



doof
vlaanderen

VOLUNTEER *POLICY*





MISSION AND VISION OF DOOF VLAANDEREN

Doof Vlaanderen *unites* and *empowers* all deaf and hard of hearing people with respect for their diversity.

We defend and promote *Flemish Sign Language* and *deaf culture* as an enrichment for society.

We stand up for *equal rights for deaf* and *hard of hearing people* in society.

Deaf and hard of hearing people belong to the group of people with disabilities and are part of a minority group with its own language (Flemish Sign Language) and culture. They strive for inclusion in society while maintaining their individuality, language and bond with the Deaf community.



PREFACE

Dear volunteer,

First of all, we would like to welcome you, whether you have been with us for a while or are just starting as a volunteer at Doof Vlaanderen, or at one of our departments, deaf associations or deaf actions. Your efforts are extremely valuable to us, and we want to make sure you feel at home.

Doof Vlaanderen is an organization for deaf and hard of hearing people and we are happy you are joining us. Volunteers like you are important in pursuing our mission and vision. Together we can make a difference.

In this volunteer policy we would like to share essential information and some guidelines. Volunteers have diverse backgrounds and experiences and can contribute in different ways. Whether you want to be involved temporarily or for a longer period, we welcome people from all ages and with different profiles. It is important that you are motivated to communicate in Flemish Sign Language, whether you are deaf, hard of hearing or hearing. It does not matter if you are not fluid yet in Flemish Sign Language. There is room to grow. In this document we present various profiles of volunteers.

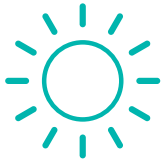
Your involvement strengthens our organization, and we are sincerely grateful for your efforts. We look forward to working with you.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer at Doof Vlaanderen you help build a **strong community for deaf** and **hard of hearing people**. This is done with respect for each other and with the same goals in mind, whether you can spare a lot or a little time. You are committed to helping people of different ages, you help organize leisure activities or you can lobby for human rights to create a better world for deaf and hard of hearing people.

AT DOOF VLAANDEREN WE WORK AROUND FOUR THEMES

Leisure activities



We organize activities where deaf and hard of hearing people can be who they are, with their own culture, language and perspective.

Policy



We lobby to make our interests and needs known to the government and policy makers.

Collaboration



We collaborate with different people and organizations.

Visibility



We raise awareness in society about who we are and what our needs are.

Our organization provides an *inclusive environment for deaf and hard of hearing people*, which is not always the case with volunteer work in society. We offer volunteers a sign language environment, giving them the opportunity to get *in touch with other deaf or hard of hearing people*. Working as a volunteer for us provides the opportunity to learn and grow. During your volunteer work you experience satisfaction and pleasure, which is positive for both you and our organization.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

You can use *your strengths, skills, experience, expertise and network doing volunteer work for us*. We also strive to reach deaf and hard of hearing people who are not yet involved in our activities. You can contribute to this through volunteer work. We can join forces and expertise to achieve things!

We believe it is important *to support* you in various ways as a volunteer, for a longer or shorter period of time. We guide you, give you an assignment (or several) and also think it is important *to thank you*. We organize an annual meeting for all our volunteers who were active in the previous 12 months. This to show our gratitude for your efforts. Volunteers, board members of departments and two board members of each of our associations are invited to this event.

VOLUNTEER PROFILES

Our volunteers are a diverse group with different interests, skills and talents. They have their motive in common: they want to volunteer in a sign language environment and connect with other deaf and hard of hearing people.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



Marleen 55 years old

Marleen is deaf and grew up using Flemish Sign Language. She has been active as a volunteer for 20 years at Doof Vlaanderen, first as a board member, later as a contact person at one of the departments of Doof Vlaanderen. She also volunteers at many events. Members of the Deaf community know Marleen well.



Zara 23 years old

Zara is hearing and is learning Flemish Sign Language. She is studying to become an interpreter and has been working as a volunteer at the office of Doof Vlaanderen for 2 years. She supports employees with all kinds of tasks, such as short interpreting assignments, writing different memos, papers and reports, and is active during events.



Peter 61 years old

Peter has become deaf, has a CI and is now fluent in Flemish Sign Language. He has been helping in the archive of Doof Vlaanderen for five years now and in doing so, comes in contact with other volunteers regularly. An employee of Doof Vlaanderen is always ready to guide him.



