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# The coordinator

The coordinator plays an invaluable role in implementing the Main Street/Small Towns Program at the local level. The job calls for a range of skills that are as varied as the towns or suburbs that employ them.



## The advantages of a coordinator

The advantages of having a coordinator to a program are that he or she:

- provides continuity by keeping an eye on all activities to ensure the goals and accountability requirements of the program are being met
- consistently shoulders responsibility for the program – a volunteer cannot be expected to take on this role
- synchronises activities to avoid duplication and creates synergies between projects and people that will improve results
- looks at the big picture and monitors the overall health of the program, unlike volunteers who are often working on only one aspect
- anticipates problems and addresses them before they can have an effect on the program.

The chairperson and executive team usually support the coordinator in these roles. A voluntary committee seldom has the time or the big picture perspective to carry out these essential duties effectively.

Because the job is so varied, the position can have a range of titles, such as:

- Economic Development and Promotions Coordinator
- Main Street Coordinator
- Business District Development Coordinator
- Town Centre or Main Street Manager
- Town Coordinator
- Small Towns Development Officer

Or variations on these.

### Tip

In some locations, the coordinator's job might be combined with a complementary part-time position to create a larger job. An example of this is combining the Coordinator with a Tourism Officer.



## Coordinator as employee or contractor?

A program can engage the services of a coordinator as an employee or as a contractor.

Some of the differences identified by the Australian Taxation Office between a contractor and employee are:

An employee	A contractor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is paid for time employed</li> <li>- does not provide their own equipment or materials</li> <li>- is entitled to paid leave (e.g. sick, recreation, long service)</li> <li>- must personally perform the job</li> <li>- works to hours set by a contract or award</li> <li>- generally is paid an hourly rate</li> <li>- is generally recruited by a job advertisement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is paid for results</li> <li>- provides their own materials and equipment</li> <li>- makes provision themselves for leave</li> <li>- may delegate to others</li> <li>- is flexible in how work is performed and is paid by results</li> <li>- is paid according to the terms specified in a contract</li> <li>- is generally engaged through a tender process.</li> </ul>

It is important that the committee clarifies the status of the coordinator. See the *Contacts* section at the end of this module in order to find out more information about the Australian Taxation Office's approach to employees and contractors.

Some other factors that may be considered when deciding to employ a coordinator as an employee or consultant are:

- the committee must meet a number of statutory obligations to an employee e.g. to pay tax and superannuation on their behalf and to make provision for leave
- a coordinator contractor must pay their own taxation, superannuation and make their own provision for leave
- the committee must still meet some statutory conditions for contractors e.g. for occupational, health and safety
- the ongoing management and operational activities of a coordinator (on page 3) do not fit easily into the Australian Taxation Office's definition of a contractor's method of working

- project work could be performed by both an employee or a contractor under the Australian Taxation Office's definitions
- developing a contract for a contractor will require a fair bit of work – the results to be achieved and their quality must be specified up front to avoid the possibility of disagreement later on
- an employee has responsibility first to the program, then to other secondary work, if any, and tends to have a more continuous association
- a contractor working from their own premises will have a less visible continuing association with the program
- in their method of working, a contractor is a 'gun for hire' and may not be able to work exclusively on the program. This may be acceptable for projects or in the planning stage of a program, but may provide less continuity for the program's implementation.

# Role of the coordinator

## The interim coordinator

In the early stages of a program an interim coordinator may be appointed for a specified period of time. Their role generally involves:

- building support and consolidating networks
- providing information and promoting the program
- researching key issues, needs and identifying sources of useful information and funding
- playing a major role in the development, promotion and acceptance of the Strategic Plan
- assisting with the development of project plans and budgets.

Once this is complete, the committee generally employs or contracts a coordinator for at least a year, and generally longer, subject to the availability of funding.

## The coordinator

In essence, the main part of the coordinator’s role is to implement the priorities identified in the finalised Strategic Plan. Typically, they do this by:

- managing the day-to-day affairs of the program (see the coordinator’s management and operational activities listed above right)
- developing project plans and funding submissions to assist in implementing the Strategic Plan (see the project types listed right)
- coordinating the activities of the committee, subcommittees, volunteers and other participating organisations, businesses or individuals
- developing and carrying out a personal work plan to achieve their role.

**Management and operational activities**

The main types of management and operational activities undertaken by a coordinator are:

- spending time with stakeholders
- maintaining contact with Council
- building and maintaining networks and alliances
- general administration
- day to day office management
- handling enquiries and general correspondence
- developing and improving office systems
- research and analysis
- reporting on progress and finances
- training volunteers and other staff
- generating publicity and marketing the program
- representing the program publicly
- acting as a main contact person for the media
- strategic and project planning

**Six types of Main Street/ Small Towns projects**

Event projects

Cooperative marketing projects

Training projects

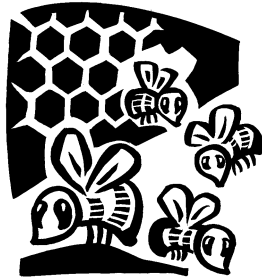
Business research and development projects

Physical design and image projects

Feasibility study projects.

Templates for these six types of projects are provided in the *Financial management and reporting* module in this series.





## The coordinator and the committee

The coordinator is responsible to the committee and carries out many of its decisions. However, as the person most in touch with the program, in practice, the coordinator proposes many ideas and actions to the committee as well. In many cases, the committee delegates a fair amount of autonomy in decision making to the coordinator.

The coordinator's role in relation to the committee is to:

- provide the committee with the information and advice they need to make decisions or to take action
- carry out the committee's decisions
- recommend new opportunities and proposals to the committee and warn them of anything that might negatively affect the program
- report regularly to the committee, and on its behalf to funding bodies on progress and finances.

The coordinator must work closely with the chairperson, vice president, treasurer, and if there is one, the secretary and public officer. The coordinator's role is complementary to these office bearers, the details of which may sometimes overlap. For example, the coordinator and treasurer may work on different aspects of financial management.

# Recruiting a coordinator

Recruitment of a coordinator is the responsibility of the sponsoring body and will involve the committee. This section will assist you with this critical step to getting your program up and running efficiently. It includes a sample position description and advertisement, and sets out selection procedures including sample questions. There is information about employment legislation and a sample contract.

Note that if the employing body is a Council, the Local Government Award will set the coordinator's pay and conditions, and there are established procedures for recruitment.

However, if the employing body is an incorporated association such as a local business association or a development corporation, its own procedures can be used or others may be adapted, such as the local Council's model.

## Developing a position description

A position description is a guide to the coordinator's job. It contains:

- Responsibilities** what the person must do and be accountable for in the job
- Selection criteria** the competencies (knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours) needed to carry out the responsibilities
- Personal qualities** aspects of personality which will contribute to appropriate behaviour and performance in the job.

The 'Sample position description' in this section shows some responsibilities and selection criteria that are needed for most coordinator positions.

To assist you further, on pages 8 and 9 are more responsibilities organised under a range of categories, e.g. financial management or business. The responsibilities shown here are a guide only. It would not be possible for one person to carry out all of these responsibilities in one, or even two to three years.

On page 10 there are many selection criteria listed. When choosing them ensure that the selection criteria flow from the responsibilities, and also be realistic about the skills and experience that you need in a coordinator. Selection criteria can be 'essential' (a candidate **must** demonstrate this attribute) or 'desirable' (useful but not vital). In a case where two or more candidates fulfil all the essential criteria, 'desirables' can be the deciding factor.

On page 7 there is a list of 'Personal qualities' which can be adapted to your position description.

Choose from the lists of responsibilities, selection criteria and personal qualities to customise your coordinator's position description in line with your Strategic Plan.

The priorities set for the first year of your Plan should also indicate whether the job is full- or part-time. This decision should also be made with the assistance of the budget templates in the *Financial management and reporting* module in this series.

