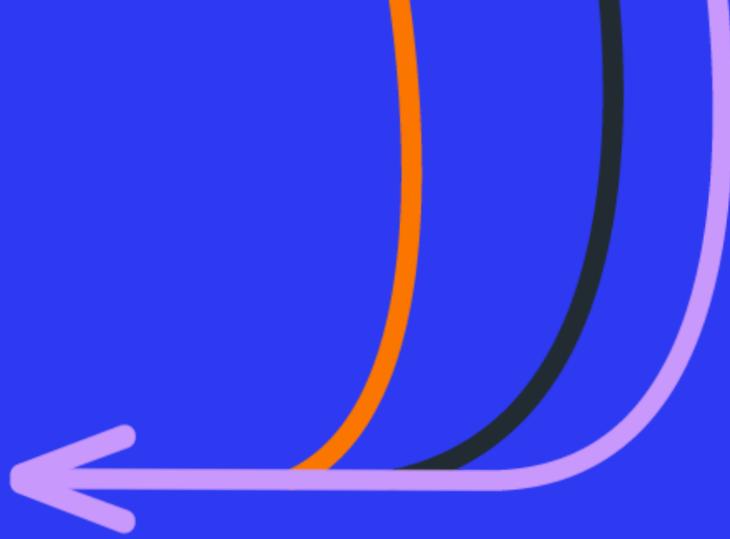


# Partnering with community organisations:

## A quick guide for effective recruitment



A guide developed by Social Ventures Australia (SVA) as part of the [Employer Innovation Lab](#), a targeted program to increase workforce participation of young people facing barriers to employment.

### Building a strong foundation

Successful partnerships are built on strong foundations. The steps to productive, respectful, and impactful collaborations need:

#### Aligned goals

- Establish shared objectives – such as building local talent pipelines, improving diversity, creating access for excluded groups, and supporting sustained employment.
- Be explicit about what “success” means for your organisation and be open to co-defining it with partners. This could be short term e.g. a hire, and long-term goals.

#### Respect for community insight

- Trust partners’ knowledge of young people, community needs, and effective engagement strategies.
- Actively listen to feedback and be prepared to modify recruitment or workplace approaches accordingly.

#### Mutual understanding

- Clarify each partner’s role, strengths, and limitations.
- Acknowledge the operational environments (e.g. government funding, local networks, or program goals) in which partners work.

#### Transparency and trust

- Commit to open, regular communication.
- Share information, updates, and challenges early to maintain momentum and resolve any issues that may arise quickly.

# Before meeting your community partner

Come to introductory meetings prepared to explore partnership opportunities. It helps to be ready to contribute clearly and practically on:

## 1 Position descriptions

- Do you have clear documentation of the job/s, including responsibilities, location, hours, salary, and reporting lines?
- Have the position descriptions been reviewed and updated so that they are not blocking/excluding the target candidates from applying? This could include removing unnecessary qualification or experience requirements.

## 2 Skills and training requirements

Provide information in bite-sized formats, using plain language and visuals. Include:

- their job title and key tasks
- who they report to
- a simple organisational chart with photos and names
- workplace policies in youth-friendly formats
- clarify any unwritten rules, like break routines, using email professionally, or how to ask for help.



**3**

### Career opportunities

- Can you describe the career pathways you have identified for young workers?
- Have you developed career maps?

**4**

### Workplace culture insights

- Can you share an honest picture of what it's like to work in the team? How is the pace and the structure? Can you give information on supervision and social dynamics?

**5**

### Onboarding & support plan

- Can you outline the ways that new starters will be supported in their first weeks/months? For example, do you have buddy systems, check-ins or training?

**6**

### Recruitment timeframes

- When does the role start? How long will the hiring process take?



# Discussing with your community partner

Use your meetings to define your partner's role and align expectations. To make sure you are all on the same page, try to focus on:



## Candidate suitability

- What are the attributes that make someone a good fit for the job and team?
- How flexible are you around formal requirements?



## Referral & assessment process

- How will referrals occur?
- Who is screening the candidates?
- Will you be using individual or group assessments?
- Will you be doing workplace tours?



## Timeframes & capacity

- Schedule dates and time for information sessions, interviews, start dates, and onboarding.



## Training & preparation

- Explore whether pre-employment preparation or accredited training can be offered by partners (e.g. the referring organisation, the employer, a third party).
- Can you co-design open days, paid work tasters or industry preparation modules with your community partner?



## Post-placement support

- Discuss who will provide check-ins, mentoring, or troubleshooting support.
- Clarify how questions or issues will be raised and addressed jointly.

# Designing the recruitment pathway



Work together with your community partner to map out each stage of the recruitment journey to ensure it is realistic, inclusive, and supportive.

You can use the [\*Support agreement & plan template\*](#) to document your joint approach.

**1**

## Information sharing

- Consider organising information sessions where candidates can hear directly from supervisors or team members and can ask questions.
- Consider providing short videos or photos to help young people visualise the role and workplace.

**2**

## Pre-employment preparation

- Community partners may deliver job-readiness workshops, short training, or workplace tours. Consider what each part can contribute to these.
- You may co-present or provide equipment, spaces, guest speakers or trainers.

**3**

## Assessment & shortlisting

- Choose methods that suit the role and the cohort e.g. open days, activities, structured interviews, or informal discussions.
- Ask partners to flag any accessibility or communication needs in advance and be flexible and responsive on the day.

**4**

## Offer & onboarding

- Once a candidate is selected, use the *Support agreement & plan* to confirm the start date, responsibilities, and any adjustments or supports.
- A pre-start meeting may be helpful to ensure confidence and preparedness.

# Ongoing communication and governance

Clear expectations and coordination help the partnership stay aligned and responsive.

