

Frequently Asked Questions

Recovery Volunteer in the CARE Team

Contents

What is the CARE Team?	2
What does CARE stand for?	2
What is the benefit of joining the CARE Team.....	2
I already hold a volunteer role at Vinnies, can I still apply?.....	2
What is a Recovery Volunteer?	2
Is there an age limit to becoming a Recovery Volunteer?	3
Does the CARE Team work alongside emergency services?	3
What sort of work would I be doing as a Recovery Volunteer?	3
Do I need previous disaster experience to become a Recovery Volunteer?	3
What training will I receive?	3
How much commitment will I need for training?	4
How long would a deployment last?	4
What if I am unavailable when activation occurs?.....	4
Will I be paid as a Recovery Volunteer?	4
Will I need to travel to support in disasters?	5
What support is available for Recovery Volunteers?.....	5
How do I express interest in becoming a Recovery Volunteer?	5
What will I need to do as part of the onboarding process?	5
Still have questions?	5

What is the CARE Team?

The CARE Team is a group of trained members and volunteers who are prepared to support communities during times of disaster or major crisis events.

When disasters occur and support is requested, CARE Team members (Recovery Volunteers) can be activated to assist affected communities as part of Vinnies' recovery support. The CARE Team helps ensure the Society can respond in a coordinated, compassionate, and prepared way.

What does CARE stand for?

Community Assistance & Recovery Engagement.

What is the benefit of joining the CARE Team

Joining the CARE Team offers a strong sense of purpose as you make a positive impact on people and communities after times of disaster or crisis. You'll gain experience in a dynamic community service environment, develop new skills, and connect with others through meaningful teamwork and networking. CARE Team members receive training, resources, and ongoing support, and the role is flexible, with activations only occurring when needed—so you can contribute in a way that fits your availability.

I already hold a volunteer role at Vinnies, can I still apply?

Yes, absolutely. Existing Vinnies Members and Volunteers are highly encouraged to apply to become Recovery Volunteers as part of the CARE Team.

If you're already a Member or Volunteer, joining the CARE Team is simple. Just submit an Expression of Interest through the CARE Team [signup link](#) or contact volunteers@vinnies.org.au. You'll then be guided through the required training and onboarding steps before becoming an active CARE Team member. If you already have experience in Vinnies services or disaster related work, your knowledge is highly valued.

We often leverage experienced Members to mentor and guide new Volunteers in Recovery Centres, helping ensure smooth integration, confidence building, and effective knowledge transfer.

What is a Recovery Volunteer?

A **Recovery Volunteer** is the role within the CARE Team responsible for supporting people and communities during disaster recovery operations.

Recovery Volunteers may assist in Recovery Centres, Recovery Assistance Points, or other community recovery settings. The role focuses on providing practical assistance, compassionate support, and connecting people with available services.

Is there an age limit to becoming a Recovery Volunteer?

Yes. For this opportunity, volunteers must be 18 years or older.

Does the CARE Team work alongside emergency services?

No. The CARE Team supports disaster recovery, not emergency response.

Emergency services such as RFS and SES are first responders and manage the immediate response to disasters. Recovery Volunteers in the CARE Team help support individuals and communities after the immediate danger has passed, assisting people as they begin the recovery process.

The role focuses on **recovery and community support**, not emergency response.

What sort of work would I be doing as a Recovery Volunteer?

Recovery Volunteers may support activities such as:

- Welcoming and supporting people at Recovery Centres
- Listening and providing compassionate support to people affected by crisis / disaster
- Assisting with Vinnies emergency relief support such as vouchers or grants
- Providing information and referrals to available support services
- Supporting other local Vinnies members and volunteers during recovery operations

Do I need previous disaster experience to become a Recovery Volunteer?

No, Previous disaster experience is not required.

Recovery Volunteers will receive training and guidance to help them feel confident supporting people during disaster recovery. The most important qualities are compassion, patience, and a willingness to help others.

What training will I receive?

Recovery Volunteers will undertake free training to prepare them for disaster recovery work, while also building valuable skills in supporting people during times of crisis. The Human Services Response Training™ is a highly regarded program used internationally, meaning you can gain practical skills and knowledge that are widely recognised across other sectors.

Training includes:

- Human Services Response Training™ - trauma-informed engagement skills and self-care training
- Recovery Training – practical skills for recovery centres and support processes.
- Standard compliance training (Safety Induction, Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Privacy and Confidentiality)

How much commitment will I need for training?

- Human Services Response Training™ is 1 x full day (face to face) or 2 x half days (online facilitated.)
- Recovery Training is 60 – 90 mins with face to face or online facilitated options available.

Additional compliance training can usually be completed in a few short sessions at your own pace via short online self-learning modules, or through online facilitated or face-to-face options if you prefer.

From time to time there may also be refresher training or simulation activities to help our CARE Team members remain prepared.

How long would a deployment last?

Deployment lengths can vary depending on the situation.

Some Recovery Volunteers may assist for a single shift at a local Recovery Centre, while others may support recovery activities over several days or weeks if they are available.

Volunteers will always be advised of the expected time commitment before accepting a deployment.

What if I am unavailable when activation occurs?

That is completely fine.

Recovery Volunteers can simply decline an activation if they are unavailable at the time. It will not affect any future opportunities.

Participation is flexible and based on your availability.

Will I be paid as a Recovery Volunteer?

As members of the Vinnies CARE Team are Volunteers, they are not paid for their time.

However, Vinnies does not expect volunteers to be out of pocket when supporting disaster recovery activities. Reasonable expenses directly related to deployments will be arranged and covered, or reimbursed where applicable. This may include travel costs (such as flights or mileage), accommodation (where required), and other approved out-of-pocket expenses in line with Society guidelines.

Further information about the expense process will be provided during onboarding and training.

Will I need to travel to support in disasters?

In most cases Recovery Volunteers will support events within their local region.

However, if additional support is required, there may be opportunities to assist in other areas. Volunteers can indicate their availability and willingness to travel, and deployments are always voluntary.

What support is available for Recovery Volunteers?

Supporting people affected by disasters can sometimes be emotionally challenging. Vinnies is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our members and volunteers.

Support may include:

- Guidance and training on personal wellbeing and self-care
- Pre deployment briefings and regular check ins
- Wellbeing / Pastoral Care via our mission team
- Access to Vinnies Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Opportunities for debriefing

How do I express interest in becoming a Recovery Volunteer?

You can express your interest by completing an [Expression of Interest form](#)

Once submitted, you will receive further information about the next steps, including onboarding and training opportunities.

What will I need to do as part of the onboarding process?

To become a Recovery Volunteer, you will be asked to complete a short Expression of Interest form, followed by the standard volunteer onboarding requirements with the Society.

This includes providing two referee contacts, participate in a short informal interview, complete a free Working with Children and National Criminal History Check (guided by us) and then completing mandatory training.

Still have questions?

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about becoming a Recovery Volunteer with the CARE Team, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our team is here to support you through every step of the process.

You can contact us at, volunteers@vinnies.org.au and we'll be happy to assist.