### Tip

When developing a position description for the coordinator, use the Strategic Plan and common sense. It is important to get a fit between the program and what a coordinator can realistically do. If in doubt, seek advice from Main Street colleagues.





## Sample position description

**NORTHWOOD MAIN STREET COMMITTEE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR  
(Full-time/Part-time)**

The Northwood area is moving ahead. The community is committed to change with the goal to survive and expand.

**THE POSITION:**

We are looking for a capable and dedicated person to implement the Northwood Strategic Plan under the Main Street/Small Towns Program. This project is a joint initiative of the Department of State and Regional Development and the Northwood Main Street Committee.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE POSITION:**

*(Outline what the program is trying to achieve through this job)*

Examples of some projects to be implemented include . . . *(list these)*

**1. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

*(Adapt from 'Additional responsibilities' list on pages 8 - 9)*

**2. SELECTION CRITERIA**

**A. Knowledge, skills and experience**

*Essential*

- Well-developed interpersonal, oral and written communication skills
- Ability to liaise with a range of people including business people, government officers, media and members of the public
- A current driver's licence
- Computer skills including word processing
- *(Adapt others from 'Additional selection criteria' lists on page 10)*

*Desirable*

- Computer skills in the use of spreadsheets, databases and desktop publishing
- *(Adapt others from the 'Additional selection criteria' list on page 10)*

**B. Personal qualities**

*Essential*

- *(Adapt from 'Personal qualities' list on page 7)*



**SALARY AND CONDITIONS:**

The appointment is for a \_\_\_\_ month period for \_\_\_\_ hours per week. The employment contract runs from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and may be renewed for \_\_\_\_ months depending on the availability of further funding and satisfactory performance in the position. There will be a (\_\_\_\_) month probationary period.

The normal working week will be \_\_\_\_ hours per week, spread over \_\_\_\_ days. The coordinator will be required to work flexible hours.

The coordinator is entitled to a proportion of four weeks' annual paid leave, equivalent to their full- or part-time status the end of each year of service. The coordinator is entitled to (\_\_\_\_) paid sick days for the twelve-month period.

If the coordinator is required to use his/her motor vehicle, he/she will be reimbursed at the rate of (\_\_\_\_) per kilometre.

Appropriate training and development opportunities will be provided.

The coordinator will work from (*specify building or office*) at (*street address*).

Travel expenses will be met by the employer.

Attendance at the Department of State & Regional Development's Community Economic Development Conference and the Regional Forum is compulsory.

The coordinator will report to (*name of supervisor*).

**Personal qualities**

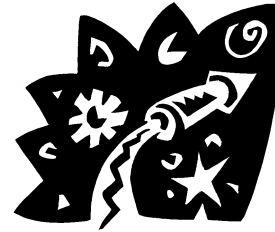
- Ability to work without supervision
- Independence and self-reliance
- High degree of self-motivation
- High degree of creativity
- Analytical ability
- Ability to exercise delegated authority confidently
- Assertiveness
- Energy, enthusiasm and ability to see things through
- Skills in dealing with conflict
- Warmth, outgoing personality
- Humour
- Resilience
- Ability to cope with ambiguity and open systems
- Patience – ability to accept long-term nature of program
- Professional attitude
- Ability to liaise and work with a range of groups in the community
- Ability to take on several tasks at once
- A passionate belief in the future of your community.



## Additional Responsibilities

### Building networks, alliances and support

- Build networks between the committee, sponsoring group, businesses, community groups, Council and the public
- Build alliances with key stakeholders and other groups and organisations
- Represent the committee at economic development functions as required by the committee



### Management and administration

- Conduct day to day administration of the office
- Act as central point for enquiries and referrals on economic development matters
- Prepare reports required by committee and funding providers

### Leadership, supervision and teamwork

- Facilitate the maximum use of available skills and resources
- Supervise consultants, other staff or volunteers, as needed
- Build team involvement, maximise productivity from people and manage conflict constructively

### Support an incorporated association

In cooperation with the committee secretary:

- Prepare agendas for meetings, distribute notices and relevant meeting papers to members
- Record and publish minutes
- Ensure that all necessary reports, documentation and records are completed and retained
- Maintain the register of financial members and send out renewals

### Planning

- In cooperation with committee and members, research and develop a Strategic Plan for the program

### Financial

In cooperation with the treasurer:

- Keep accounts of the program including payments, invoicing, collection and compliance with legal and incorporation requirements
- Develop budgets for the program and for projects
- Provide monthly financial reports (including payments) and an end of financial year report
- Liaise with committee's accountant and auditor

### Project management

- Plan projects so that tasks, responsibilities, milestones, costs and risks are estimated
- Establish communication channels between those involved in a project and manage expectations
- Implement projects in a timely manner, including marketing aspects, if any
- Monitor, report on and evaluate projects

### Fund raising

- Seek sources of funding with view to future self-funding of the program
- Prepare project proposals and funding and sponsorship applications

### Marketing and promotion

- Develop and conduct projects to raise public awareness and support for the program and its objectives, which may include:
  - publishing newsletters
  - sending out regular press releases
  - developing promotional materials
  - placing advertisements
  - acting as the main local and regional media contact in conjunction with the chairperson
- Develop and implement cooperative marketing campaigns for local businesses targeting local people and other audiences
- Organise 'shop locally' trade promotions to increase customer support of local businesses

**Events**

- Coordinate the development of an annual events calendar to ensure maximum benefit and to prevent duplication
- Assist and/or manage the development, organisation, promotion and evaluation of events
- Enhance existing key town events

**Business development**

- Conduct or contract research into indicators of business activity. Monitor these and provide reports to businesses
- Create and strengthen opportunities for expansion of local businesses
- Initiate activities that will encourage new businesses to relocate to the area and the development of new industries to improve business mix e.g. business prospectus
- Provide information and act as a referral for those seeking business advice or services
- Encourage the development and transfer of business skills amongst the community through training and other activities
- Assist in the implementation of business and/or customer service awards
- Coordinate the undertaking of a Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP) survey, and assist in the implementation of results
- Conduct business networking meetings

**Physical design and image**

- Promote improvements that will enhance the physical appearance and design of the area to businesses, property owners and the community
- Implement projects which recognise the importance of heritage to town character
- Seek support and funding for design initiatives

**Town centre management**

- Help improve the presentation and upgrading of the town centre through cleaning, landscaping and capital works by liaising with Council, traders, property owners, businesses and community organisations
- Supervise security contracts
- Arrange the setting up, dismantling of decorations and other displays around the centre
- Develop cooperative marketing initiatives for the retail sector
- Develop and implement business development strategies e.g. retailers training

**Tourism**

- Work with the local Tourism Association to implement tourism related projects specified in the Strategic Plan which may include:
  - developing and managing marketing activities or cooperative marketing campaigns
  - assisting in the development of an appropriate mix of tourism accommodation, attractions and experiences
  - conducting or contracting research into tourism markets, and tourism business activity indicators and disseminate this research
  - assisting with the identification, design and development of new infrastructure projects to support tourism activities
  - encouraging the development or transfer of business skills amongst tourism operators through training and other strategies.