## Define roles & contacts

- Use the *Support agreement & plan* to nominate contacts for day-to-day support, post-placement check-ins, and overall governance.

## Regular check-ins

- Schedule weekly or fortnightly catchups during the initial employment period, on-site if possible.
- Set expectations for communicating attendance, progress, or any challenges.

## Track progress together

- Keep track of key milestones such as induction completion, training participation or completion, and early performance.
- Include reviews at agreed set points (e.g. 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months).

## Include young people's voice

- Ensure you have discussed an approach to gaining feedback from new starters.
- Ask partners to collect informal feedback from new employees and act on it together.



# Common pitfalls & how to avoid them

Focus on the objective. You're both creating opportunities for young people and contributing to a stronger, more inclusive workforce.

Plan collaboratively, communicate openly, and stay responsive to set your partnerships, and the young people you recruit, up for long-term success.

Pitfall	How to avoid
<b>Unclear expectations</b>	<i>Set shared goals and responsibilities early. Capture them in the Support agreement &amp; plan.</i>
<b>Accountability gaps</b>	<i>Use a documented plan to confirm which partner is doing what, especially during onboarding and first three months.</i>
<b>Sporadic communication</b>	<i>Commit to a check-in schedule during the first few months of employment.</i>
<b>Underestimating support needs</b>	<i>Expect that many young people will need encouragement and problem-solving support even if “job ready.”</i>
<b>Rigid processes</b>	<i>Adapt your recruitment and induction practices based on partner advice and candidate feedback.</i>

# Support agreement & plan template

[Month YEAR]

Support Agreement & Plan

[Employer] & [Community Partner]

This document outlines the shared commitment from [Employer] and [Community Partner] to work together to support young people into meaningful career pathways by working collaboratively to maximise support and offer the best possible chance of success for young workers in their new roles. Examples have been provided below.

## Key contacts - employer

	Name & position	Phone	Email
Primary contact			
Secondary contact			
Other			

## Key contacts - community partner

	Name & position	Phone	Email
Primary contact			
Secondary contact			
Other			

## Key contacts - Social Ventures Australia

	Name & position	Phone	Email
Primary contact			
Secondary contact			
Other			

# Role details

Clearly define the role to ensure expectations are aligned and that appropriate candidates can be identified whose skills and aspirations align with the role.

## Example: Warehouse and Facilities Assistant

- *Confirmed that the role is white collar with no physical tasks - role is scanning and inputting information into a computer. A lot of desk work, it is a large warehouse, but the store person and leading hand would maintain the stock, so there wouldn't be lots of extensive walking around a large space.*
- *Level of experience is that this is an entry level role, where the person must be prepared to be trained in MS Office software use and other software use. White card can be provided by employer.*
- *Most important underlying capabilities or learning potential:*
  - 1. Ideally at least a level of interest and comfort in working with computers and software needed.*
  - 2. Associated tendency towards attention to detail, following through to ensure correct information and coordination and being accurate in data input.*
  - 3. Communicating with stakeholders and team members over the phone and via email using a professional and thorough approach.*
- *Employer will host an information session where young people can ask questions about the role and medical test requirements if needed.*
- *The role is available as a full-time equivalent role but could also be part-time.*
- *Available as soon as we can complete the recruitment process.*

# Recruitment strategy/process

Clearly define the steps involved in the recruitment process and the responsibilities of each party.

## Example: Recruitment details

- **Employer:** can provide an overview and schedule for an open day event that two to three candidates can attend.
- **Community partner:** With the PD confirmed can now look for candidate across TTW, DES - flexibility with the age range, (in TTW due to covid has been widened to 26 or 27 yrs old).
- **Community partner:** Will circulate the position description and video from **employer** (with the supervisor describing the role) with its consultants across these services so they can visualise the young person in the role and also show them the video to see if they can see themselves in the role.
- **Community partner:** Will screen candidates provided by consultants and then provide a little bio/profile information on candidates to make **employer** aware of any accessibility issues or recruitment process requirements.
- **Employer:** May choose to interview some candidates following the open day with the warehouse supervisor, (we can discuss the interview approach in a meeting prior).
- **Employer:** Work out the start date once candidate is selected and employment offer is accepted by the candidate.

# Initial employment period (first six weeks)

Identify any assistance the community partner will provide during initial settling in period and how the employer and community partner can work together if there are challenges.

## Examples:

- *In the first week: employer to agree workplan with supervisor and consult with community partner regarding the details of the plan and performance expectations.*
- *In the first week: employer to advise employment consultant within 24 hours if employee doesn't attend and/or can't be contacted.*
- **Community partner** will attend the first day (can be determined closer to the time).
- **Community partner** will check in with the employee within 48 hours of start date, and then weekly for first six weeks.
- **Employer and community partner** meet at the end of the first week to discuss any issues.
- **Employer and community partner** meet weekly for first six weeks of employment then fortnightly as required.
- **Employer** to notify **community partner** immediately if employment is likely to be terminated.
- **Community partner** provides travel card for first three months of employment (if needed).
- **Employer** to notify **community partner** if any assistance needed by employee (e.g. obtaining TFN).

## Six weeks to six months

Identify any assistance the community partner will provide during initial settling in period and how the employer and community partner can work together if there are challenges.

### Examples:

- Review meeting between **SVA, employer and community partner** at two months from start date.
- **Community partner:** continue contact with employee/s fortnightly or as required.
- **Employer:** assist with any documentation required by **community partner** for their program purposes (e.g. tax file numbers, pay slips/proof of employment) [**community partner** to specify what you might need here].

## Six months

**SVA, employer and community partner** review learnings from the project.

## Other

**Community partner** can provide other support if needed.

This could include:

- assistance with purchasing uniforms/PPE
- training
- travel assistance
- assistance to employee if they have problems with housing.