



aware 

VOLUNTEERING with aware

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For the latest version of this guide, go to:
[www.aware.org.sg/register/volunteer-centre/vol-summaries/]

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Introduction

AWARE started in 1985 as a small group of volunteers working for a more gender-equal society.

Today we are a much bigger organisation with a large pool of volunteers and a strong secretariat to coordinate and support their efforts – but we have the same goal.

AWARE depends on the talents, experience and passion of its volunteers in all aspects of our work. Volunteers staff the Helpline and provide Befriending services for women in need. They develop and provide training programmes and carry out a significant proportion of our research and advocacy work. Volunteers also help with our fundraising and administrative tasks. The Board, which sets the strategic direction for AWARE and oversees its operations, is made up of volunteers.

Why volunteer? Because it is gratifying to be able to make a difference to individual lives and to contribute to shaping a better society. We relish the opportunity to work with smart and motivated

people who share our values. We are energised when we learn new skills, encouraged when we realise that we are helping to bring about the changes we want to see.



Whether you are new to volunteering with AWARE or an experienced contributor, we thank you for your interest and commitment. We want your volunteering experience with AWARE to be positive and empowering, and we hope that you will continue to volunteer with us for a long time.

This guide explains how you can get involved and your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer.

We wish you an enriching and fulfilling experience with AWARE!

Vision, Mission, Values & Operating Principles

Our Vision

A society where there is true gender equality, where people are valued as individuals free to make informed and responsible choices about their lives.

Our Mission

To remove all gender-based barriers so as to allow individuals in Singapore to develop their potential to the fullest and realise their personal visions and hopes.

We do this in three ways:

- Research & Advocacy
- Education & Training
- Support Services

Our Values

We embrace diversity, and we promote understanding and acceptance of diversity.

We respect the individual and the choices she makes in life, and support her when needed.

We believe a woman should have freedom of choice over her reproductive rights.

Our Operating Principles

We provide a safe space for all in the constructive exchange of ideas and opinions.

We operate on principles of integrity, trust and mutual respect.

We solve problems and make decisions in an inclusive and participatory manner.

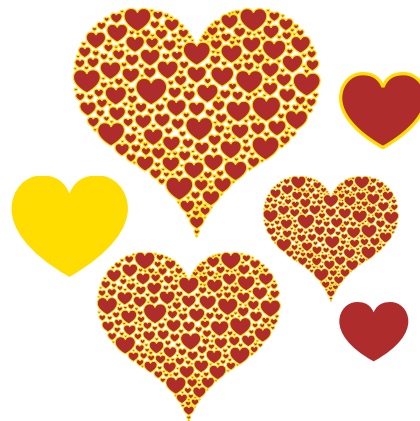
We use accountability structures in order to be an effective organisation.

Everything we do at AWARE is guided by our Vision, Mission, Values and Operating Principles as a feminist organisation.

Why Volunteer with AWARE?

Volunteering with AWARE can be a great opportunity to give back to the community, learn and develop new skills, build your experience and résumé, and make a difference.

- Get exposed to new ideas and stimulating points of view
- Take part in thought-provoking discussions and vigorous debate
- Work closely with like-minded people on projects and programmes



Volunteering has many rewards:

A sense of accomplishment

- Help shape a just and equitable society
- Influence policy and opinion through research, campaigns and social media
- Change the lives of individuals and organisations through education and training
- Lend a helping hand to women in need

Become part of a community

- Meet dynamic people who are passionate and informed about social issues

Personal Growth

- Gain knowledge and understanding of social and other issues, some of which could have implications for you or people close to you
- Develop skills and gain experience that can be used not just within AWARE but in other aspects of your life
- Build your confidence and enhance your leadership skills
- Expand your network of contacts

Getting Started

Getting To Know AWARE (GTKA) Session

If you are new to AWARE, the best way to find out more about what we do and how you can help is to attend our monthly Getting To Know AWARE (GTKA) sessions. Go to <http://www.aware.org.sg/get-to-know-aware/> to find out when the next session is and to register.

At GTKA, we tell you more about our history, mission and objectives. We outline the issues that we are looking into and the projects we are working on. We talk about the volunteer opportunities and discuss how you might be able to contribute to our work. This is a fun and informative session where you will get to meet other newbies as well as experienced AWARE members.

What Volunteer Opportunities are there at Aware?

We always have programmes and projects that need

volunteers. You can get involved in research and advocacy projects, or our Helpline and related support services, or lend a hand with our administration, training and communication needs, for example.

Some programmes and projects require you to come to the AWARE Centre, others you can work on at home. You might work alone or as part of a team.

You can find out more by coming to the GTKA or by checking out: <http://www.aware.org.sg/register/volunteer-centre/vol-teams/>

From time to time, we post notices on our website calling for volunteers to assist with specific activities. These notices will be included in our monthly e-newsletter. So keep a look out for these calls for volunteers.

How to become a volunteer

Register your interest to work with us by completing the online volunteer form (<http://www.aware.org.sg/register/volunteer-centre/sign-up/>). Please provide all the details asked for as this will make it easier for us to match you to a suitable volunteer opportunity.