## Additional Selection Criteria

### **Building support, networks and alliances**

- Ability to develop networks and form alliances
- Experience in working with community groups
- Ability to work effectively with retail and tourism business and property owners
- Ability to liaise effectively with Council, relevant government agencies and funding bodies

### **Oral and written communication skills**

- Experience in promotional writing, including media releases, articles and promotional publications
- Plain English and business writing skills including preparing reports, minutes, submissions and proposals
- Ability to 'sell' the program to the media and act as a public spokesperson
- Ability to run effective meetings and facilitate outcomes

### **Professionalism and efficiency**

- Ability to schedule own work, manage time, use initiative, work unsupervised, make decisions and solve problems
- Ability to present well and deal with the public in a courteous and professional manner

### **Leadership, supervision and team work**

- Strong interpersonal skills including the ability to communicate, negotiate and resolve conflict
- Ability to motivate and mould a group into a team
- Ability to work effectively as a team member
- Ability to supervise, train and delegate

### **Training and research**

- Experience in developing, delivering and commissioning training
- Knowledge of research methodologies
- Ability to conduct or contract research

### **Management and administration**

- Computer skills
- Strong organisational and administrative skills
- Experience in setting up or improving office systems and processes

### **Financial management**

- Experience in financial management and account keeping
- Experience in developing budgets
- Knowledge of financial management software
- Ability to compile and interpret financial reports

### **Planning**

- Ability to identify and analyse information for strategic planning purposes
- Experience in strategic planning in a consultative environment

### **Marketing and promotion**

- Marketing skills and experience
- Experience in developing cooperative marketing campaigns

### **Fundraising**

- Knowledge of potential funding sources for community economic development
- Proven track record in securing funds from sponsors and other government or private funding programs

### **Project management**

- Knowledge and experience of project management and evaluation of projects, including project planning tools and methodologies

### **Events**

- Event management skills, experience and possibly qualifications

### **Business development**

- Knowledge of business analysis research and business trends
- Knowledge and understanding of business operations and investment issues
- Skills in merchandising and display

### **Physical design and image**

- Understanding of the principles of streetscape design and heritage

### **Town centre management**

- Experience in shopping centre management and/or marketing

### **Tourism**

- Knowledge and understanding of tourism business operations
- Knowledge of information sources about local, regional and national trends in tourism.

**The selection process**

There are three important components that the committee must take into consideration in selecting a coordinator:

1. Assessing the written job application and other materials supplied by the applicant
2. Conducting the interview
3. Checking references.

**Written job application**

Potential applicants should be encouraged to contact the advertised contact person to talk about the job and obtain written background material, such as the position description, Strategic Plan, and any other information that will give them a feel for the job. Well informed applicants are more likely to:

- submit appropriate and relevant applications
- ensure that interviews are focused and effective.

All candidates who show that they meet the essential criteria in their written applications should be interviewed. If no candidates meet the essential criteria you may need to:

- readvertise
- re-think the job description – is what you are asking realistic? and/or
- throw the net wider by advertising in more locations, and/or
- revise the advertisement to make it more appealing.

**Interviews**

The interview clarifies and investigates the information in the written job application. For the interviewers it provides the information they need to select a coordinator. A meeting of the panel beforehand to discuss the interview process is valuable because it:

- focuses the interviewers on the position description, selection criteria and relevant questions
- ensures all the selection panel share the same understanding about criteria and weighting of each
- is a forum to bring out and resolve personal likes and dislikes, prejudices and unconscious biases before the interview.

At the end of the interviews, you should have formed an opinion about which candidates best fulfil the essential selection criteria. The extent to which they fulfil desirable criteria then becomes a way to choose between candidates.

**Referees**

Conclusions reached at an interview should be double checked by speaking to applicant's referees. This is also a way to select between candidates who had equally strong written applications and interviews.

It is important to give referee statements a reality test by having someone with experience talk to the referees. For consistency and fairness, develop a list of questions and nominate one of the interviewers to contact all the referees of candidates who are being considered for appointment.

**Tip**  
 Not all selection criteria can be covered in an interview. Some facts may be set out in the written application. Others, such as personal qualities, may emerge when you contact the applicant's referees.





## Steps for recruitment

Each committee will need to develop its own process for recruitment. Here is one committee's steps for recruitment which may be a useful guide.

1. The committee agrees on the position description, conditions and remuneration
2. The advertisement is written by the committee and placed in appropriate media – local, regional or state papers. (See sample advertisement on page 15.)
3. Selection panel is formed. They then:
  - choose their convenor
  - decide on the interview process
  - formulate questions to ask applicants
  - acquaint themselves with anti-discrimination laws
  - decide if they will have an eligibility list ie. a list of candidates that are suitable for the job. (If the first is unable to take up the position or leaves within a relatively short time of commencing in it, the job is offered to the next on the list).
  - decide what they will do if they cannot agree about an appointment, e.g. majority vote, a second interview or another method.
4. Potential applicants are sent the position description and background information, such as the Strategic Plan
5. Written applications are considered by all of panel and culled according to selection criteria to form a short list of applicants to be interviewed
6. The short-listed applicants are contacted and interview times arranged. Interviewees are encouraged to bring relevant samples of their work to the interview
7. Letters are sent to unsuccessful applicants
8. Interviews of short listed applicants are held
9. Referees of interviewees considered appropriate for the job are contacted
10. Selection panel convenes to decide on successful applicant – discussion is based on written application, interview and referees' statements
11. A verbal offer is made to the selected applicant – if accepted, a written offer should follow.
12. After acceptance, a letter sent to unsuccessful applicants on interview short list.

### Please note:

**If the position is part-funded by DSRD** then approval must be sought for the advertisement and position description from the Department prior to advertising the position (step 2). The advertisement should acknowledge DSRD's financial contribution to the position. **A DSRD officer is to be involved** in step 3, step 5 (this should be discussed with the DSRD officer participating on the selection panel) and steps 8, 9 and 10 from the above list.

## Anti-discrimination

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment. All people must be treated equally. This means a committee must observe equal access and fairness in:

- how it advertises a job
- the way interviews are conducted and documented
- how decisions about hiring are made.

Decisions made in recruiting a coordinator must only be based on the applicants' abilities to do the job as expressed in the selection criteria and not on any other factor.

## Some advice about interviews

### Forming the interview panel

- Interview panels typically consist of the committee chairperson, a representative of the sponsoring body, a representative of stakeholders, eg. a business person and/or community member from the committee, and a DSRD staff member, if the Department is funding the position. The sponsoring organisation may provide the convenor.
- It is desirable to have both male and female interviewers.

### Before the interview

- All interviewers are provided with all written applications and they cull these according to the selection criteria. The chairperson records a summary of the reasons for either interviewing or not interviewing each candidate
- A short list of applicants to be interviewed must be agreed to by all interviewers. The interview panel determines the number of interviewees



- All interviewers contribute to the development of and must agree to the list of interview questions. Questions should be open-ended – inviting more than yes/no answers. They must also relate directly to the selection criteria
  - The interview questions are distributed to the interview panel and any issues about them clarified
  - A rating system based on the interview questions and the selection criteria should be agreed to beforehand by all interview panel members
  - A private interview room with unthreatening seating arrangements should be found. There should be someone to receive the interviewees and direct them to a place to wait.
- At the end of the interview, the convenor asks if the applicant has any questions, provides the answers, explains the next steps (for example, when a decision is likely to be made and how the applicant will be informed). He or she also thanks the interviewee and shows them out
  - The convenor will need to be ready to answer questions about pay, conditions, or the nature of the position (refer to the section *Answering applicants' questions*)
  - In between interviews and at the end of all interviews, the convenor, with the selection panel summarise points about each interviewee – noting the degree to which they fulfil the selection criteria. This with the referee statements forms justification for the job offer.

### The interviews

- All interviews should last for the same length of time (30-45 minutes is suggested), with a break between interviews for a discussion among the panel
- At the beginning of the interview, the convenor of the interview panel, generally the chairperson, welcomes the interviewee, puts them as much at ease as possible, introduces the panel and explains the interview procedure
- The same questions and same procedure should be followed for each interview
- The first question is generally a broad one which allows the interviewee to be expansive and 'find their feet' in the interview setting

### After the interview

- The convenor must be ready to handle enquiries from unsuccessful applicants seeking feedback on why they didn't get the job. Your selection panel's notes on each applicant at the cull or interview stage will help provide the answers.

