



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

Successful Member Recruitment

A Guide to Help Conferences Recruit New Members



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Membership, Volunteers and Regional Operations Directorate

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Introduction

Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society (the Society) are the backbone of the organisation, providing companionship and assistance to people in need every day of the year. To continue to help people in need, the Society needs new members and volunteers so that our work grows and flourishes. 'Christianity is not about ideas but about deeds inspired by love' (Blessed Frederic Ozanam).

Membership of the Society is not limited to Catholics. The Society welcomes all those who want to make a difference and share their faith through the Vincentian vocation to assist those in need.

The Society is, however, in 'competition' with many other organisations for people who want to volunteer. This means that our recruitment messages need to be strong, clear, and appealing.

Successful Member Recruitment: A Guide to Help Conferences to Recruit New Members (hereinafter referred to as the Recruitment Guide or the Guide) will assist Conferences to recruit and develop new Members, including Associate Members.

The Guide recognises that each Conference has its own needs and goals. It has been designed so that each Conference can select recruitment methods that are best suited to them. The methods described in the Guide have been trialled by Conferences in different parts of the state and have succeeded in attracting people of various ages and backgrounds.

Before You Begin

- Take a moment to reflect by asking yourself the following:
 - Why are we recruiting? What is our purpose/goal?
 - What activity will new members do and what qualities or skills will they need to have?
 - What is the environment/culture that the new members will be coming into?
 - What are the expectations and attitudes of existing members? Are they open to accepting people of all ages and backgrounds?
 - New people will bring new ideas. Are existing members open to change?
 - New people may work in the daytime and only be available at weekends or in the evenings. How will your Conference accommodate this?
 - Do you have suitable members who can mentor and develop any new recruits?

Reflecting on these questions will help you to better understand your Conference and choose the best approach to recruitment.

- Ask your Regional Council President or Central Council President what methods other Conferences in your Regional and Central Council have found to be successful. There may be ideas you can build on and lessons others have learnt that can help you recruit successfully.
- Let the Regional Director or Member and Community Engagement Coordinator know that you are recruiting and see what assistance they can provide.
- Think about the recruitment process as having four main steps:
 1. Preparation and planning, including identifying the methods you will use

2. Carrying out the recruitment actions you have identified
3. Responding quickly to any enquiries
4. Inducting, training and mentoring new members.

Each of these steps are explained below.

Step 1: Planning for Recruitment

If you have reflected on why you want to recruit, considered the options available, and determined which options will work best in your area, you will have a good idea of how to proceed.

Before you commence, however, take a moment to plan your activities so that you don't end up with a lot of eager new recruits that you can't engage quickly.

The following questions can help you to plan.

1. What activity or role will the new recruit be undertaking? Will you have enough work ready for them to do?
2. How can you ensure that all applicants' requests are answered quickly? Speed is of the essence, as it reflects our professionalism and ensures the applicant feels respected.
3. Who will be the nominated contact person for the applicant? Is this person able to respond to the applicant with the enthusiasm, knowledge and a welcoming attitude?
4. How will we welcome the new recruit into our Society so that they immediately feel an important part of the Vincentian community?
5. Who could you allocate to mentor the new recruits until they are fully integrated into the Conference, program or service?
6. In addition to the Society's compliance learning, is there any other training the new member will require in the first 12 months?

Remember that people need a clear understanding of what they are being asked to do, and the time commitment involved.

Step 2: Recruitment Methods

There are eight 'tried and true' recruitment methods:

1. Giving a 'Pulpit talk' at your Parish Church
2. Engaging with your local Catholic Primary and High Schools
3. Advertising online through Seek
4. Tapping into your personal networks such as family, friends and professional contacts
5. Speaking on community radio
6. Holding an information session
7. Attending community events
8. Getting the word out on social media.

Think carefully about your recruitment aims, your local community, and the nature of your Conference before selecting the best methods for your Conference.

The methods are summarised in the table below, then expanded on one by one.

Where possible, a real-world example is provided in the appendices.

