



## **Voluntary work in Amsterdam**

Below you find some practical information and suggestions about doing voluntary work in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

### *Organization*

In the Netherlands, voluntary work is run by non-profit organizations. The work usually covers one or two shifts a week. Organizations favor a structural agreement about participation for half a year or longer.

### *Language*

In voluntary work, engaging people without a reasonable command of Dutch language is not a matter of course. Most organizations will indicate that some knowledge of Dutch is a condition for doing voluntary work. Not all participants – clients, volunteers or professionals – have an easy command of English. Besides, all communication with volunteers is in Dutch. Fortunately, organizations are increasingly aware of the possibility to recruit English-speaking volunteers. From all participants this will require some flexibility, creativity, and thinking out of the box. Non-speakers of Dutch will need initiative and perseverance to find suitable voluntary work. Organizations will welcome your ideas about promising openings.

### *Probation*

After a positive introductory interview, it is common practice in organizations to agree on a probationary period. This period will allow you to find out if voluntary work comes up to your expectations. Also it enables the organization to assess your suitability for the tasks in question.

### *Training and guidance*

Some organizations offer their volunteers courses, workshops and intervision. Sometimes, acceptance of this provision is obligatory. Generally, courses are in Dutch language.

### *Contract*

It is strongly recommended to come to a clear agreement about your activities – including those you are not expected to do – , and about who will give you guidance and to whom you may turn with questions. Some organizations make use of a volunteer contract or cooperation agreement. A contract specifies agreement about tasks, responsibilities, availability, illness, vacations, probation, performance interview, expenses, and insurance. Such a contract is not compulsory, but may be practical.

### *Expenses*

Organizations are free to decide if they will refund expenses. Some organizations provide a fixed compensation per shift, other ones only refund actual expenses, and still other

organizations do not refund anything. Dutch law allows you to receive up to 1500 euro's yearly and 150 euro's monthly for expenses without having to declare this to tax authorities. Above these amounts you will have to show receipts for all your expenses.

#### *Food and accommodation*

Voluntary work in exchange for food and accommodation is not customary in Amsterdam. Only EU citizens aged between 18 and 30 can do voluntary work in combination with food and accommodation, and only by taking part in the project European Voluntary Service. For more information go to <http://www.europeanvoluntaryservice.com/main>.

#### *Labor permit*

All holders of a labor permit for the Netherlands are allowed to do voluntary work in this country. This means that EU citizens (except those from Croatia, but including those from Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) are always free to do voluntary work here. Holders of a tourist visa are not allowed to do voluntary work. If you are a non-EU citizen specially wanting to come to the Netherlands to do voluntary work, the organization ready to engage you has to apply for an employment permit. This applies also for students. For this purpose employers may contact UWV werkbedrijf, afdeling Arbeidsjuridische dienstverlening, tel. 079 – 7502903. For each individual case, UWV will provide the proper application form.

#### *Exchange*

Voluntary work on an exchange basis is only possible for young people from Canada, Australia and New Zealand. For more information on residence in the Netherlands, consult the website of [Immigration and Naturalisation Service](#).

#### *Certificate of good conduct*

Organizations working with a vulnerable target group, such as elderly people or minors, often ask for a Certificate of good conduct (Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag). Applying for a such a VOG costs €30. This certificate only refers to the period in which the applicant has lived in the Netherlands. Ask the organization if they also want you to apply for such a certificate in your home country or other countries.

#### *Insurance*

The Amsterdam Volunteers Insurance (Amsterdamse Vrijwilligers Verzekering, AVV) is a secondary liability and accident insurance for all those doing voluntary work in Amsterdam. This insurance is only valid during the execution of voluntary work or voluntary care, and only after an appeal has been made to the primary insurances of the volunteer and the organization. Insurance costs are paid by the municipality. Volunteers are insured automatically.

#### *Incidental voluntary work*

People interested in incidental voluntary work may turn for help to the website [www.amsterdamcares.org](http://www.amsterdamcares.org).

*For all information about voluntary work in Amsterdam please contact:*

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Geldersekade 101

1011 EM Amsterdam

020-5301220

[volunteer@vca.nu](mailto:volunteer@vca.nu)

[www.vca.nu/english](http://www.vca.nu/english)

[www.vrijwilligerswerkinamsterdam.nl](http://www.vrijwilligerswerkinamsterdam.nl)