## Sample interview questions

- Please tell us why you have applied for this position.
- What is your understanding of the position?
- What is your understanding of Community Economic Development?
- What type of challenges do you think would be encountered in this position? How would you deal with them?
- What aspects of your employment background equip you for this position?
- Which of your skills do you believe would most assist you to achieve results in this position?
- How would you judge your success if you took on this job?
- This job requires teamwork. How do you foster teamwork?
- Describe a project that you have been involved in that required you to motivate others.
- Tell us about your organisational skills and how you manage your time.
- Briefly outline your experience in the preparing budgets and reports.
- Describe your approach to working with committees?
- How would you go about building community networks?
- What are the basic steps in coordinating or organising a promotion? How would you gauge if it was successful?
- What experience have you had in negotiating with organisations to gain their contribution/involvement in a project?
- How do you believe your skills in business management and/or strategic planning would assist you to achieve results in this position?
- Briefly outline your skills and experience with the tourism industry and individual tourist operators.
- Are there any matters you would like to raise?



## Answering applicants' questions

Some areas that the convenor may need to clarify for applicants are:

- salary and superannuation
- the employment contract
- annual leave and public holidays
- working hours, including policy on overtime, working on weekends and hours outside 9am to 5pm
- use of car/travel allowance
- accountability channels
- work location, office equipment and resources
- compulsory attendance at the Community Economic Development Conference and Regional Forums
- probation period (if any) and performance appraisal process.

This information should be contained in the coordinator's employment contract.



## Sample advertisement

### NORTHWOOD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Jointly funded by NSW Department of State and Regional Development  
and the Northwood Main Street Committee

**[sponsoring body logo]**

Applications are invited from enthusiastic and motivated persons for the position of Economic Development Coordinator for Northwood NSW. We are looking for a self-starter, motivator and team player who has an understanding of small business, marketing and promotion. The successful candidate will be able to liaise and negotiate with all sections of the community and have an ability to raise funds. A current driver's licence is required.

This is a *full-/part-time* position based on an average of XXX hours per week with remuneration ranging from XXX to XXX depending on skills and experience.

The Coordinator's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- *key responsibilities from the position description should be listed here \**

Northwood is a thriving community in the heart of one of Australia's most sought-after locations and was voted one of the top 10 places to live in 'Lifestyle' magazine. The successful applicant will appreciate the challenge of new development opportunities.

Details of required skills and experience and conditions of employment are in a Position Description available from Mr John Smith (Phone 02 112 3565). Specific enquiries should be directed to the Chairperson of the Northwood Main Street Committee Ms Joan Long (Phone 02 112 3579).

**Applications close: 5.00 p.m. Friday 14 July.**

Applicants should be marked confidential and sent to:

The Secretary, Northwood Main Street Committee  
PO Box A1  
Northwood NSW 2345

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*Northwood Main Street Committee is an equal opportunity employer and has a smoke-free workplace.*

\* Italicised information should be included or changed to suit your circumstances.



## Employment legislation

Employers who engage a coordinator as an employee must comply with requirements of state and federal legislation that cover employment. These are set out in this section. These requirements do not apply to coordinators who are employed as contractors.

While this information is correct at the time of publication, changes will occur. Check with the relevant government department to get the most up-to-date position. The relevant contact details are at the end of this module.

Another useful guide to employers wanting to know about conditions of employment and obligations under the NSW industrial legislation is the *Small Business Employer's Handbook* published by the NSW Department of Industrial Relations. Details are at the end of this module.



## PAYE tax

All employers are obliged to deduct tax instalments from all wages or salary payments paid to employees, ie. Pay As You Earn (PAYE) deductions. The Australian Tax Office can provide a schedule of rates for weekly, fortnightly or monthly tax deductions (see the *Contacts* section at the end of this module).

It is necessary to register as a 'group employer' with the Australian Taxation Office on its form.

If you are paying staff on a monthly basis, for example, the total tax instalments deducted from salary and wages, plus a signed remittance certificate must be sent to the Australian Tax Office or taken to the local post office.

When employees leave or at the end of the financial year, the appropriate paperwork must be sent to the Australian Taxation Office (the duplicate group certificate and the reconciliation statement). These forms are available from the Australian Taxation Office or the post office.

For contractors who are not operating a business in their own right, you may need to deduct tax and issue them with a group certificate as well. Check if this is necessary with the Australian Tax Office.

### Tips

When calculating tax deductions, include all overtime, penalty payments, allowances, and bonuses as well as payments for long service or holiday leave.

The employer is legally required under tax legislation to keep tax records for five years.



### Workers' compensation insurance

The employer is legally required to provide a safe and healthy workplace. The NSW WorkCover Authority regulates workplace safety and will help with legal obligations such as workers compensation insurance, rehabilitation procedures and ways to prevent workplace injuries.

All employers must have a current workers compensation policy with a licensed workers compensation insurer. The insurer calculates the premium on the basis of the overall wages bill and type of work being carried out.

#### Tip

The contact for the NSW WorkCover Authority is at the end of this module.

### Superannuation

Employers must make compulsory contributions to superannuation for full-time, part-time and casual staff under the federal Superannuation Guarantee Act 1992. The contributions must be paid into an approved fund, which complies with the Occupational Superannuation Standards Act.

There are a few exceptions to this requirement, for example, those over 65. Even so, if the employee is covered by an award check it first, because it might overrule this type of exemption. Check with the WorkCover Authority – contact details are at the end of this module.

#### Tips

New employees have the right to choose a superannuation provider.

A non tax-deductible levy can be imposed on employers that fail to contribute to superannuation for their employees, in lieu of superannuation payments. Avoid this costly penalty.



## Leave

### *Annual leave*

Full-time staff must take four weeks annual leave, which must be paid for by the employer. There are a number of leave provisions for full and part-time employees that are required under legislation such as Annual Holidays Act 1944 and the Annual Holidays Amendment Act 1984.

### *Parental leave*

Full and part-time employees with 12 months continuous service with an employer are entitled to **unpaid** maternity, paternity and adoption leave of up to 52 weeks under the NSW Industrial Relations Act. The employee is entitled to return to the same or a similar position.

#### **Tip**

Replacement employees during parental leave must be informed that the position is temporary.

More information about leave can be obtained from the NSW Department of Industrial Relations. (See *Contacts* section at the end of this module.)

## **Sick leave, study leave, compassionate leave and other forms of leave**

There are no laws about providing these types of leave. They are usually contained in awards.

However, it is customary after a qualifying period to grant:

- a certain number of paid sick days per year – a medical certificate is usually required for multiple sick days
- paid study leave – usually determined by the nature of the study and its applicability to the person's performance in their job
- compassionate leave for bereavement or illness in the family – usually a 'local' arrangement.





### Anti-discrimination legislation

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act makes it illegal to discriminate on grounds of race, sex, marital status, physical impairment, age and sexual preferences in employment and access to goods or services and other areas. The Act aims to promote equality of opportunity and the benefits of diversity in our society.

Employers and employees also need to be aware of Federal legislation about discrimination in the workplace. These include the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986, Affirmation Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act 1986, and Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

#### Tip

Direct queries on:

- NSW legislation to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board
  - Federal legislation to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- (See *Contacts* section at the end of this module)

### Occupational health and safety

Occupational health and safety is about developing safe systems. Employers are responsible under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees, contractors and volunteers, as well as visitors to the workplace. Employees and volunteers also have an obligation to support these requirements by adopting safe behaviour and reporting hazards.

The employers' responsibility includes reducing injuries, incidents and disease by examining:

- the way work is done – for example, setting guidelines about lifting weights and providing information about repetitive strain injury (RSI)
- the machines and equipment that people use – for example, screen guards for computers or ergonomically sensible furniture
- the work environment – for example, taking measures on excessive noise or passive smoking.

Employees who have health and safety concerns must raise them with their employers. If they do not receive satisfaction, they may approach the WorkCover Authority to inspect the workplace. (See *Contacts* section at the end of this module.)

#### Tip

If employers fail to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, they can face large fines.