This list is not exhaustive and if you have other methods that you have tried successfully, please continue to use them, and send us an email so that we can include your successful method in the next version of the Guide.

Summary of Recruitment Methods

METHOD	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS	CONSIDERATIONS	SUITED TO
1. PULPIT TALK	Attracts people who are Catholic from within your Parish and are already aware of the Society.	Mass attendance is falling in some Parishes and response may be limited.	How supportive is the Parish Priest?	Member; Associate Member
2. ENGAGING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS	Relationship may already in place. Likely to be existing good will and awareness among parents; teachers and students through Mini Vinnies and outreach activities.	Parents and teachers may be time poor. Some may already support us so good to check with Schools and Youth Engagement staff in regional office.	How can we strengthen our relationship and broaden our engagement with school communities?	(Youth) Member; Associate Member; Volunteer
3. ADVERTISING ONLINE	Attracts people from a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and skills. Is particularly attractive for working-age people.	Majority of applicants will be 19-55 years and may be in fulltime work. They will want practical activities, training and support, and evidence of how their work will make a difference.	How will non-Catholic applicants be welcomed? Can you be flexible with work and meeting times so that weekends and evenings are options?	Associate Member; Volunteer
4. PERSONAL NETWORKS	Allows you to invite people you know and respect. Your personal recommendation of what it means to be a Vincentian will add value.	Some people like to keep different parts of their lives compartmentalized. People may feel pressure to say 'yes' to you because of the existing relationship.	What are their skills and interests? Do we have a suitable role for them?	Member; Associate Member; Volunteer
5. COMMUNITY RADIO	Attracts local people who want to help their community.	You may not have someone who can speak in a compelling way on radio or has the confidence to do so.	Need to discuss with media team – regional office staff can provide advice on how to contact them.	Associate Member; Volunteer

	<p>Message can be crafted to recruit for a specific program or activity.</p> <p>Allows you to speak directly to a larger number of people.</p>			
6. INFORMATION SESSION	<p>Allows you to use your passion to inspire others face-to-face.</p> <p>Is targeted.</p> <p>Can invite people with an existing interest.</p> <p>People will have chosen to come and listen to you.</p>	<p>Need a good public speaker to keep people engaged.</p> <p>Some organisation and cost involved.</p>	<p>Do you have a venue you can use?</p> <p>Can you arrange catering?</p> <p>Will you get enough people attending to make it worthwhile?</p>	<p>Member; Associate Member; Volunteer</p>
7. COMMUNITY EVENTS	<p>Allows us to reach a wider local audience who are already connected to their community.</p> <p>Allows a two-way exchange to take place between the Vincentian on the stall/stand and community members.</p>	<p>Requires current members to prepare and staff the stall/stand.</p>	<p>Does the Shire or Council have a calendar of community events you can use?</p> <p>Which events are suitable?</p> <p>Can your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator assist you?</p>	<p>Member; Associate Member; Volunteer</p>
8. SOCIAL MEDIA	<p>Captures a younger audience.</p> <p>Can be targeted to your local area.</p> <p>The Society already has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts you can use.</p>	<p>Relies on our message being heard in what is already a very 'crowded marketplace'.</p>	<p>Need to discuss with social media team – regional office staff can provide advice on how to contact them.</p>	<p>Member; Associate Member; Volunteer</p>

1. Giving a 'Pulpit talk' at your Parish Church

- Arrange to meet with your Parish Priest and ask if you can make an appeal at all of the Masses over a selected weekend. Let him know why you need to recruit more members and advise him that you will only need five minutes to deliver your talk.
- Ask the Parish Priest if he will put a notice in the Parish newsletter/bulletin that will inform the congregation of your forthcoming talk and the Mass times at which it will be heard.
- Choose a speaker from your Conference and prepare some talking points to help the speaker give a simple, heartfelt and engaging speech. Include a story or personal experience. Tell the Congregation *what* you do, *why* you do it and the *difference it makes*.
- The best time for the talk is after the Communion service. Ask the Priest to introduce you and tell the Congregation the reason for your talk. Appendix 1 is an example of a recent Pulpit Talk given in Armidale Diocese.
- Provide the Congregation with a brochure or flier to take home. These should have been prepared earlier and will confirm both the invitation to find out more about becoming a member and provide details of who to contact for more information.
- Make yourself available to talk to people after Mass.