Jolien 26 years old

Jolien is hard of hearing and learned Flemish Sign Language at the age of 20. She helps during events organized by Doof Vlaanderen and the departments. For example, she is responsible for registrations, the cash register, or the bar. She loves structured work. Doof Vlaanderen often relies on her.



Wouter 35 years old

Wouter is deaf, has deaf parents and grew up using Flemish Sign Language. He volunteers during events by Doof Vlaanderen, such as WDD, and volunteers for a short amount of time. He loves challenges and variety, does not want to be a board member or have a permanent responsibility. Sometimes he helps with the bar, sometimes he participates in a panel discussion and sometimes moderates a discussion if the subject interests him and he has enough time.

WHAT MOTIVATES THEM?

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING VOLUNTEERS

The motivation of deaf volunteers is mainly that they want to make themselves useful in a sign language environment where communication runs smoothly and to have social contacts. In other situations, this is less apparent, for example at work, at school, with family or other volunteer organizations.



HEARING VOLUNTEERS

- Interpreting students
- Hearing people who want to learn Flemish Sign Language
- Hearing people who support Doof Vlaanderen

The motivation these hearing volunteers have, is mainly that they want to practice their Flemish Sign Language skills. Interpreting students occasionally receive small assignments to practice their interpreting or translation skills.

INTERNAL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers who volunteer at events organized by employees of Doof Vlaanderen and are usually guided by these employees.

EXTERNAL VOLUNTEERS

Every association, department and regional Deaf Action has a board. They can also consist of permanent or occasional volunteers. Permanent volunteers are volunteers the board can frequently count on. The occasional volunteers assist now and then, sometimes they are engaged only one time.

Do you recognize yourself in Marleen, Zara, Peter, Jolien or Wouter? What do you like to do, what can you do well, and which profile suits you best? If you do not know (yet), you can always contact us. We will figure it out together.



DOOF VLAANDEREN	
Board member or member of the general meeting	Permanent or occasional volunteer

DEPARTMENTS	
Board member or (at some departments) member of the general meeting.	Permanent or occasional volunteer

DEAF CLUB	
Board volunteer or voluntary member of the general meeting.	Permanent or occasional volunteer

DOVENACTIE
Permanent volunteer

In the next chapter we will discuss the steps for permanent and occasional volunteers at Doof Vlaanderen.



HOW DO I BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT DOOF VLAANDEREN?

How do I become a permanent or occasional volunteer at Doof Vlaanderen?



Here we will explain the different steps for permanent or occasional volunteers at Doof Vlaanderen. Departments, deaf associations and Deaf Actions can be inspired to use the same steps for their own volunteers.

3.1 CALL/CONTACT



Would you like to become a volunteer with us? Welcome! You can spontaneously register as a volunteer at Doof Vlaanderen. Please email us at info@doof.vlaanderen or contact one of our employees.

We sometimes spread a call for volunteers on our website and social media. How can you get informed?

1. **Talk about it:** are you curious about volunteering with us or do you have doubts about whether your commitment matches our goals? Talk about it with other volunteers, employees or board members of Doof Vlaanderen.
2. **Check our website:** on our websites you can find vacancies with links to register as a volunteer.
3. **Follow us on social media:** you can find us on Facebook and Instagram. We sometimes launch call for volunteers there for specific activities and events.
4. **Register for our newsletter:** you will receive regular updates on volunteer opportunities.



3.2

FIRST CONVERSATIONS



The collaboration starts by having a first conversation with you as a volunteer by an employee of Doof Vlaanderen. We get to know you first and ask about your interests, talents and skills.

The following things are discussed:

- What are the tasks?
- When will you do the tasks?
- Who is your contact person and who guides you?
- What compensation will you receive?

During a second conversation we will check whether your tasks are clear and answer your questions. This conversation will take place as soon as possible after the first conversation.

3.3

REGISTRATION



If you are a new volunteer, you will have to complete a form and give this form to your contact person at Doof Vlaanderen. You will then be registered, like all other volunteers, in the digital volunteer file of Doof Vlaanderen.



Doof Vlaanderen and you as a volunteer enter a volunteer agreement with agreements concerning the cooperation.

This agreement contains the following matters:

SAFETY – At Doof Vlaanderen we want to take good care of our volunteers and we do our best to ensure your safety in various ways. Everyone has the right to be themselves. We strive to provide a safe place physically, socially and emotionally. It is also important that you are aware of the rules and standards of Doof Vlaanderen because this will help you to keep yourself safe. Volunteers are also insured during their volunteer work.