## A sample employment contract (see next page)

An employment contract is a written agreement between the employer and the employee. A contract is highly recommended because it:

- sets out clearly the work agreement at the outset of employment
- avoids confusion and mis-perceptions about the job and its conditions.

A sample employment contract is provided as a guide. It should be adapted to suit your circumstances.

#### Tip

The employment contract must include state and federal requirements on employees (refer to the Employment legislation section in this module).



**SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This employment contract is between \_\_\_\_\_ [the employer] and \_\_\_\_\_ [the coordinator], hereinafter referred to as the employer and the coordinator.

**1. The position title**

*(Insert position title here)*

**2. Period of employment**

The employment contract runs from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ commencing on the above date.

The contract may be renewed for \_\_\_\_ months depending on the availability of further funding and satisfactory performance in the position.

There will be a *(insert period)* month probationary period from the above date. At that time performance will be reviewed by a formal performance appraisal. If performance is satisfactory, the appointment will be confirmed.

**3. Termination of the contract**

This contract may be terminated before the contract term by:

- the coordinator giving one month’s notice in writing
- the employer giving one month’s notice in writing, or one month’s salary in lieu of notice
- the employer without notice if the coordinator commits a serious breach of the Code of Conduct.

The employer’s disciplinary procedures, process for appeals and grievance procedures are set out in Appendix A. *(This should be developed by the committee and included with the contract).*

**4. Duties**

The coordinator will carry out a work plan comprising priority, activities and projects specified in the Strategic Plan under the direction of the *(your committee or sponsoring body’s name)*.

The coordinator will undertake the responsibilities outlined in the position description (in Appendix B) and implement the work plan to agreed target dates and level of performance.

The coordinator is required to conform to the employer’s Code of Conduct.

The coordinator is required to conform to the provisions of the association’s constitution. *(If applicable in your committee’s case).*

**5. Supervision and performance appraisal**

The coordinator will be under the direct supervision of (nominate a person).

The coordinator is required to submit a written report on progress at the monthly committee meetings.

Further performance reviews will take place every *(insert period)* months after the initial confirmation of appointment. If part funded by DSRD, the performance of the coordinator will be assessed by the ‘Coordinator and Program Performance Review’ form at the end of the *Monitoring and Evaluation* module.

**6. Remuneration**

The current gross salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per annum, paid *(by cheque/in cash/by direct bank transfer)* at the rate of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month/fortnight. The salary comprises wage and superannuation contribution.

The salary will be reviewed annually at the anniversary of the commencement of service.

**7. Hours of work**

The normal working week will be \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week, spread over \_\_\_\_\_ days.

The coordinator will be required to work flexible hours. For example, they may need to attend meetings or functions outside business hours, or work in excess of the hours stipulated above per week to complete projects. When this occurs, the coordinator is entitled to take time in place of the extra hours worked (time in lieu).

The hours of work must be logged and arrangements for using hours in lieu must be agreed in advance with *(name of the supervisor)*.

**8. Public holidays**

The coordinator is entitled to be paid for public holidays that fall on the working days that have been agreed with the employer.

**9. Annual leave**

The coordinator is entitled to a proportion (on a pro rata basis) of four weeks’ annual paid leave at the end of 48 weeks of service. The proportion of leave entitlements should be equivalent to their full- or part-time status.

The coordinator and the employer will reach mutual agreement about when annual leave will be taken.

Leave must be taken in the year that it is accrued unless agreed by the employer.

The coordinator will be paid for their entitlement before they commence it. They are also entitled to 17.5% leave loading *(if the award or agreement specifies this)*.

Time in lieu which is attached to annual paid leave does not attract a leave loading.

Any unused annual leave remains an entitlement when the employment of the coordinator is terminated.



**10. Sick leave**

The coordinator is entitled to *(insert number)* paid sick days for the twelve month period commencing on the above date. Another *(insert number)* days paid sick leave may be taken for each of the subsequent twelve month periods, beginning on the anniversary of this contract. Unused paid sick leave may accrue for use in subsequent twelve-month periods. Absences of two days or more must be supported by a doctor's certificate.

**11. Compassionate/special leave**

If the employer agrees, the coordinator is entitled to up to two days compassionate/special leave in any six-month period of employment in the event of death, serious illness or emergency related to immediate family members. Lesser amounts of paid leave may be granted for other personal reasons at the discretion of *(the supervisor's name)*.

**12. Expenses**

All travel expenses will be met by the employer. The coordinator will be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary out-of-pocket expenses arising from the performance of his or her duties. Documentation for the expense must be provided in all cases. Expenditure of this type above the value of \$\_\_\_\_\_ must be approved in advance by *(the supervisor's name)*.

**13. Use of motor vehicle**

If the coordinator is required to use his/her motor vehicle, he/she will be reimbursed at the rates *(specify rates)* for travel allowance.

**14. Workers' compensation, superannuation and occupational health and safety**

The employer will take out workers' compensation insurance for the coordinator from an approved insurer, and further undertakes to provide an environment which conforms to the occupational health and safety standards set by the NSW WorkCover Authority. The employer is also responsible for paying compulsory superannuation at the set national rate.

**15. Location of employment**

The coordinator will work from *(specify building or office)* at *(street address)*.

**16. Equipment**

The coordinator will have the use of the following equipment at their place of employment:

- Computer and relevant software
- Phone and facsimile
- Photocopier

Other equipment may be provided as the need arises and funds permit.

**17. Administrative support**

At this stage no administrative support will be provided. It is possible that voluntary support may be forthcoming and that funding may provide for administrative support for particular projects.

**18. Attendance at Community Economic Development Conference**

Attendance at the Department of State and Regional Development's annual Community Economic Development Conference and Regional Forum is compulsory. Other training and development opportunities will be determined as part of the performance appraisal process.

**19. Variations to the agreement**

This agreement can be changed or extended in writing if signed by both parties.

Signed for an on behalf of *(insert employer representative name)*

Chairperson	Witness

Signed for an on behalf of <i>(insert coordinator's name)</i>	
Coordinator	Witness

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20( ).



# Setting up the coordinator

## Location

Coordinators are often located with a sponsoring organisation, such as the local Council, business association or development corporation. The advantages are:

- resources such as premises, computers, fax and phone can be shared
- there are opportunities to work closely on related projects, an arrangement that can improve results and avoid duplication of effort
- the coordinator can keep in touch with decision makers and influencers and get advice and information readily
- there is access to other resources, such as the organisation's databases, library, etc.

There are also similar benefits to having the office in organisations that have compatible objectives, such as a community centre, a business enterprise centre, an employment centre or a community group.

But wherever the office is located, ideally it must:

- make the coordinator visible
- be in an area where the coordinator can get out and see people, 'walk the talk'
- be part of the community so the coordinator can keep up with what is going on
- have access for members of the community who are mobility impaired.

### Tip

A centrally located shopfront is ideal for the Coordinator's office. It can be used for displays, meetings and entice passers by with promotional materials and publications on the program.

A vacant shop front in the centre of the retail area presents the opportunity for free or discounted rental. The landlord would of course be acknowledged as a program sponsor.

## Case study: the Kempsey Uptown Downtown office

The Kempsey Main Street Program office, called Uptown Downtown because it serves both central and west Kempsey, aims to be a welcoming place for the whole community. It is centrally located in the main retail area in Kempsey on a busy corner close to the Pacific Highway and the Clyde Street Mall. A generous local property owner has donated the use of the premises rent free for four years.

The all-glass shopfront shows the program name, logo and the coordinator and president's contact numbers. Two large boards display lots of photos of local people taken at festivals and promotions. These always attract attention from passers by and many people come in for a closer look. The office encourages this with chairs, a coffee table and endless free tea and coffee.

The phone, photocopier, facsimile, computer and printer are also available to the local community as a resource. (Although on Mondays the office is closed to visitors to allow the coordinator to complete press releases, reports or submissions). At other times groups can use the office as a meeting space.

