
The Features Of Community Service Organisations

Simply put, the objectives of any community service organisation are to – Act with high standards of ethics and integrity. Honour and respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients and staff, acting reasonably and competently to deliver a quality service to clients and stakeholders. Act fairly, responsibly and observing their duty of care to clients and staff. Honour diversity in the community and the workplace, allowing all employees and clients to be treated without prejudice or bias. Treat all clients and colleagues with respect, dignity and kindness, ensuring the provision of a safe environment for staff and clients.

Employer obligations towards their employees include: obligations regarding employees pay and entitlements (ensuring workers and employed under the correct award and remunerated appropriately as per Fairwork legislation. Including, taxation – an organisation must ensure it withholds the correct amount of tax each pay period for each employee as per Pay As You Go Tax. Taxation obligations also change somewhat depending on the organisation and its number of employees.

Superannuation must be correctly calculated and paid into each employee's superannuation account monthly. Private sector companies have different obligations from government organisations regarding employees' salary-sacrificing superannuation.

Employees with HECS debt or child support payments have their financial obligations deducted from their wages fortnightly (or per pay cycle). HECS debt is overseen by the taxation department and child support payments by the Department of Human Services.

Training: – employers or organisations must ensure 10% of their yearly income is utilised for staff training, otherwise the organisation will face taxation penalties. Staff must possess the knowledge and skills (through experience or qualification), to function in accordance with benchmark standards for their service role. Appropriate training programs as provided by registered training organisations are regulated by the national quality framework. The national quality framework assists with monitoring and compliance with training legislation.

Support workers are expected to maintain currency in their roles, keeping abreast of current models of practice, theory and research. All workers should be willing to evaluate their own personal bias or prejudice, acknowledging if their own personal beliefs are impacting upon their service delivery. If necessary, support workers may require further self-reflection or training to improve their service delivery.

New employees should be given the correct training and orientation so as to be able to work safely within the workplace. Opportunities for ongoing professional development and training should be provided to staff.

Workplace health and safety / Occupational health and safety: Employers /organisations must ensure they provide a safe working environment for their employees. If personal protection equipment is required for the workplace, the organisation has an obligation to provide it. Employees must be trained in the correct use of personal protective equipment. If they fail to do

so and sustain an injury, the employees' WorkCover entitlements may be restricted.

If chemicals such as cleaning products for example, or dangerous goods are required in the workplace they must be appropriately stored with appropriate signage in place and material data safety sheets readily available in the event of injury. Any equipment required to contain a spill or exposure must also be readily available to staff to comply with workplace health and safety guidelines. A workplace policy and procedure regarding safe storage and use of chemical must also be available and employees must be declared to be competent in their use prior to handling.

Health and safety guidelines are not restricted to physical safety, employee emotional and mental health must also be accommodated. Procedures and policies must be in place and enacted in the event of bullying, harassment or vilification on the basis of gender, race, religion or sexuality for example. Employee assistance programmes which provide confidential counselling for staff and their clients may be included as a measure of care for staff.

A community service organisation is expected, due to the diverse nature of clientele and diversity and equal employment opportunity guidelines and legislature, to have in place, robust anti-discrimination or harassment policies. A clear complaints process must be in place to protect workers and clients. There must be strategies available for staff to deal with aggression in the workplace.

This may include providing workshops or training in de-escalating workplace violence, or physical measures such as exclusion zones or exclusion of aggressive clients, family members, staff or the general public. Workplace re-organisation to enable safe access and egress, or improved vision – such as increased lighting or the inclusion of (safety) glass walls or windows internally, may also be necessary to ensure the safety of staff and clients.

Emergency policies and procedures to manage threats in the workplace are very important in the community services sector to maintain safety for staff and clients. They can be easily established and reinforced with the use of security cards for all staff containing international colour codes relating to specific types of threats.

Privacy and confidentiality legislations impact on community welfare organisations, especially as they may often interact with government entities such as Centrelink, Medicare, health service and mental health providers or children's services and the family law court for example. Employees must receive training to be conversant with their obligations to the client regarding privacy and confidentiality and the storage of client personal information and case details. There are specific obligations pertaining to the treatment and storage of staff personal, wage and financial institution details.