CONFIDENTIALITY - As a volunteer you may sometimes come across information that is personal or sensitive. It is important that we treat this information confidentially. That is why we have included a duty of confidentiality in our volunteer agreement. We discuss with each volunteer which matters are confidential and must remain within Doof Vlaanderen.

GUIDANCE - Here we explain what guidance the employees of Doof Vlaanderen offer. Doof Vlaanderen will appoint you a contact person with whom you can discuss everything, such as:

- Content of your tasks
- Execution of your tasks
- Duration of the task
- Possible compensation or reimbursements
- ...

What can you expect as a volunteer from the contact person at Doof Vlaanderen?

- Being available for you, willing to get to know you
- Be present on your first day
- Be interested in your ideas and skills
- Be clear about what Doof Vlaanderen expects from you
- Listen to what you expect from Doof Vlaanderen

TRAINING - We also organize training for volunteers, based on their needs and questions.



FINANCIAL COMPENSATIONS

- **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS** - Expense reimbursement for volunteer work is not a basic right, but we look at each situation individually. It is important to know that an expense allowance is different from a performance fee, reward or payment. It is intended to cover costs you may have during your volunteer work. The good news is that you do not have to worry about taxes or contributions to RSZ as expense reimbursements are not considered to be an income. This means that no tax forms are drawn up for volunteers. We also take into account the maximum expense reimbursements. Prior to starting as a volunteer, we will make clear agreements about expense reimbursements and how these are provided.
- **REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS** – Sometimes you have to travel for your volunteer work at Doof Vlaanderen. This may involve travel to and from the Doof Vlaanderen office or travels in the context of an activity. Doof Vlaanderen decides which travel costs are reimbursed. We determine the reimbursement rate ourselves but take the legal maximum amounts into account. We only reimburse demonstrable costs.

Some rules:

- If the place is accessible by public transport, we expect you to use it. In this case we will pay the costs of the public transport (train, tram, bus).
 - If the place is not accessible by public transport, we pay a fixed amount per kilometre driven by car. We expect volunteers to carpool, we strongly encourage traveling with others and sharing a car.
 - If an exception to the above rules is necessary, discuss this in advance with your contact person at Doof Vlaanderen.
- **OVERVIEW OF COSTS** - As a volunteer you can pass on your costs. You need prior permission from your contact person at Doof Vlaanderen for this. Fill in the declaration form (or cash book) and attach evidence of the costs made. We cannot refund costs without evidence.
 - Provide supporting documents for the administration to Doof Vlaanderen. No supporting documents, means no refund.
 - Clearly note to whom the costs should be reimbursed.
 - The refund is preferably made by bank transfer. This is to have proof of the refund. Payment in cash is also possible, but in this case a proof of reimbursement must always be signed and kept.
 - Our accountant will inform you about the financial matters mentioned above. You can also contact our accountant (for a physical meeting or online) for practical questions. We will also provide you with an information pack with additional information, details and forms for the reimbursements mentioned above and about the volunteer insurance.



Your contact person and other employees at Doof Vlaanderen will regularly ask you how you are doing. If you have any feedback, questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to your contact person.

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE?

If you want to stop volunteering, that is completely okay. It is up to you what you want to tell your contact person at Doof Vlaanderen about your leave. We respect your choices. We encourage you to provide us with feedback and to let us know whether you want to volunteer again in the future or not. Your opinions and experience are valuable to us and we can learn from this.

Some questions that may be discussed during the exit interview:

- Why do you want to quit?
- How do you want to quit?
- What do you leave behind and how are your tasks transferred?
- How do you look back on your efforts, your guidance and Doof Vlaanderen?
- What is going well in Doof Vlaanderen and where is improvement possible?
- What can Doof Vlaanderen do for you? Can we play a role in finding other volunteer work? Do you need a reference?
- How do you want to stay informed about Doof Vlaanderen and how do you want to stay involved?

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE AN APPRECIATIVE GOODBYE

We would like to create an appreciative farewell culture. How you prefer to say goodbye as a permanent or occasional volunteer depends on your motivation and your personality. Some volunteers like to say goodbye in silence. If so, a gift voucher and a personal thanks are a fitting farewell. Others prefer a pleasant farewell moment with a public word of thanks. Together we can find a good way to say goodbye.

If you would like to come back to Doof Vlaanderen as a volunteer, you can always contact us.



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