The Uptown Downtown program has made the shopping precinct friendlier as well. Savages Lane, a nearby main pedestrian link in the business and retail part of town was previously uninviting and unsafe. By raising money through raffles (for example the first mulberry pie of the season) Kempsey Uptown Downtown was able to buy large boards and the local hardware shop donated paint for murals to decorate the lane.

Now twenty two paintings by young people, school children and local artists, including a number from the local Aboriginal community, brighten up the thoroughfare. An assistant from the Uptown Downtown office does a regular 'graffiti beat' with a specially painted trolley to keep the murals and the area in top shape. Uptown Downtown is now lobbying Council to complete the facelift by laying pavers and Northpower to install extra street lighting. A photo of the once unpleasant lane now graces the front cover of the Telstra North Coast white pages telephone directory!



## Physical environment

Because the office is the shop front of the program and a window into its soul, an uncared for or poorly presented space sends the wrong message.

The office does not have to be expensive or glamorous, but it should be welcoming, functional and use all opportunities to display what the program is about.

Ideally, it should have a private space for one or two people to meet, and a larger meeting room that can also be used as a command centre for activities for volunteers, such as mail outs and preparations for events.

The question of the coordinator working from home needs to be resolved. On occasions, a coordinator will need to have a block of uninterrupted work time for an important project such as a funding proposal. This will need to be balanced with the responsibility of the coordinator to be visible and available to the public.

Security is an issue. Personnel and other records and equipment need to be secure. Develop a system to back up computer information and a policy about keys and access. If meetings go late into the night, security of the premises and personnel needs to be considered.

### Tip

Send positive messages about the program by using the office as a promotional area with publications, posters and displays on the program.

## Equipment

Scrimping on equipment and resources may save money but this is a false economy as it can severely impair a program's effectiveness. For example, a substandard computer will not be capable of running your financial spreadsheets. If the coordinator has limited access to a phone and fax machine, their ability to carry out important communication strategies will be curtailed.

Professionalism of the program is important so the committee and coordinator should set priorities for expenditure on equipment and reassess these regularly. They will also need to investigate sponsorship and other funding sources for these tools. It is suggested that a coordinator needs the following equipment to operate effectively:

- a computer and printer
- a phone and answering machine
- easy access to a photocopier
- a mobile phone
- the use of a vehicle or reimbursement for the use of their private vehicle.

### Tip

You need to spend money to make money. Inadequate equipment can severely impair a program's effectiveness.

## Budgeting

Module 2 in this series, *Financial management and reporting*, provides a budget template for setting up and funding a coordinator.

The 'Coordinator management budget' in the spreadsheets identifies the expenses that are likely to be incurred for one year, and also allows these to be calculated for three years. The equipment budget is also a guide to the type of equipment a coordinator will need. By completing these spreadsheets you will see the cost of setting up the coordinator, their running expenses, and the cost of management and operational time, as part of the whole program.

However, keep in mind that only part of the coordinator's salary is included in the 'Coordinator management budget' – the amount of time they spend on management and operational activities. The rest of the coordinator's time may be allocated across six project budgets.

### Tip

Read Module 2, *Financial management and reporting* and use the spreadsheets it contains as a guide to identifying and costing your coordinator's needs.



# The coordinator in action

## A work plan

A work plan contains a series of actions or tasks that flow from the priorities of the Strategic Plan. It guides the work that the coordinator does every day – it creates his or her ‘to do’ list. Coordinators can suffer from overload. One way to counter this and to manage expectations, is for the committee to help the coordinator to prioritise management activities and projects. This keeps the committee abreast of what the coordinator is doing and gets everyone to focus on what is realistically achievable.

Even so, a coordinator’s work plan will always have a number of actions which are being implemented at the same time. Some project management tools will help you develop a work plan. For example, breaking down actions into tasks and Gantt charts will help with scheduling. (See the *Project management* module in this series.)

The budget templates in the *Financial management and reporting* module in this series are another useful tool to help you identify sources of income and project costs.

It is useful if the coordinator distinguishes between ongoing activities (which tend to be management and operational) and projects (which have both finite time frames and budgets).

A simple example of a typical work plan sheet used by one coordinator for the ongoing management activity of promotion is shown below.



<b>Action: Complete a promotional brochure</b>			
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Time</b>
1. Collect quotes for design and printing and submit to committee for approval	22 May	–	3 hours
2. Research content with Historical Society and Tourism Association	31 June	< \$1000	1 week
3. Identify photographs from residents and Tourism Association	3 June	–	3 hours
4. Write brochure text	10 June	–	3 hours
5. Circulate text to committee for comment	17 June	–	1 week
6. Organise design for brochure with designer including adaption of visual identity – deliver photos and text	18 June	–	1 hour
7. Obtain chairperson’s approval for brochure proofs	25 June	–	1 hour
8. Deliver proofs to printer, pay deposit and sign release	25 June	\$200 deposit	1 hour
9. Organise delivery from printers	8 July	\$30	2 hour
10. Organise volunteers for mailout/drop off to Visitor Information Centre, Council, businesses, tourism operators and database enquiries	15 July	\$200 postage	1 day

### Keeping records and reporting

Information management is the umbrella term for the process of gathering and using information to improve the performance of a program.

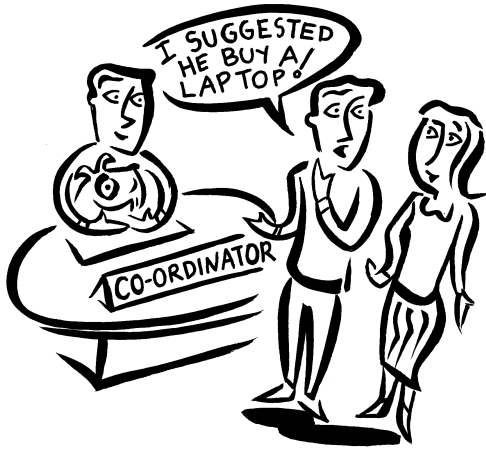
A coordinator is likely to use information for three main purposes:

- 1. Strategic planning and policy making
- 2. Evaluating the program and individual projects
- 3. Meeting operational needs and accountability requirements.

The first two uses of information will be covered more fully in two other modules in this series: *Collaboration and strategic planning* and *Monitoring and evaluation*.

Here, the focus is on the third use: recording, processing and reporting information for operational and accountability purposes. There are six main types of information in this category. These are records of:

- 1. Contacts and their details, e.g. phone, address, etc.
- 2. Actions and achievements
- 3. Policy decisions
- 4. Budgets and finances
- 5. Human resources and personnel matters
- 6. Systems and procedures.





## Types of reporting for operational and accountability purposes

	You can use it for:	You can gather it from:	You can record it in:
<b>1. Records of contacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct mail activities and telemarketing</li> <li>• A vital resource for many communication strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone calls, mail, meetings, contacts, research, ticket purchase records, the Internet (e.g. businesses in your area with websites)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A card index</li> <li>• A database including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– members</li> <li>– useful contacts and resource people</li> <li>– businesses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2. Records of action taken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting the committee know that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the programs being run according to the broad directions of the Strategic Plan and project plans</li> <li>– legal and accountability requirements are being met</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Fulfilling the requirements of funding bodies to report on progress</li> <li>• As source material for publicity about achievements</li> <li>• Answering criticisms and mis-information about the program</li> <li>• Retaining corporate memory – the “footsteps” and learning of previous members is retained after those involved have moved on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee meeting minutes</li> <li>• The coordinator’s work plan and daily records</li> <li>• Media clippings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A file containing minutes of meetings</li> <li>• A file containing reports delivered to the committee and public meetings and sent to funding bodies</li> <li>• A media reports file</li> </ul>
<b>3. Records of policy decisions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing a new coordinator, committee member or other participants about how the committee and program chooses to operate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes, especially of the AGM</li> <li>• Existing policy documents</li> <li>• Relevant government department documents, e.g. Department of Gaming and Racing’s <i>Charitable Fundraising Guidelines</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A policy folder or manual so that policies and changes to them are kept in one location for ready reference</li> <li>• A new version of the constitution (if it is a change approved at an AGM)</li> </ul>
<b>4. Budgets and financial records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting the committee know the financial position so they can meet their financial management obligations</li> <li>• Demonstrating to the community and funding bodies that the program’s finances are healthy and their management is above board</li> <li>• Day-to-day tracking of expenditure</li> <li>• Meeting legal requirements, e.g. of the <i>Incorporated Associations Act</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excel budget spreadsheets (see <i>Financial management and reporting module</i> in this series)</li> <li>• Accounting software packages, e.g. <i>MYOB, Quickens</i></li> <li>• Paper-based accounts, e.g. general ledger, records of income and payments</li> <li>• Treasurer’s reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A file containing the treasurer’s reports</li> <li>• A file of annual financial statements</li> <li>• A ‘budgets’ file</li> </ul>

