

# City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department Policies and Procedures for Volunteers

## Definitions

The **Parks and Recreation Director** is the staff member that regulates the use of volunteers and works with staff that supervises volunteers. The Director ensures that applications, job descriptions, manuals, trainings and policies are current. In addition, they prepare a year-end report that quantifies volunteer contributions to the department.

The **Parks and Recreation Staff** works directly with volunteers. They ensure that volunteers fill out an application, receive an orientation, and track their hours. The Parks and Recreation Staff works closely with the Parks and Recreation Director to organize volunteer recruitments, form program goals and collaborate on any work that requires volunteers.

## **I. GENERAL POLICIES**

### **1. Written Policy**

This document is designed to outline policies for the City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation volunteer services management. It pertains to Parks and Recreation volunteers, staff and other issues directly or indirectly affecting volunteer services. All Parks and Recreation volunteers and staff will comply with these policies and consult this document for policy direction. If an area is not addressed, the Parks and Recreation Director should give direction. This document is organized from general to specific policies with special attention to the department needs.

### **2. Role of Volunteers**

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond possible reimbursement for previously approved expenses, performs a task at the direction of, or on the behalf of, the City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the department before performance of the assigned task. Volunteers will not displace paid employees from their positions. The City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department accepts the services of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the organization. If a conflict between the organization and volunteer should arise, there are procedures outlined below that should be followed.

### **3. Volunteer Participation**

The City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department welcomes and encourages the assistance of volunteers in implementing services, the mission and goals of the organization. As members of the community, volunteers have a right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. In this sense, volunteering is one way for citizens to participate in their community. This "right", however, does not supersede the mission and policies of the City of Woodland Park. Therefore, volunteers agree that the organization may, at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the agency.

### **4. Safety**

Safety is of the highest priority for the City of Woodland Park. Volunteers must take proper safety precautions, anticipate unsafe circumstances and act accordingly to prevent accidents. All volunteers will be responsible for the safety of themselves, others, materials and equipment.

### **5. Anti-Discrimination/Harassment Policy**

It is the policy of the City of Woodland Park to provide a productive work environment and not to tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, volunteer, customer, or member of the public that harasses disrupts or interferes with another's performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. In addition, it is the policy of the City of Woodland Park to prohibit discrimination against volunteers or applicants for volunteer positions on the basis of race, national origin, religion, disability, pregnancy, age, military status, gender

or sexual orientation. Specifically, the areas of harassment, alcohol and drugs and absenteeism/tardiness are of particular concern to the City of Woodland Park.

- a. Harassment:** Harassment may be verbal, physical, visual or sexual. It may be general behavior or behavior targeted toward a specific individual or group of people. Harassment may occur regardless of whether the behavior was intended to harass.
- b. Alcohol and Drugs:** The City of Woodland Park is concerned about the health, safety, well being and satisfactory work performance of all volunteers. It is the City's position that the use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs can (1) seriously affect a volunteer's health and well being; (2) markedly reduce work performance; (3) be a source of potential danger to self, peers and the general public; (4) cause a loss of confidence by the public. Specifically, the City of Woodland Park volunteers may not purchase, possess, use, sell, manufacture or be under the influence of an illegal drug or alcoholic beverages while performing their volunteer duties. If a volunteer violates this policy they will be dismissed from their volunteer placement.
- c. Absenteeism/Tardiness/Dependability:** It is vital that volunteers arrive on time for all commitments and trainings. If a volunteer is unable to keep a commitment, they need to contact the Parks and Recreation Department in advance. Volunteers are required to attend all training programs. If a volunteer cannot attend a training or volunteer commitment, they need to contact the Parks and Recreation Department.

## **6. Workplace Conflict Policy**

It is the policy of the City of Woodland Park to expect workplace standard for volunteer behavior that is courteous and respectful, even in the event that conflicts arise among individuals in the workplace (i.e. staff, volunteers, customers, contract employees). This standard is intended to foster a workplace that values diversity and individuality among volunteers and provides supportive mechanisms for resolving workplace conflicts. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner in all interactions including those that involve a workplace conflict or disagreement.

## **7. Diversity**

The City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation is committed to ensuring that its mission and operations embrace the community which it serves. It actively encourages the community to participate fully and benefit fully from its services. The City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department is committed to equal opportunities among the members of the community and actively seeks diverse populations to serve as volunteers. Volunteers will be accepted without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, national origin or disability. In the case of volunteers with special needs, reasonable accommodations will be made.

## **8. Confidentiality**

While working with the City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department, volunteers might become knowledgeable of confidential information. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer.

## **9. Worker's Compensation**

Volunteers are not considered agents or employees of the City of Woodland Park. They are not eligible for worker's compensation if they are injured while performing their volunteer duties.

## **10. "Authorized Volunteer" – Government Immunity Act**

Under State Law, volunteers are considered "Authorized Volunteers". They are covered under the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act Section 24-10-101 and are subject to the applicable provisions of the Act. The Act does not cover willful and/or wanton behavior including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, racial or gender discrimination, drug and/or alcohol use.