Where there appears to be a suitable match, we will contact you and explain what the programme or project is about and your possible role.

How to propose projects to AWARE?

We are always open to ideas for projects, and especially those that fall within our strategic plan. We hold regular open calls for project ideas.

Please see our Project Guidelines which tells you how to go about formulating project proposals, and explains our process for accepting and monitoring projects.



Working in Groups

If you are working in or planning to form a group to carry out your project, please refer to the Projects Guidelines.

Volunteer Engagement Form

All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Engagement Form (VEF) that sets out the scope and terms of the activity being undertaken and specifies the volunteer's role and responsibility.

The VEF will provide you with the key information you need to carry out your Assignment. It will have the following:

- a) The task, deliverables, milestones and deadlines (where applicable)
- b) Minimum requirements
- c) Expected commitment (where applicable) e.g. 3 hours per week
- d) Duration of the Assignment, e.g. 12 weeks
- e) Any other specific terms and conditions
- f) The names and contact details of the people providing guidance and support.

Support, Guidance and Supervision

What Guidance and Supervision can I Expect?

The VEF, the Project Proposal Form (where applicable) and this guide set out what is expected of you. There may also be additional guidelines or SOPs (standard operating procedures) for the particular type of work you undertake, e.g. the Helpline.

Every volunteer, whether working alone or in a Sub-committee, will have an Accountability Partner whose role is to:

- a) Provide guidance on the scope / approach / methodology of the Assignment
- b) Ensure that the project is on track and help resolve issues that may arise in the course of the work.

The Accountability Partner will usually be a member of the staff.

AWARE prefers each volunteer to contribute to no more than two projects at the same time. This is to reduce burn-out and to ensure quality and delivery.

Information Resources, Contacts and Facilities

AWARE will provide you with meeting rooms and work spaces, referrals to information resources and contacts to support your work.

Orientation & Training

Depending on the Assignment, you may need to attend a brief orientation or training session before you begin work. If you are new to AWARE, you should attend the GTKA so that you have a basic understanding of AWARE's objectives, work and values.

We conduct a number of in-house training programmes for our volunteers. For certain programmes like the Helpline, training is compulsory and chargeable.

AWARE also runs some in-house training programmes, e.g. workshops on gender issues, which volunteers are encouraged to attend.

AWARE has a fund to support the training needs of volunteers. If you know of a training programme that will help you carry out your work for AWARE, you can submit a request through the Accountability Partner for AWARE to subsidise your training.

Rights & Responsibilities of Volunteers

As a volunteer you have the right to:

- be valued as an individual
 - be respected and valued for your knowledge and skills
 - be provided with appropriate training, guidance, support and feedback
 - clarity about the scope, method and desired outcomes of your volunteer work
 - work in a safe environment
 - volunteer in a friendly atmosphere
 - expect AWARE's staff and volunteers to practise and uphold AWARE's Values and Operating Principles
 - use the conflict mediation and resolution process, if needed
 - a personal reference when you complete at least 50 hours of voluntary service with AWARE.
- do your best to live up to your commitments as specified in your VEF
 - be respectful and polite to all persons you deal with in the course of your work
 - ask for support when you need it
 - always act in the best interest of AWARE
 - value and support the other members of any team you may work with
 - practise and uphold the AWARE Values and Operating Principles
 - comply with the rules and procedures set out in this Guide.



Volunteers should be members of AWARE, and should complete the [online volunteer registration form](#)

As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- be reliable, and act honestly and ethically at all time

Other Specific Obligations

Aside from the above general rights and responsibilities, you should also keep the following in mind:

a) Conflict of Interest

As a charity that serves the public interest, AWARE has to be particularly mindful of conflict of interest issues. You should, as a volunteer, avoid any situation that gives rise or may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, except where the conflict of interest has been declared to the Accountability Partner or Executive Director and there is explicit written approval by the Board for you to proceed despite this conflict.

An example of a conflict is where your Sub-Committee decides to hire the company you work with or own to provide services to AWARE. Another example is when the work you do for AWARE also serves another organisation.

b) Confidentiality

Please use your discretion when telling people outside of AWARE about the projects you are working on at AWARE. Don't divulge any information that might be prejudicial to AWARE.

c) Entry into Commitments (Financial and Non-Financial)

Volunteers are NOT AUTHORISED to enter into any contracts, purchases, commitments and obligations (financial or otherwise) on behalf of AWARE. Please consult your Accountability Partner if this issue arises.

d) Licences and Certifications

If you are volunteering for an Assignment that requires certification or licensing (eg. legal clinic), please ensure that you have the necessary certification or licence. You may be asked to provide AWARE with copies of these documents.



e) Ownership of Work Products

As a general rule, all work done by volunteers for AWARE becomes the property of AWARE. Volunteers will be asked, in their VEF, to assign to AWARE all their rights in the Work Products which they produce in the course of their Assignments. If you are not happy with this, or there is good reason for a different arrangement on rights, please discuss the matter with your Sub-Committee Chair / Accountability Partner/the Executive Director.