2. Connecting with the School Community

If your local Catholic schools already have a 'Conference' such as a Mini Vinnies or a High School Conference, it will be easier to try to recruit new members. The Schools and Youth Engagement Coordinator in your Regional Office will know what already exists at the school and can put you in touch with the right teacher.

If there is no Mini Vinnies or High School Conference, find out if there is another connection between the school and the Society. This could be through the Family Educator or Religious Education Coordinator, for example. See if you can use that connection to speak to students, teachers or parents about deepening their involvement with the Society.

If there is no existing connection, you could write to the School Principal (see Appendix 2).

You can encourage teachers and parents to get involved in the Society by:

- Inviting parents and teachers to volunteer on a service or join your Conference.
- Create a sub-conference which is connected to your Conference, such as a 'Parents and Teachers Conference'.

You can encourage older High School students (Years 11 and 12) to become a member of your Conference by:

- Identifying specific students that are suitable, interested and have a little time to give.
- Arranging to speak directly to those students about the opportunity.
- Welcoming them to your Conference and providing opportunities for them to engage outside of school hours and with the full support of an existing Conference member.

A Conference in Manning Region successfully recruited three young people as Conference Members using this method. They work alongside adult Conference Members on a Saturday morning in a Centre. Even if their interest wanes after a period, the Regional Council President 'keeps them on the books' and having sown the seed, they often return to Conference work at a later time. These young members can be given a certificate or other acknowledgment of their contribution.

3. Advertising Online

'Seek' is the most popular website for jobs ads. Seek focuses on matching jobseekers to employment opportunities and receive millions of visits to their website every month. In Australia, Seek is the largest single source of volunteering opportunities and they allow not-for-profit organisations to post ads for volunteers for free. You can have a look at the website by clicking on this link:

<https://www.seek.com.au/>. Appendix 3 gives an example of an ad.

Seek offers the Society a way of connecting with thousands of people who are looking for volunteering opportunities in their local area. Several Conferences have used Seek with good results.

If you would like to advertise on Seek, contact your regional office and let them know that you are recruiting new members, explain the role/s you would like the new person to undertake, provide your Conference location and let the office know who prospective applicants should contact if they are interested. The regional office will be able to get an ad placed for you.

Ads usually run for three months and can be re-run at any time after the initial placement period.

4. Tapping into Your Personal Networks

You may want to let the people in your everyday life know that you are looking for new members and see if any of them are interested.

- Do you know individuals that would be willing and able to contribute to our good works?
- What are their interests and skills and what roles might they be interested in and suited to?

If you can identify someone:

- Explain the opportunity to put their faith into action
- Tell them why you think they would be a good fit
- Let them know how they will make a great impact in the lives of others
- Consider sharing your own personal experience and endorsement
- Describe how they could get involved
- Consider offering them an opportunity to 'give it a go' before asking them to commit.

You might also hold a small private event such as an afternoon tea or a cheese and wine evening and inviting a select group of people to come and learn more about the Society, the work you do locally, how to get involved, and what the benefits are to all involved. You could ask people in your immediate network to each bring a friend with them. Keep the number of invitees manageable and ask people to RSVP so you can cater accordingly.

5. Speak on Community Radio

Community radio delivers locally produced content that is relevant to local communities. Appendix 4 gives an example of a community radio talk.

The benefits of using a community radio talk to recruit are:

- Your message can be very specific, for example you can target local people to assist in a specific Conference event or activity, to volunteer on a short-term basis, or to become a member with a specific and ongoing role or function
- You can explain what being a Vincentian means and the good works that your Conference undertakes and how they help the local community
- You can tell your personal story of joining the Society and putting your faith into action
- You can explain to people what they would get out of joining the Society.

