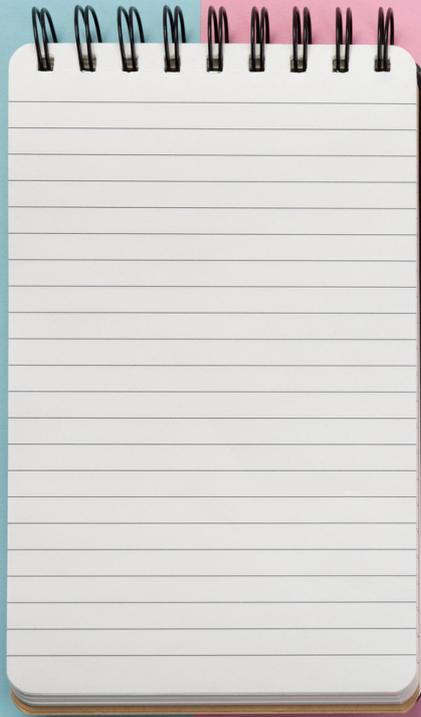




# Employee Volunteering FAQs



**Volunteer  
Ireland**  
Obair Dheonach Éireann



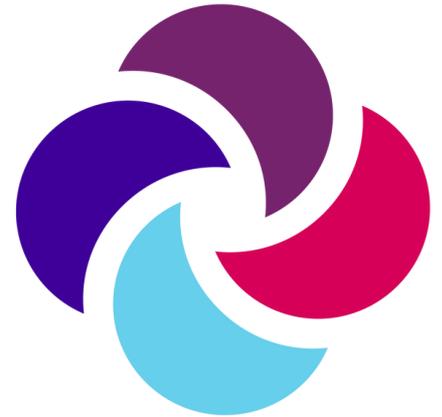
# Is there a list of corporate volunteer opportunities? Where can employees volunteer?

Currently, there is no single listing of corporate specific volunteer opportunities.

- For individual volunteering opportunities go to <https://www.i-vol.ie/> or contact your local Volunteer Centre here: [www.volunteercenters.ie](http://www.volunteercenters.ie).
- To chat through your questions and learn about employee volunteering join one of Volunteer Ireland's weekly Employee Volunteering Information Sessions. To attend contact [terri@volunteer.ie](mailto:terri@volunteer.ie).
- Read our How To Guide – Looking for employee volunteering ideas?

# Will Volunteer Ireland organise our volunteer day?

Volunteer Ireland is here to provide support and advice around how you can source, identify and manage a successful and impactful employee volunteer day. In addition, we have a number of large-scale corporate partnerships with companies where we manage and support the engagement of many hundreds of volunteers across a given calendar year. These partnerships are negotiated many months in advance and are usually in place by the end of each calendar year. If you are interested in discussing a potential large-scale partnership with Volunteer Ireland contact [terri@volunteer.ie](mailto:terri@volunteer.ie).



# What types of volunteering do company employees usually engage in?

Employee volunteers participate in lots of different types of volunteer opportunities from climate action litter clean ups, to assembling winter care kits for refugees, engagement in community events and fundraising activities, supporting education, participating in annual Christmas Shoebox appeal, sharing business advice, mapping local wheelchair accessible sites, along with lots of hands on indoor and outdoor gardening and painting projects. While many companies engage in programmes set up by non-profits many others develop and deliver their own in-house education, careers, digital literacy and business entrepreneur programmes.



# What kind of timeline is required to organise an employee volunteering programme?

It's best to start planning several months ahead as you'll need to do some looking around to find the right opportunity for your team. For larger teams, there can be a lot of planning involved and you need to give your company and the organisation time to plan and put everything in place. Be aware that few organisations will have the capacity to respond to last minute requests.



## Can I choose a date that fits my team's schedule?

It's important to be flexible with your date to ensure that it works for both you and the charity you are supporting. While it's good to have a general timeframe in mind it can sometimes be challenging to find an opportunity for a specific date. Keep in mind that some activities are suited to particular times of the year: tree planting takes place in October or March; gardening projects and litter clean ups run from March/April to September/October when the weather is more favourable; schools are usually available to start engaging with companies around STEM, mentoring and careers activities by mid-September and are available through March/April (exam and holiday times excluded); many charities are flat out coming up to the Christmas period and don't have capacity to organise additional activities for teams of volunteers.

