

FACTSHEET

Community Support Worker Volunteer

Community Information & Support agencies provide critical assistance to community members needing help.

Volunteer interviewers, called Community Support Workers, assess the diverse needs of people accessing these agencies and provide assistance to meet those needs.

Community Information & Support

Community Information & Support (CIS) agencies are community-based services that help those in immediate need or crisis. They assist people by providing information, referrals and support services, including emergency relief (ER).

ER provides crucial financial and material aid to people experiencing hardship. It is delivered within a supportive service approach, which includes tailored information, referrals to link people with specialist services and wrap-around support.

Volunteers give their time and expertise to power CIS agencies by either supporting or delivering these essential services to local communities.

Community Support Worker (CSW) role

CSWs interview people seeking support to identify and assess their needs and provide targeted support.

CSWs provide:

- Crisis intervention
- Holistic assessments
- Information, referrals and advocacy
- Support, including a supportive and listening ear, ER and practical support like form-filling

Duties and Responsibilities

- Deliver appropriate assistance to clients and commit to addressing underlying reasons for seeking assistance
- Provide assistance in a confidential and impartial manner
- Maintain and respect a client's right to privacy and self-determination
- Comply with the agencies policies and procedures and relevant Government legislation
- Collect data, capture case notes and undertake other administrative processes
- Follow directions, consult with others and work within a team
- Engage in training to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills

Qualities of a CSW

- Good listener and communicator
- Empathetic and compassionate
- Desire to make a positive difference
- Open to diversity and respectful of other's values and way of life
- Willingness to learn

Volunteering

CSWs volunteer on a rostered basis at times agreed upon between themselves and their chosen CIS agency.

It is important to acknowledge that the role of a CSW, although very rewarding, can sometimes be challenging. This is because of the complexity of issues you will encounter when assisting people in crisis or experiencing financial and personal hardships. For this reason, CSWs must complete an accredited training course or meet the requirements of CISVic's recognition of prior learning.

CSW training program

The CSW accredited training course provides participants with the essential skills to interview, assess and deliver services to people with complex needs.

Participants are required to:

- be currently volunteering at a CIS agency,
- work through online content and attend scheduled training sessions over seven weeks,
- complete a minimum of 14 hours of in-agency learning; and
- complete a range of assessment activities.

The CSW accredited training course is delivered under seven distinct learning modules, these include:

1. Guiding practice – foundational knowledge to work in community information & support (CIS).
2. Assisting clients – communication and interview skills.
3. Who are our clients – essential information to understand and work with CIS clients.
4. Working in the agency – service & agency practices, processes, procedures and policies.
5. Complex needs – skills and knowledge to manage complex or challenging situations.
6. Reflective practice – skills to continuously improve practice.
7. Conducting interviews – information to support key client issues.

A commitment of 10 hours per week over seven weeks is required to complete the content and assessments.

The assessment activities provide evidence of learnt knowledge and skills. Participants complete six activities throughout the training that align with the course content, including supervised interviews.

Upon successful completion, participants will receive a nationally recognised *Statement of Attainment* for the unit Assess co-existing needs from Eva Burrows College and a *Certificate of Endorsement* as a CSW from CISVic.

The volunteer agency will work with the participant on completing the course to determine when they are ready to interview clients within the agency as a CSW.

Ongoing professional development

Along with CIS agencies, CISVic offers volunteers various training opportunities to support their work with clients and other aspects of the CSW role.

For more information about these, volunteers are encouraged to speak with their key contact with the CIS agency or view CISVic's training page on their website.

Benefits of volunteering as a CSW

- Develop new skills and experience for personal and professional growth.
- Develop your listening and interpersonal skills, along with building knowledge of community supports & services
- The opportunity to help people in crisis during their moment of need
- Become a valuable team member within a community of like-minded carers wanting to make a difference
- Have your valuable contributions acknowledged and recognised

Contact us

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Helping local communities



Community Information
& Support Victoria