Identify someone in your Conference who has the confidence to speak on radio and can articulate the work of the Society in an engaging way.

Have a clear understanding of the message you wish to get across and the action you want a listener to take after hearing the message (e.g. 'for more information you can call Carol on 0401 111 111').

If this method is new to you, contact your Regional Director or Member and Community Engagement Coordinator for guidance. They can also and put you in touch with the media team in Sydney.

6. Hold a Public Information Session

Information sessions can be held by a Conference or group of Conferences as part of a direct appeal to the community for new members.

Arrange a venue, set a date and time, organise catering, organise any sound system and computer equipment you will need, and advertise the event or invite select groups of people to attend. Make it as easy for people to attend as possible by holding the information session outside of business hours and in an accessible location.

During the information session, speak about the Society and our works and why you are recruiting. Consider having several different speakers to keep people engaged. You may also want to show the short video 'Sharing Our Hope', which the regional office will have a copy of. Give people an understanding of the type of work they would be doing, the time commitment, and the training and support that would be provided.

Collect email addresses and phone numbers (perhaps ask people to register when they arrive) so that you can follow up afterwards. You could also hand out Expression of Interest slips so that anyone who is interested can complete it and hand it back to you on the night.

Have print materials such as Vision Magazine, brochures and any other helpful information available on the night.

Follow-up by contacting attendees within a week of the information session to see if they would like more information or have any questions.

If someone seems interested but is hesitant, you might consider inviting them to a Conference meeting or other appropriate activity so that they can get more of an understanding of who we are and what we do.

Suggestions for promoting the information session include:

- the Parish newsletter/bulletin
- Catholic School newsletters
- local newspaper
- local radio
- town notice boards
- Vinnies Shop
- Council/ the Shire.

7. Attending Community Events

Hold a stall or set up a stand at appropriate community events such as multicultural fairs, agricultural shows, festivals or other community event that attracts members of the public.

Book your place with the organisers, prepare materials such as tables, chairs, banners, posters, brochures and giveaways; organise a roster of existing Conference Members to staff the stall; and make sure you have enough members so that people can take regular breaks.

Hand out Expression of Interest slips or collect names, email address and phone numbers of interested people so that you can follow up with them afterwards. If someone seems interested but is hesitant, you might consider inviting them to a Conference meeting or other appropriate activity so that they can get more of an understanding of who we are and what we do.

8. Use Social Media

The State Support Office in Sydney has a small team of dedicated staff who have experience and skills in the use of social media. The Society already has a Facebook page; a Twitter account; an Instagram account; a LinkedIn profile and a YouTube channel.

These methods attract a wide range of younger people and different platforms appeal to different demographics and age groups.

If you want to try this method, please contact your Regional Director or Member and Community Engagement Coordinator in the regional office in the first instance. They will be able to provide further guidance and advice and put you in touch with the digital marketing team in Sydney.

Other Useful Tips

As you start to implement your preferred options, here are some more tips:

- **Deliver the message in a heartfelt and personal way**
 - Talk about how and why you became involved in the Society.
 - Explain how your work makes a difference in the lives of others.

- Share a powerful/moving story of personal experience that delivered a wonderful outcome to a person you assisted.
- Tell people of the wonderful sense of achievement they will experience when they have helped somebody.

➤ **Explain to potential new recruits the activity and tasks involved**

Here is an example from an advertisement:

We are currently seeking volunteers who live in Campbelltown who would be able to provide friendship and support to lonely or elderly people, in their own homes, aged care units, retirement villages etc. These visits can be made in the evening, weekend or daytime according to your own availability. Visits would be for around one hour's duration either weekly or fortnightly.

➤ **Let potential new recruits know what they will get out of it personally**

Here is an example of what you could say:

With busy lives it can sometimes be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits are enormous to you, your family and your community. Volunteering is one of the best ways to make new friends, build relationships and acquire new skills. You can make a real difference to people's lives. Volunteering makes you feel appreciated and needed. It provides an opportunity to give back what has been given to you.