Where Volunteers do not provide signed assignment of their rights in the Work Products, they shall, by carrying out work for AWARE, be deemed to grant AWARE the licence to use, modify, reproduce, distribute, and otherwise utilise the Work Product on a worldwide non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual and irrevocable basis.

Where Volunteers assign to AWARE all their rights in their Work Products, they can use their Work Product for their own personal purpose, so long as they get the written consent of AWARE.

For guidance on other issues that may arise, please see:



Appendix A

- Representation to the Media
- External Correspondence with Third Parties
- Money Matters
- Reimbursements for Purchases of Goods and Services
- Budget Approvals

Related Policies and Procedures

Conflict Mediation and Resolution policy and procedures which apply where a volunteer has a grievance against another volunteer, staff or contractor of AWARE.

Please ask your Accountability Partner or Volunteer Manager for this.



Discontinuing & Ending Assignments

Delays and Volunteers Discontinuing Assignment

Volunteers are highly encouraged to complete their Assignments in accordance with their VEF. We recognise, though, that this may not always be possible.

If you cannot complete your agreed tasks on time, please do inform your Accountability Partner and / or Sub Committee Chair of the delay.

If you need to discontinue an Assignment, please give at least 2 weeks' notice.

AWARE Discontinues an Assignment

AWARE may discontinue an Assignment if the volunteer:

- a) Is continually unresponsive
- b) Is absent from meetings more than 3 times in a year without any reasonable justification

- c) Is not fulfilling the terms of the VEF even after due notice and guidance by the Accountability Partner.

End of Assignment or Project

Where an assignment comes to an end, you should complete the End of Assignment Survey and pass this to the Accountability Partner.

Handover

When an Assignment is completed or discontinued (whether by AWARE or by the volunteer/s), all documents and materials relating to the work should be handed over to the Accountability Partner.

If the Assignment is to be taken over by others, arrangements should be made to ensure a smooth transition of the duties and responsibilities to them.

Glossary

Accountability Partner:

Person or party assigned to oversee an Assignment or project.

Assignment:

Specific task or tasks assigned to a volunteer who works individually and not part of a Sub-Committee.

Getting to Know AWARE (GTKA):

A 2-hour session conducted at AWARE every month to introduce AWARE, its mission, work and volunteer opportunities to those who are keen to join or volunteer with AWARE. For more information, see:

<http://www.aware.org.sg/get-to-know-aware/>

Sub Committee:

A group of volunteers undertaking a project.

Sub Committee Chair:

The person who has been appointed to lead a subcommittee.

Volunteer Engagement Form (VEF):

The document signed between AWARE and each volunteer, specifying her role and responsibility, including a declaration by the volunteer that work done for AWARE is solely for AWARE, with AWARE retaining full rights to it. A sample of this form is attached as Appendix B.

Work Products:

Any materials or products (hard and / or soft copies) that have been created or produced by a volunteer or volunteers in the course of their volunteer work with AWARE, including research compilations, position papers, submissions, training materials, presentations, images, audio-video materials.

Appendix A

Representation to the Media

It is important that AWARE speaks with one consistent voice on all issues and that there is clarity on who represents AWARE.

You might be asked by the media or any other external party for AWARE's position on an issue or for your views as an AWARE member on it. Please do not comment. Instead, refer the media person to your Sub-committee Chair, the Accountability Partner, the Communications Executive or the Executive Director.

If you decide to comment in your personal capacity on an issue that is relevant to AWARE, please ensure that the media representative or other party fully understands this.

There may be times when you will be asked by the Sub-committee Chair, Accountability Partner or other staff member to speak to the media on behalf of AWARE.

Generally, a media query will only be referred to a volunteer who:

- a) has specialist knowledge of a particular issue;
- b) is comfortable to speak to the media on this issue;
- c) is able to respond to the query on a timely basis; and
- d) where it is appropriate for the volunteer to take on this task.

If you are asked to handle a media query, you should, after the interview, update the person who referred the media query to you and indicate when and where the comments are expected to be published or broadcast.

Money Matters

a) Reimbursements for Purchases of Goods and Services

You should bear in mind the following matters before incurring any expenses for your project which you expect AWARE to reimburse:

Only payments which are necessary for the project will be approved.

All reimbursements must be supported by original supporting documents and approved by the Executive Director and the Board.

Any purchase exceeding \$3,000 will require three competitive quotes.

b) Budget Approvals

Where a volunteer or a Subcommittee submits a request for approval for a budget that exceeds \$1,000, the Board may either allow the project to be funded from its existing funds or require the Secretariat to raise the needed funds. In the event that new funds have to be raised, the volunteer(s) should not incur any expenses until this money has been raised.

We thank you for your interest & commitment and hope that you will continue to volunteer with AWARE for a long time.

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If you have any questions or feedback about the volunteer guide, please write to us at volunteering@aware.org.sg.

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