Attending on-going staff training sessions
- Keeping up to date with community, state and national issues, including relevant legislation

Training and supervision for CSWs

The CSWs course is run in various locations around Victoria and is open to people of all ages and backgrounds.

There is no pre-requisite qualification for undertaking the course but an initial interview and acceptance as a CISC volunteer is required.

Basic English literacy skills are needed to complete the course. However, the training does not require high level academic ability. The training is undertaken in small groups to enable trainers to personally support all participants.

Volunteers training program

The nationally accredited training course, *CHCCCS004 Assess Co-existing Needs*, is auspiced by a Registered Training Organisation, The Salvation Army Training Plus. When all workplace activities and written assessment tasks have been successfully completed, The Salvation Army Training Plus issues a Statement of Attainment.

The course covers the following topics:

- Working in a Community Information and Support Centre
- Interpersonal communication, interviewing and client assessment skills
- Agency procedures
- Practice guidelines, ethics and the law
- Responding to complex situations

Trainee support

All trainees will be assigned a mentor by their CISC for the duration of the training. The mentor, an experienced and accredited Community Support Worker, will be the first point of contact for the trainee and will provide support and supervision during the training period.

Training hours, enrolment and fees

Training generally takes place over 8 weeks: 50 hours in total, with 36 hours at the training location and 14 hours in the workplace. Trainees attend the training location one day a week for 6 days, spread over the 8 week period. Your local CISC agency will advise you about the enrolment process and fees if applicable.

Probationary period

After successfully completing the course, trainees undertake a probationary period of supervised interviewing at their CISC. On successful completion of the probationary period, trainees become accredited interviewers and will receive a Certificate of Endorsement from CISVic. This endorsement is transferable between CISVic member agencies.

Recognition of prior learning or higher qualifications

Volunteers who are able to provide evidence of qualifications and/or significant work experience matching the learning outcomes of the training program, may not be required to undertake the course.

CISVic help those most in need

Our main work is with the vulnerable and disadvantaged, including those on welfare payments, single parents, newly arrived, refugees, those with mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues and those experiencing family violence and family breakdown.

Local agencies provide a range of support services including emergency relief, both financial and practical assistance by providing food, food vouchers, travel cards, petrol vouchers, assistance with bills, rent and medicines.

Why we need you?

We rely on volunteers because there is no way we could provide the services and support required by our clients on the funding received. Volunteers also bring their own skills, knowledge and life experience to the work they do.



For further information about
volunteering at a Community
Information & Support Centre:

Contact your local agency

Visit our website: www.cisvic.org.au



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