➤ **Outline the attributes, skills and experience you are looking for**

Here is an example from a refugee homework program:

All you need is compassion, patience, the ability to listen and basic literacy and numeracy skills. An appreciation of the difficulties facing new arrivals in Australia is especially important but full training and mentoring is provided before beginning this volunteer role.

➤ **Address potential fears and concerns and reinforce that new members will be provided with training and support**

You may wish to say something like:

All you need is compassion, a non-judgmental attitude and most of all a good and kind heart. We will train and mentor you at every stage. You will meet some wonderful people and you will feel a great sense of achievement when you have made a real difference to somebody's life. We are a friendly, supportive group of people. We look forward to meeting you.

Appendix 5 shows some examples of advertisements that you may also find useful.

Step 3: Responding to Enquiries

Make sure the nominated contact person is ready and available to respond to enquiries, which may arrive by email, phone or in person.

When enquiries are received it is vital to respond to them quickly, to thank the person for their response and to invite them to meet with the Conference President and some selected members.

The purpose of this first meeting is to welcome all the attendees, tell them more about who we are and the work that we do, tell them about their expected roles, and answer any questions they have.

It is best to limit this meeting to an hour and use the opportunity to further inspire the person or people attending to get involved in helping people in need.

Make an application form available to those who want to take the next step and provide any further encouragement the person needs.

It is best to keep this first session separate from your Conference meetings so you can focus all your attention on your guests.

Step 4: Induction, Training and Mentoring

Becoming a Member

To become a member of the Society, a person must complete an application form and then go through the pre-engagement checks described below.

Prospective members are not permitted to engage with the people we serve until the checks are completed.

It is very important, however, to keep prospective members engaged during this process to maintain their passion and commitment to joining the Society. You can:

- Discuss learning opportunities that will be provided such as Society Orientation, Code of Conduct, Childsafe Familiarisation, Work Health and Safety, and Privacy trainings
- Invite the applicant to meet with existing members for a cup of tea and a chat
- Invite them to a meeting or to visit a service, ensuring that client confidentiality is not compromised.

Pre-Engagement Checks

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Child Safe Organisation. Safeguarding children and young people so that they thrive in their families and communities, whatever they may be, is a fundamental aspect of our work. We continually assess and evaluate our child safe strategies to ensure that we are compliant with legislation and can uphold our commitment to support and protect children.

To ensure that our people are suitable and supported we require all members to undergo pre-engagement screening. This includes:

- an interview (usually with the Conference President)
- two reference checks (usually conducted by the Conference President)

- a Working with Children Check provided by the NSW Government to the applicant upon application
- a national criminal history check (police check) - staff in the regional office will email a link to the applicant so that they can complete the process.

Our people also undertake basic training in child safe behaviours and reporting.

Orientation and Training

Once the pre-engagement checks are completed, the new member will be able to commence.

As a first step, the Conference President should ask regional office staff to enter the new member's details into Society People, our membership database.

Provide the new member with a letter of welcome, a copy of The Rule, a copy of the Vincentian Visitation Guidelines (for those undertaking visitation) and any other materials you would normally provide. This could include a prayer card, bookmarks, and other items to make the person feel valued and included. Your Member and Community Engagement Coordinator can help.

Let the new member know about the Member and Volunteer Support website (MAVS) and the resources that are available: <https://mavs.vinnies.org.au/>

Once a new member is entered into Society People, they will have access to the Vinnies Learning Centre (VLC). This will allow them to complete the compliance learning modules, and access other learning opportunities. Instructions on how to access the VLC will be emailed to the new member.

Mentoring and Support

It is important for the Conference President and Members to mentor and support new members. You could do this 'organically' or you could match the new member up with an existing member for informal mentoring. This will be especially valuable for younger people, who can benefit from the guidance, support, and encouragement of an experienced member.

Other things you can do to nurture and support new members include:

- Nurturing and supporting their spiritual development
- Identifying pathways for them to get involved and use their skills in other Society work
- Encouraging them to spend time looking through the information on the MAVS website
- Reminding them of the training opportunities available through the Vinnies Learning Centre
- Gradually providing opportunities for them to step up and take on greater responsibility.