Their uses, sources and some record-keeping methods for each are outlined on pages 25 and 28



	You can use it for:	You can gather it from:	You can record it in:
<b>5. Human resources and personnel records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that terms of the employment contract are known and observed</li> <li>• Ensuring that the chairperson and committee meet their legislative requirements as employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinator contract</li> <li>• Payroll, superannuation, taxation and workers' compensation insurance payments</li> <li>• Appropriate industrial awards (if any) and legislation</li> <li>• Performance appraisals and training records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate files.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Records of systems and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring volunteers, assistants, new coordinators and committee members are given an idea of 'how things are done'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coordinator documents the established procedures for the key tasks that continually arise, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– getting approvals for expenditure, travel allowance, etc.</li> <li>– conducting mailouts</li> <li>– membership drives, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folder for procedures.</li> </ul>

**Tips**

It is important to remember that records remain the property and are the responsibility of the sponsoring organisation. Financial records must be kept for five years.

Don't forget to keep the Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) Client Manager in the loop about progress, achievements and issues.

All records related to funding applications through the Main Street/Small Towns Program must be retained by the applicant and made available to DSRD if requested.

One coordinator made recording and reporting easier by:

- keeping a record of phone calls, noting date called, his/her details and subject
- keeping her 'to do' lists as records of action taken
- compiling a list of achievements every week.



## Software, databases, filing systems and report writing

To effectively store and use information, a coordinator requires three skills:

1. Use of software and databases
2. Developing and using of filing systems
3. Writing reports.

### Tip

A good database increases efficiency and lets you reap the benefits of direct mail and telemarketing.

### Software and databases

Software such as *MYOB* or *Quickens* can help you develop and store records. It is important to ensure this and other computer-based information is managed well. Backing up weekly and storage of discs off site should also be considered.

A number of simple, easy-to-use database software packages are available. An investment in the right software, help from an expert, if needed, and a volunteer (hopefully) to help with data entry, will make your program much more professional. Main Street/Small Towns programs need to be competitive, especially in terms of generating funds.

### Tip

Don't delay setting up a filing system, otherwise you may drown in paper.

### Filing systems

For top filing systems you can't do better than visit your local bureaucracy. A government department (local, state or Federal) or community organisation (such as a community resource centre) may be willing to show you how their filing system works. Setting up a system increases efficiency as you can put your hands on what you need quickly and easily. File every day or every second day or the pile may get so big you'll be afraid to look at it.

### Writing reports

Reports should be short and use graphics to replace words, where possible. Copies should be circulated well before a meeting if you wish committee members to give it due consideration. Reports should be a resource which help people make informed decisions about action to be taken. They should contain issues and trends, an analysis and clear recommendations. For example, a report about a completed event should allow the reader to judge its success or otherwise, and give them enough information to know what factors may affect a future event and how it could be improved.

### Tips

The committee should determine a policy about intellectual property. For example, some funding applications may contain detailed proposals – should these be the property of the committee rather than the person who wrote it, vice versa or will their be joint ownership? Another example of an issue to be decided is the ownership of drawn, photographic or video images made by a coordinator during their terms of employment.

Use the 'Four key elements of a Main Street/Small Towns program' as a framework for your filing and reporting to DSRD. They are:

1. Collaboration and strategic planning
2. Business and economic development
3. Marketing and promotion
4. Physical design and image.



## Delegations and accountability

The committee must decide on those matters that a coordinator may handle without referring to the committee for a decision. Typically delegations concern:

- expenditure – how much a coordinator can spend at their own discretion
- agreements or contracts – what a coordinator can agree to without seeking approval
- contact with the media – the guidelines that exist for responding to issues that arise.

Policy decisions about these matters must be placed on file permanently and be readily available for reference. If a coordinator is still in doubt after consulting the policy, he or she is wise to check with the chairperson about delegations.





# Responsibilities of the employer to the coordinator

## Induction and orientation

The coordinator will need assistance for a period before becoming fully functional. Therefore, a planned induction process should start as early as possible.

The induction process should at least cover the following information about the program and how it operates.

### The program

- the values and objectives of the Main Street/Small Towns Program in general
- the values and priorities of the program in *this* location
- the history of the program so far including background on community groups, individuals and businesses – the local ‘politics’
- the planning process used
- the structure – the role of the committee, sub-committees and sponsoring organisation
- accountability and reporting requirements
- the political context of the program including federal and state programs
- ethical principles and Codes of Conduct
- legal aspects, including incorporation.

### How the program operates

- the personnel – meeting the committee, other staff or key members of the sponsoring organisation, Council or staff
- recording information – files and information systems
- office, equipment and other physical resources
- finances
- monitoring and evaluation
- appropriate protocols for speaking to people in elected or other positions of power.

Keep in mind that there are limits to what a person can absorb. It is important that the new coordinator is introduced to this huge bank of information in bite-sized chunks. They also need to receive it in different ways – not just a briefing by the chairperson, a whirl of hand shaking or by being handed a pile of written reports. They must be given the time to follow a structured path for getting up to speed which may include:

- interviews with key Council staff and stakeholders
- visits to businesses or sites
- time spent with another coordinator who can give them some guidance or act as a mentor
- briefings with DSRD staff
- observation of a program at work in another location
- time to read DSRD’s *Community Economic Development Guide* and these *Self help modules*.

A social event may be an appropriate welcome to the coordinator.

## Training and development

All employees are entitled to training and development opportunities. The committee should encourage the coordinator to take opportunities that will increase skills and knowledge that improve their ability to perform in the job.

Coordinator training should be structured. The selection criteria in the coordinator’s job description can be used as a skills development guide. The courses, seminars and conferences the coordinator attends should help them build competencies and grow in their role. Part of the performance appraisal process is aimed at identifying skills gaps, and developing a structured training and development program to address these.

The coordinator should have opportunities to keep up-to-date with recent developments in the field, eg. new programs and funding sources. The Department of State and Regional Development’s annual Community Economic Development Conference, regional forums and other training programs are valuable sources of this information and an opportunity for the coordinator to network with peers.

Three significant development opportunities are available to coordinators:

• **Mentoring**

Continuing contact, advice and support from a more experienced coordinator is an invaluable learning opportunity for someone who is trying to improve in their job. Mentoring might include the coordinator working with or observing their mentor, and/or the mentor providing on-the-job coaching for the coordinator. This opportunity is a source of ideas, resources and psychological renewal and avoids a new coordinator 'reinventing the wheel'.

• **Participation in a coordinator's network**

A coordinator's network allows those involved to exchange tested and new ideas for improving local programs. It also provides opportunities for coordinators to collaborate on combined projects which derive benefits from economies of scale.

• **Experiencing other programs in action**

Many coordinators across NSW have a 'specialty', e.g. telemarketing, event management, or cooperative marketing. Spending time with an expert to learn these skills is a valuable experience for coordinators which brings benefits to their local program.