## Is there a cost for employee volunteering?

It is highly recommended that all companies build a line item into their budget to support employee volunteering. Many charities require a donation or partnership for company employees to engage with their programmes. Regardless of whether or not they require it, it is best practice to pay for the project materials and supplies that will keep your team busy on their volunteer day. Project supplies vary greatly from arts and crafts materials to plants and soil for gardening projects to paint, paintbrushes and furnishings for indoor revamp projects. Along with a supplies budget it is best practice to give a donation to the organisation to support the vital work they do and to cover the time they will spend organising your team volunteer activity.

## Are charities and community groups looking for teams of volunteers?

Some smaller charities and community groups have never even thought about engaging a corporate team and might not understand what is meant by a 'team volunteer day'



This means you will need to explain how you might help (basic painting, gardening, clean ups, sharing professional expertise, delivering a science week event) and also how you cannot help (provide a large one-off financial donation, pay contractors to lay a new playground surface, fix a roof, install new electrics). Larger organisations are usually very familiar with employee volunteering and may have tried and trusted ways that they engage with company volunteers.

Some larger charities and community groups will have regular or annual volunteer opportunities available that can facilitate team volunteering. These usually fill up fast so it's best to plan ahead and book your team in, well in advance.

# I've contacted lots of charities and no-one is coming back to me – what can I do?

There may be a few different reasons why you're not having any success. Charities and non-profits are busy with their day-to-day activities serving their clients and achieving their mission...many are not aware of or thinking about company volunteering. Others are under-resourced and don't have the capacity or time to support employee volunteers. Or they might be getting a lot of enquiries and just don't have the time to get back to you. Other larger well known national charities may have a partnership set up already and so don't have any other volunteer opportunities to offer.

So, our advice is to tap into your employee's local knowledge...is there a school, community garden, sports club, community centre or community group that they know of that is in need of support? When contacting organisations, be sure to give them some ideas about what your group can offer and be specific about whether that is practical hands-on help or sharing skills/advice.

## Will our team be insured?

You will need to check with the group you are volunteering with along with your own insurance company. Many community organisations will already have volunteers and a listing of volunteer activities added to their volunteer policy and in this case you should be covered under their current insurance.

If a volunteer slipped or tripped separate to the volunteer activity e.g. on a wet bathroom floor then the volunteer should be covered under the organisation's public liability insurance. The company's own insurance usually covers employees traveling to and from the volunteer activity.



## Do we need to be garda vetted?

The Garda Vetting Act does not require vetting for 'occasional' volunteering. Therefore, if you are doing a one-off project then you should not be garda vetted. That said, all regular child protection systems should still be in place while volunteering e.g., no adult is alone with a child at any time. If you are engaging in more regular volunteering with children or vulnerable adults, you will likely need to be garda vetted. Each organisation engaging volunteers or workers is responsible for assessing each role and deciding if garda vetting is required.

## What happens if I need to cancel our volunteer day?

It's really important that you deliver on your commitments. Only reschedule if you absolutely have to. If you are close to the volunteer project date, the organisation will likely have put a lot of work and effort into planning for your team to arrive and will be hugely disappointed if the project doesn't go ahead. To ensure your company's good reputation reschedule your volunteer day as soon as possible.

## How can I ensure our staff will show up to our volunteer day?

There are a number of ways to encourage sign-ups and attendance at your company volunteer day: make it a company priority, get senior leadership involved and managers are more likely to come on board and allow their teams the time away to volunteer; put a diary invite in the volunteer's Outlook calendar so the time is blocked out, identify project leads to take responsibility for securing the volunteer numbers required for the project and turnout on the day; personally invite your own team colleagues and networks within the company to sign up and support the activity – the top reason people don't volunteer is that no-one asked them; approach internal company groups such as DEI or PRIDE groups to support the project and encourage their members to attend; build excitement and interest by sharing details about the organisation, their clients and the positive impact your project will have; as the project date approaches personally check in with registered volunteers ensuring they have the information they need and letting them know they are necessary to the success of the project.





# Volunteer Ireland

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