Keep succession planning in mind and look out for members with leadership qualities.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADVICE, SUPPORT OR ASSISTANCE AT ANY TIME, CONTACT YOUR MEMBER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR.

We wish you every success with your recruitment activities!

Appendix 1: Example of a Pulpit Talk

Good morning/evening,

I am XXXXX from St XXXX's Conference of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, here in XXXX.

I am sure that everyone at this Mass today has heard of the Society, often referred to in a shorthand way as 'Vinnies'.

The Society's mission states: "The Society of St Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization that aspires to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society". It is a challenging mission, but in attempting to achieve this mission we Vincentians have experience great satisfaction, and yes often joy.

Here in XXXX we have XXXX active conferences. A Conference is a group of members who meet at agreed times and undertake assigned tasks. We also [describe any other activities your Conference takes part in, such as running the local shop etc.].

Many of you have already generously supported the works of the Society by contributing to our fundraising appeals or donating quality goods that could be sold or passed on to people in need.

Thank you. Your generosity has enabled us to support individuals and families at very difficult times in their lives...to give them a hand up when it is needed most.

But while the work of the Society is often highlighted at times of natural disaster such as drought, bushfire or flood, it is the on-going, everyday work of helping people who are experiencing unemployment, homelessness, domestic violence, economic hardship, illness, addiction or family breakdown that is a challenge for us in the Society.

In addition to these challenges, we have a growing number of people in our community, often those who are aged, or infirm, or who are lonely, and who really appreciate having a caring person visit and spend some time with them.

Like our Church's clergy, our members are ageing, and the Society needs new people - Vincentians with enthusiasm and new ideas to continue our good works.

We Vincentians come from a variety of backgrounds and bring a range of talents to our roles. And in my experience, every Vincentian has brought their own special skills to make a difference in the lives of those we seek to help.

Perhaps you could do the same as a Conference Member, or a volunteer working in our shops...or even in a special role where you see a need in the community?

We know that there are many demands on our time, especially those who are parents of young children, families where both parents have employment responsibilities, even grandparents whose children or grandchildren live away and who appreciate regular visits.

The Society has become more flexible in requiring a level of commitment from its members and volunteers, and so is keen to find ways in which those wishing to join can be become involved and their personal contribution welcomed and appreciated.

So, if you think you have the time, (I am sure you all have special skills and talents to offer) please speak to myself or my fellow Vincentian XXXX, after Mass.

You may also know of a friend or family members who may be interested in getting involved and if so, please let us know, or speak to them about the Society.

We will be conducting a short information session in the coming weeks or so, during which you can find out more about our work in XXXX, and meet some of our current members and volunteers.

Thank you for your attention, and thank you Father/Bishop for the opportunity to speak today.

Appendix 2: Example of an Approach to a School

Here is a sample letter for the Parish School Principal which you can copy the text onto letterhead and change as needed for your situation. Note the paragraph on Mini Vinnies which may not apply.

[Insert Date]

Date [insert name of Principal],

Our Parish St Vincent De Paul Society Conference is holding a recruitment drive during the [insert recruitment period e.g. month of May] and we seek your support. During the weeks of [insert information] Conference Members will invite and inform local residents of the opportunity to become involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society.

We would like to alert the parents and staff of [insert name of school] about the opportunity to live their faith through service to those who are struggling in our community.

[We are delighted that there is an active Mini-Vinnies group in our school and thank you for your support of this initiative. It is a wonderful opportunity to engage our younger parish members in their local community and social justice awareness.]

Is it possible to utilise the school newsletter to promote the events that we are planning, so that we can inform people about our activities and needs for volunteers?

Ideally there would be a different notice for 3-4 weeks in the school newsletter on these dates [insert dates.] I will forward those announcements to the school office [OR] I enclose them here [delete whichever does not apply].

Through these efforts we hope to share the joy and fulfillment that being a Vincentian brings.