The freedom of information act may impact a private organisation which liaises with the government sector. This may have ramifications for the confidentiality of information concerning the organisation – this may include interventions, funding, private investment, and the record keeping and accountability practices of the organisation.

If a centre is dealing with child clients, all staff must be aware of their mandatory reporting obligations if they suspect a child is at risk of, or is experiencing neglect, abuse or sexual exploitation.

Any business or organisation operating in Australia must have an appropriate insurance policy providing coverage for injury, accident or harm, as required by legislation. Insurance protects all persons who access or utilise an organisation whether staff, clients, visitors, contractors or other stakeholders. Insurance coverage may include damage to property, work-cover insurance, injury to visitors or others, negligence or public liability for example.

Employees must understand and work within relevant legal frameworks and legislation that underpins their work sector, their role in the organisation and employees must work within the norms of their profession.

Employees must be able to demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities, in respect to legislative requirements, when working with their clients, their families, colleagues, and community members.

Good organisations begin with good intentions and good people, to continue operating effectively good systems must be utilised for success. Community sector and support services deal with the most vulnerable populations of our communities. It is essential our communications with and our advocacy for our clients and families is of the highest ethical standard.

All employees, contractors and all members of the board, management and advisory committee are expected to behave ethically, at all times, in accordance with the Australian Community Workers Code of ethics.

It is expected all staff in the community services sector, practice highly ethical behaviour, in every aspect of care, advocacy and communication with our clients and their families and for the common good.

All employees in the community services sector are to utilise the principles of respect, human dignity, equity and self-determination when communicating with, or advocating for our clients, their families and all other stakeholders, irrespective of the service user's beliefs or behaviours.

All employees in the community services sector are expected to behave transparently, for the good of their clients and for the benefit of their community when using public monies and public resources. Community service workers must utilize their resources responsibly, ethically and for their specified purpose. These resources should be utilised to best meet our clients and family's individual requirements.

All community service sector employees are expected to utilize their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the organization, clients, stakeholders and the common good. Community service sector employees are expected to participate in annual performance appraisals and conduct regular reviews and reflection of their personal performance, communication and commitment to their workplace, colleagues and clients.

All community sector service staff must be committed to protecting the safety of their clients, families, staff, volunteers and all other stakeholders through respectful communication. Honouring the privacy and digital safety of staff and clients assists to ensure their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Community sector staff should be open to continuing their personal learning, encouraging creativity and innovation amongst colleagues and in the workforce. In this way, staff members are able to respond to the needs of clients and their families with flexible and responsive advocacy.

Diversity should be embraced in the community sector and workplace, adhering to equal opportunity employment principles and anti-discrimination legislation. Being open to diversity allows greater employment opportunities and flexibility in workplace employees. This greater diversity in employees may contribute to an increased sense of trust amongst clients as they see themselves reflected in staff members, or a find the organisation more inclusive and accommodating than white mainstream society.

A diverse workplace does not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind towards staff or clients. All employees treat their colleagues and clients with dignity, honesty and respect. Staff are encouraged to deal with conflict in a positive and timely manner and to be proactive taking personal responsibility for their actions and behaviour.

Staff members should not be placed in situations in which they are expected to behave unethically or in an unsafe manner which contravenes their professional code of practice.

All staff are encouraged to work with the bounds of their role as defined by their job description and organisation policy and procedures, maintaining high levels of personal integrity. If employees have any concerns about provisions of care, policies or workplace behaviour, they are encouraged to pursue their concerns with their appropriate supervisor or manager.

Employees are encouraged to seek advice or input from superiors or other appropriate sources when faced with situations which they feel is beyond their expertise. Employees are encouraged to admit to conflicts of interest in their workplace, without penalty. Transparency in all workplace practices promotes high ethical standards amongst team members. Promoting a cohesive workplace through positive behaviour, acknowledgement of good work actions or behaviour encourages pride and ownership in the workplace and of one's role. Compensating staff appropriately for their work, acknowledging a positive team spirit, whilst holding all staff to the highest standards can assist a community support team to provide excellent care and service