## **11. Volunteer/Paid Staff Relations**

Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in upholding the mission and implementing the services of the City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff members, but are used to

augment services to the community. If uncomfortable relations develop between staff and volunteers, the Parks and Recreation Director should be contacted and the appropriate action should be taken.

## **II. SPECIFIC POLICIES**

### **1. Job Designs/Job Description**

All volunteer positions should have accurate job descriptions which reflect the job to the best possible degree. While job descriptions should be sufficiently flexible, they also need to be significant and meaningful to the organization, program participants and volunteers. These position descriptions should be reviewed and updated as programs and organizational needs change.

### **2. Health and Safety**

The safety of employees, the general public and volunteers shall receive first consideration in the performance of work. Accident prevention must be made a part of everyday operations. Safety is necessarily an integral part of every volunteer job. Parks and Recreation Department volunteers work with youth, people with disabilities, specialized equipment and the general public. In all instances, health and safety issues arise. Volunteers must be aware of any safety issues that are present during their volunteer placement.

### **3. Background Checks**

As a general rule, background checks are performed on volunteers that directly work with the public. More detailed background checks are performed on volunteers that work with vulnerable populations (e.g. people with disabilities, youth), with cash or in environments where security is of concern. Below are the types of background checks performed:

#### **a. Personal/Profession Reference Check**

All prospective volunteers must submit personal and/or professional references prior to acceptance as a volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request may not be accepted as a volunteer. The Parks and Recreation Director or Technician should perform these reference checks for any prospective volunteer who works with the public. If the references do not provide sufficient information, the Parks and Recreation Director should obtain additional reference information.

#### **b. Police Check**

All prospective volunteers may be required to submit to a police background check. Those volunteers that work with the public, cash or other secure environment will have a police background check performed. The cost of the check will be paid by the City of Woodland Park.

#### **c. Central Registry Check**

All prospective volunteers that work with youth may be subject to a central registry background check. These checks are performed to ensure the safety of the youth, volunteers and the Parks and Recreation Department. If an individual refuses to submit to a central registry check, they will not be accepted as a volunteer.

### **4. Development and Training**

Volunteers should be fully prepared to perform their volunteer duties as assigned. The Parks and Recreation Department has the responsibility to provide necessary training for satisfactory performance.

### **5. Volunteer Recognition**

The fulfillment of a commitment and the quality of work are excellent bases for volunteer recognition. Every program that uses volunteers should develop a plan to recognize and celebrate the efforts of the volunteer workforce.

### **6. Attendance Records**

All volunteers should maintain current records of hours they have donated to the organization. The Parks and Recreation Department should provide an attendance tracking system to the volunteers to assist in achieving this goal. In an effort to quantify the amount of time donated

to the City of Woodland Park Parks and Recreation Department by volunteers, it is important to track volunteer hours. Tracking hours enables the department to measure the impact of volunteer efforts. This impact is measured in both financial terms and in expanded services offered to the customer.

## **7. Volunteer Dismissal**

As stated above, volunteers serve at the sole discretion of the organization and can be dismissed from their placement without reason at any time. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the organization or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal.

### **a. Progressive Discipline**

Progressive discipline is a process through which a volunteer is warned or disciplined before being faced with the penalty of dismissal. It is progressive because each step is more serious than the previous. The first step is a **verbal warning** where the Parks and Recreation staff notifies the volunteer of the unacceptable action/behavior and gives them an opportunity to respond. If the action/behavior continues, the staff should issue a **written warning** which is given to the director of the department. This is followed by **disciplinary suspension** and finally **dismissal** if the unacceptable actions/behaviors do not stop.

### **b. Immediate Dismissal**

Volunteers may be discharged without warning. The Parks and Recreation Department has the right to request a volunteer to leave immediately. Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination;
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing volunteer assignment;
- Theft of property or misuse of organization's funds, equipment or materials;
- Lies or falsification of records;
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts;
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers;
- Failure to abide by organization's policies or procedures; or
- Unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department or the objective of the individual programs.

## **8. Conflict Procedures**

If a volunteer has a conflict, they should attempt to resolve it with their immediate supervisor. All complaints and questions should receive thoughtful consideration and will be discussed with the individual who raises them. The first attempt to resolve the conflict should be done verbally. If the conflict is not resolved, the volunteer should document the grievance and give a copy to the director of the department. If the complaint involves the immediate supervisor, the volunteer may talk to the director of the department who will determine the course of action.

## **9. Volunteer Records**

Certain information must be maintained concerning volunteers and their work for the organization. Volunteer records, current job descriptions, reference information, emergency contact information and any disciplinary action documentation will be maintained by the director of the department.

## **10. Working with Special Populations**

In some cases, volunteers work with children, youth, people with disabilities and other special populations. These volunteers must go through the proper background checks and training to be qualified to work with special populations. It is also expected of the volunteers to treat everyone equally regardless of an individual's background.

## **11. Participants in Parks and Recreation programs vs. Volunteers**

Individuals who participate in Parks and Recreation programs are welcome to become volunteers for the department.