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

[name]

President, [name of Conference]

Other possibilities for involving the school

- Special notice about the information evening to Mini Vinnies parents
- Brief address to the Parents and Friends meeting seeking support of recruitment drive
- Speak to the Mini Vinnies group about what members do and how they help people
- If you are speaking at Mass one Sunday perhaps some Mini Vinnies students might come to the Mass and sing a special song or some other involvement in the Mass.

Appendix 3: Example of a Seek Ad

Conference Members | Dulwich Hill

About this opportunity

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is looking for people in the Dulwich Hill area who are interested in joining the Society as a Conference Member.

All around the state, members of the Society respond to the needs of their local communities in groups known as 'Conferences'. Conferences grow organically from within our communities, from parishes, schools, universities and workplaces.

As a member you have the opportunity to make a difference by:

- Providing Immediate Assistance: Short term help for the individual person or family could be in the form of food vouchers and assistance with rent and bills.
- Giving a Hand Up: Our members delve deeper and build trusting relationships with the people we assist, uncovering the longer-term help that may be required. This is often done through actively listening, sharing stories and responding with assistance such as budget counselling.
- Raising Our Voices for Social Justice: Actions speak louder than words. The Society is a network of charity and social justice encircling the world. Our Society's unique grassroots approach inspires a variety of responses such as home visitation, social visitation, music groups and other innovative local responses.

The Dulwich Hill Conference is looking for someone who could help once a week from 5:30pm – 7:30pm as we visit those we assist, and also fortnightly on Tuesdays from 7:00pm – 8:00pm as we debrief with each other at our Conference meetings.

We would love a volunteer who is passionate about social justice and has some basic computer and numeracy skills to contribute to the Conference's activities.

What we ask of you:

- To bring with you compassion, a non-judgmental attitude and most of all a good and kind heart. These important personal attributes underpin this opportunity to provide care and support for some of the most vulnerable in our community.
- We also ask for an ability to maintain confidences and respect for the privacy of those we assist, ability to listen and respond without judging and a willingness to join with others to support those in need.

How we will support you:

- You will be trained and mentored at every stage. You will enjoy the support and camaraderie that is part of the Conference. You will gain a greater understanding of poverty and disadvantage and how it impacts people's lives and you will experience what it means to put one's faith into action.
- You will meet some wonderful people and you will feel a great sense of achievement when you have given a hand up to someone and not just a hand out. We are a very friendly group

at Dulwich Hill with an emphasis on sharing, supporting, and caring for each other. We also have a lot of fun and laughs.

If this opportunity excites you, we are only a phone call away. We look forward to welcoming you to the Society.

Additional requirements:

- National Criminal History Check
- Working with Children Check.

Appendix 4: Talking Points for Radio Interview

General Tips

- Differentiate between a member and other types of volunteers - the difference between the two will likely be lost on people outside the Society
- If you are seeking more members, make sure you talk more about members than other forms of volunteering
- Leave people with a clear idea of what they need to enquire about (i.e. “I want to become a member”) if they like what they hear.

Suggested Script and Talking Points

Today I have in the studio / on the line XXXX from the St Vincent de Paul Society - hello XXXX

Hi, thanks for having me on the show.

I understand the Society is putting out a call for more volunteers. How can people get involved?

There are a few ways you can get involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society on a voluntary basis.

You can volunteer to work in one of our shops, for instance. It’s one of the most visible ways to help and probably, as a result, our most well-known.

But what we really need is more members, these are volunteers who do work within their communities to help people seeking assistance in a responsive and dignified manner.

The kind of assistance we provide depends on the needs of the person or family and can include a food hamper or voucher, help to pay a bill, help with household goods or clothing, back to school needs for the kids, help with medical expenses. Sometimes the person may need us to advocate for them with a housing service provider or other provider, or they may need a referral to a mental health service, addiction service or other health and welfare service. Each person’s needs are different and we start by having a conversation so we can learn more about the person we are assisting.