As the coordinator gains more skills and experience, so does the community. The coordinator will in turn train others, increasing the skill bank of his or her assistants, committee members and volunteers.

Successful projects often create the need for additional program staff, as well as contribute to creating jobs in the community. This can lead to an increase in the level of community involvement in the economic development process and a more cohesive local approach to achieving future economic growth.



## Supervision

The coordinator works in a fluid work environment often without day-to-day supervision. There can often be pressure to meet conflicting expectations and demands from many sections of the community.

However, a coordinator is not completely alone. If employed by a Council or other body with paid full-time staff, the coordinator may report to a more senior person as their supervisor. In other circumstances, the chairperson of the committee takes on this role. In all cases, the supervisor and/or the chairperson must be aware of the stresses and strains of the position and assume the role of advocate and 'protector' of the coordinator. The aim is to keep the program on the course set by the Strategic Plan and help the coordinator stay focussed and avoid burn out.

The supervisor/chairperson plays a mix between a supervisory and supportive role by:

- making contact regularly between meetings
- checking progress the coordinator is making on projects
- following up on problems
- providing advice and support
- acting as a sounding board and giving direction if needed.

## Performance appraisal

While supervision is a day-to-day process, performance appraisal occurs at pre-determined intervals. The purpose of performance appraisal is to:

**Ensure accountability for work performance**

Performance appraisal evaluates whether tasks in the coordinator's work plan are being completed to agreed standards. It is an opportunity for a coordinator to review his/her own progress. It is also an occasion when a supervisor can give congratulations on achievements. Performance appraisal also assesses and clarifies required behaviours. It should make the coordinator's job easier because they are in no doubt as to what is required. Coordinators can also put realistic limits on expectations as well.



**Tip**

**Performance appraisals**

In conducting performance appraisals the supervisor/ chairperson should:

- **be objective** – not allow personal issues to intrude
- **do it** – don't put it off because of other demands and because appraisal can be time-consuming
- **appraise against the agreed tasks and behaviours** – use the Strategic Plan, position description, work plan and Code of Conduct as guides
- **be positive** – provide feedback aimed at identifying opportunities for development and improvement, not finding fault
- **be confidential** – use discretion and respect privacy, especially in keeping records.

**Provide development and training for the coordinator**

Performance appraisal is an opportunity for coordinators to identify their training and development needs, and evaluate the effectiveness of training and development undertaken during the appraisal period. Appraisal should guarantee a structured, positive program of skills development within the available budget.

**Enhance the coordinator's working environment**

Appraisal time is an opportunity for the coordinator to ask for the support and assistance that they need. Issues about work environment and work procedures can be identified and resolved to improve:

- communication
- the quality of supervision
- the coordinator's work satisfaction.

It is also a time when the question of salary adjustment can be discussed and some forward planning about leave can be done.

**Standards and ethics**

As well as being clear about the targets they must achieve in their work plan, the coordinator needs to know what is expected in terms of their behaviour. Also, the committee is safeguarded if it has a shared understanding about the appropriate behaviour for its members.

**Ethical principles**

Many organisations outline behavioural expectations in a code of conduct. The ethical principles in DSRD's Code of Conduct are relevant to those who work in the Main Street/Small Towns program. Some aspects which are easily adapted include:

- **respect for law**
- **respect for people**
  - treating others with proper regard to their rights and obligations
  - performing duties in a reasonable, responsible manner
  - ensuring decisions and actions are reasonable, fair, appropriate to the circumstances and based on all relevant facts
- **promoting confidence in the integrity of the program**
- **protecting the reputation of the program**

- **being responsive to stakeholders and the community**
- **using authority, resources and information only for the intended work-related purposes**
- **looking for ways to improve performance and achieve high standards.**

**Developing a code of conduct**

The committee will need to develop a code of conduct based on these or similar principles for members, the coordinator and others involved in the program.

Clear guidelines should be established in your code of conduct about:

- **Discrimination or harassment**

Under legislation employers have the responsibility of ensuring that the workplace is free of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of sex, physical appearance, mental status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment, sexual preference, religious, moral or political conviction or professional status.
- **Conflicts of interest**

These arise when a coordinator or committee member may be influenced, or could be perceived to be influenced by a personal interest, in carrying out his or her role. Conflicts of interest could be caused by:

- a financial interest in a matter which comes within the scope of the program
- holding personal attitudes or beliefs which affect impartial advice, decisions or behaviour
- other employment undertaken by the coordinator.

The chairperson should be made aware of potential conflicts of interest.

• **The use of facilities and equipment**

This could include private use of resources by the coordinator or committee members and by community or interest groups. Similarly, the appropriate use of the Internet should be determined.

• **Public comment by committee members and coordinator**

Before an issue warrants public comment, the committee must determine who may comment, on what matters, and in what way. These procedures need to be reviewed regularly, particularly in regard to contentious issues.



• **Other employment by the coordinator**

The coordinator should disclose secondary employment to the committee and DSRD, if funded. The coordinator should give first consideration to program work. Conflict of interest should also be considered before other employment is undertaken. Secondary employment must take place outside program working time.

• **The political neutrality of the program**

It is expected that strict impartiality is observed and that conflict of interest is avoided. If a coordinator in a program funded by DSRD runs for political office, the Department is to be informed immediately and the coordinator is to take a leave of absence from their position.

• **The use of sensitive or commercially confidential information**

Possessing information through the program must not prejudice decisions, or be used to cause harm to others or to gain improper advantage.

• **The receipt of gifts**

The committee must decide what value of gift may be accepted and by whom. Of course, gifts intended to influence behaviour in a certain way should not be accepted.

• **The sanctions which could be imposed if there is a breach of the Code**

These may range from a warning to dismissal of the coordinator or removal of a member from the committee. DSRD may seek reimbursement of funds and/or restrict the level of future funding available.

## Disciplinary procedures and dismissal

The *Sample employment contract* in this module suggests some conditions for the termination of an employment contract. The committee will need to develop its own disciplinary process and ensure that procedural fairness is observed in the case of dismissal.

The NSW Department of Industrial Relations provides some excellent information about managing the dismissal process, unfair dismissal and avoiding unfair dismissal claims at its website (see the *Contacts* section at the end of this module). You are strongly advised to read this material before beginning the process of recruiting a coordinator.



**Tip**

Your Code of Conduct tells people you deal with how you do business, how they can expect you to behave and how you expect them to do business with you.



# Contacts

## **Coordinator as employee or contractor?**

### **Australian Taxation Office**

#### **'Status of workers' brochure**

National enquiry number: local call cost, 13 28 66

Your local Australian Taxation Office listed in white pages phone directory

Website: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

## **Employment legislation**

### **Australian Taxation Office**

Your local Australian Taxation Office listed in white pages phone directory

Website: [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

## **WorkCover Authority of NSW**

### *Head Office*

400 Kent Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Phone (02) 9370 5000  
Facsimile (02) 9370 5999

### *Information Centre*

Phone 131050  
Facsimile (02) 9370 6102  
Website <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>

## **NSW Department of Industrial Relations (DIR)**

### *Head Office*

1 Oxford Street  
Darlinghurst NSW 2010  
PO Box 847  
Darlinghurst NSW 2010  
Phone (02) 9243 8888  
Facsimile (02) 9243 8771

### *Contact centre*

For the nearest DIR office  
Phone 132005  
Website <http://www.dir.nsw.gov.au>

## **Small Business Employers' Handbook (\$20)**

### *Available through:*

DIR Publications and Sales  
Phone (02) 92438774  
Facsimile (02) 9243877  
Email: [publication.sales@dir.nsw.gov.au](mailto:publication.sales@dir.nsw.gov.au)

## **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission**

### *Central Office*

Level 8 Piccadilly Tower  
133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney 2000  
GPO Box 5218  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Phone (02) 9284 9600  
Facsimile (02) 9284 9611  
Website: <http://hreoc.gov.au>