

VOLUNTARY WORK IN HAARLEM

Here you find some practical information about doing voluntary work in Haarlem, the Netherlands.

Organization

In the Netherlands, voluntary work is run by non-profit organizations. The work usually covers one or two shifts a week, with a maximum of 28 hours a week. Organizations strongly favor a structural agreement about participation for half a year or longer, but this can always be discussed.

Language

While doing voluntary work, engaging people without a reasonable command of the Dutch language is not advisable. Most organizations will indicate that some basic knowledge of Dutch is a condition for doing voluntary work, because not all participants (clients, volunteers or professionals) have an easy command of English. Besides, almost all communication with volunteers is done 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-Dutch speakers will need initiative and perseverance to find suitable voluntary work. Organizations will welcome your ideas about promising opening.

Probation

After a positive first interview, it is common practice in volunteer organizations to agree on a introductory period. This period will allow you to experience if the voluntary work provided faces up to your expectations. It also enables the organization to decide your suitability for the tasks in question.

Training and guidance

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

Contract

It is strongly recommended to come to a clear understanding and agreement about all your volunteering activities, including: tasks you are and are not expected to do, who will give you proper guidance and where you can go with questions you might have. Some organizations make use of a volunteer agreement. Tasks, responsibilities, availability, illness, vacation time, introductory periods, performance interviews, expenses and insurance can be specified in the volunteer agreement.

Expenses

Organizations are free to decide if they will refund expenses. Some organizations provide a fixed compensation per shift, others only refund actual expenses and still other organizations do not refund anything. Dutch law allows you to receive up to €1500,- yearly and €150,- 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 the Netherlands. 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 www.europeanvoluntaryservice.com

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 (including Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway 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 that's willing to engage you has to apply for an employment permit.

Exchange

Voluntary work on an exchange basis is only possible for young people from Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. For more information www.ind.nl

Certificate of Good Conduct

Organizations working with a vulnerable target group, such as minors, often ask for a Certificate of Good Conduct (Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag). The cost (€30,-) of applying will in most cases be refunded by the organization. This certificate only refers to the period in which the applicant has lived in the Netherlands. Be sure to ask the organization if they also want you to apply for such a certificate in your home country and/or other countries.

Insurance

The municipality of Haarlem has a secondary liability and accident insurance for all those doing voluntary work in Haarlem. This insurance is only valid during the execution of voluntary work and only after an appeal had been made to the primary insurance of the volunteer and the organizations. Volunteers are insured automatically.

For all information about voluntary work in Haarlem please contact:

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