Many members also get involved in social justice campaigns such as social and affordable housing, or people seeking asylum.

Members are part of local groups we call Conferences and so they also attend regular Conference meetings to make decisions about how to best help their community.

What does the Society do?

In a word: lots.

We run Vinnies Shops to keep clothes out of landfill and provide affordable clothing.

We run services that provide help for people experiencing homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, and more.

We campaign at local, state, and national levels to ensure governments don’t forget they need to take care of vulnerable people.

But it’s our members who do our most important work – a lot of it is behind the scenes but its impact on people’s lives is immeasurable. They help people experiencing some of the toughest times

they will ever experience – they might have lost their home in a bushfire, or their job, or be struggling in another way.

Our members visit vulnerable people and supply them with what they need to get them back on their feet.

The Society began its work in poverty alleviation and that's still our core business.

One of the worst things about poverty is it is basically an inescapable trap because it denies you the resources you need to get out of it.

Our members are all volunteers and they work to alleviate poverty wherever they can.

Please tell me what you need to be a member

We need volunteers from 18 years old and upwards who have a passion for giving people in need a hand-up and who want to deepen their faith and spirituality through service to the poor.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation, though, so we're really just looking for people who want to help. If that sounds like you, then get involved, it's very rewarding.

The time commitment people give varies, but for most people it is 3 – 4 hours per week, plus meetings which are held once a week.

In particular, we're encouraging younger people to get involved. When the Society began in the 1880s in France, it was started by a group of 20-something university students, led by a man named Frederic Ozanam.

They provided help and vital supplies to people experiencing poverty in Paris and the movement spread quickly around the world in the decades that followed.

Do I need any skills or experience?

All you need is compassion and a non-judgemental attitude and most of all a good and kind heart. We will train and mentor you at every stage. You will meet some wonderful people and you will feel a great sense of achievement when you have made a real difference to someone's life.

What are the benefits of being a member?

It's incredibly rewarding work. There's simply nothing like helping people by providing them with what they need to get back on track.

But it's also a good way to make friends – St Vincent de Paul Society members are deeply involved in their communities and are very warm people. Our reason for doing what we do attracts a good bunch of people.

It also provides people with an opportunity to get involved with the wide work of the Society – we're an international organisation after all.

How can people join?

It's simple – they just need to phone me on **xxxx** or they can email me at xxxx@vinnies.org.au

People can learn more about what we do by visiting our website which is www.vinnies.org.au.

We are a very friendly group at **xxxx** Conference, and you can be sure of a warm welcome. We look forward to hearing from you!

Appendix 5: Examples of Advertisements

Example 1



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

JOIN OUR AMAZING TEAM

The St Vincent de Paul Society is looking for more volunteers.

Do you have a few hours each week to help the disadvantaged in your local community?

You can assist by:

- visiting people in their homes
- interviewing people at our Care & Support Centre
- doing reception and data entry duties

If you would like to find out more please phone Trevor on 0411 666 230

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
207 Edward Street, Wagga Wagga

Example 2



Volunteers needed

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Become a member or volunteer today and join us in making a difference for those in need in your community

The Society would not exist without its members and volunteers; they are the Society. Conference members put their faith into action by visiting people in their homes or in the community, providing friendship and support to those they serve. Volunteers help deliver much needed services to the community through involvement in our Special Works, including Youth Programs, Compeer (Mental Health Friendship Program), and Vinnies Shops.

For further information or to register your interest, please call us on (02) 4967 6277 or email us at maitland.newcastle@vinnies.org.au



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Example 3



 St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

**JOIN US
AND MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**
to those in need within
your community!

JOIN OUR AMAZING TEAM

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS.

Do you have a few hours each week to help people experiencing disadvantage in your local community?

You can assist by:

- Interviewing and assisting people;
- Volunteering in our shop: serving, sorting, store display;
- Assisting with data entry or other administrative duties.

We welcome people of all ages, backgrounds, and denominations.

**Find out more by contacting us on
02 6862 5758
or email us at
wcfsvdp@vinnies.org.au**