SHAKOPEE
PARKS AND RECREATION

City of Shakopee Volunteer Use Manual

I. INTRODUCTION

This manual serves as a guide for staff who coordinate and engage with volunteers across carious programs and events. Volunteers are essential to the success of the City of Shakopee's programs, services, and facilities.

II. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mission and Philosophy

Volunteers contribute energy, enthusiasm, and talent that enhance the city's ability to serve residents. By participating in a wide range of projects and programs, volunteers foster a sense of ownership and pride in the community. The City of Shakopee recognizes the mutual benefit of this partnership and is committed to providing meaningful, accessible, and enjoyable volunteer opportunities.

Types of Volunteer Opportunities

- One-time events
- Seasonal or program-based support
- Ongoing roles

III. BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Eligibility Requirements

Volunteers are welcome from all backgrounds. Individuals must be at least 14 years old to volunteer independently. Volunteers under age 14 must have a supervising adult present. Background checks may be required for volunteers age 18 or older, depending on the assignment.

Orientation and Placement

Prior to their first shift, the volunteer should complete a short orientation and safety overview. This orientation should include:

- Role specific information

- Dress code
- Volunteer evaluation process
- Program contact information
- Safety considerations including location EAP,

IV. DETERMINING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Before requesting volunteers for a program or event, staff should take time to consider whether volunteer involvement is appropriate, beneficial, and manageable. Volunteers are not intended to replace staff, but rather to enhance programs, support logistical needs, and build stronger community connections.

When Should I Involve Volunteers?

Volunteers may be a good fit when:

- The program requires extra hands for set-up, tear-down, wayfinding, or guest interaction.
- The experience would be interesting or rewarding from a prospective volunteer's perspective.
- Involving residents supports a larger mission of engagement, inclusion, or civic pride.

If you're unsure, consider the following questions to help guide your decision:

> ***What kind of support does this program or event require?*** Is it physical help, administrative assistance, or extra presence for participant engagement and/or safety?
>
> ***Will involving volunteers improve the participant's experience or program quality?*** Would their presence allow staff to focus more on specialized tasks or customer service?
>
> ***Is this opportunity appealing from a volunteer's point of view?*** Does the role feel meaningful, active, or fun? Will it help volunteers feel connected to the city and its mission?
>
> ***How many volunteers are needed—and how did I determine that number?*** Consider your staff-to-volunteer ratio, the type of tasks involved, and the size or layout of your event.
>
> ***Will using volunteers help meet cost recovery goals or reduce operational costs?*** For fee-based programs, using volunteers for certain non-specialized tasks may increase efficiency.

Do volunteers need specific skills or characteristics to be successful in this role? Are there age requirements, physical activity levels, or soft skills like customer service needed?

When NOT to Involve Volunteers

While volunteers can enhance many programs, there are times when involving them may not be appropriate or beneficial. Staff should avoid using volunteers in the following situations:

- The task is only needed for a brief moment during a longer program and does not justify a full volunteer shift.
- Current staffing levels are sufficient to manage the program or event effectively.
- The task involves handling money, processing payments, or accessing sensitive financial information.
- The role requires operating city vehicles or heavy equipment.
- The volunteer would be expected to answer detailed questions about city policies, department procedures, or program rules that go beyond their assigned task.
- There is not enough time or capacity to properly train or supervise the volunteers.

V. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Sign-Up Process

Volunteer opportunities are shared through the city website, social media, newsletters, and outreach. Volunteers sign up through an online platform or by contacting the staff coordinator directly. Group sign-ups for schools, businesses, or clubs are also welcome.

Pre-Event Communication

A few days before their shift, volunteers receive a confirmation message with the following details:

- Date and time
- Meeting location and parking instructions
- Contact information for program supervisor on the day of
- Role description and expectations
- Dress code and/or gear requirements

Day-of Coordination

Upon arrival, volunteers check in at a designated spot. Staff supervisors greet them, review the day's tasks, and provide any needed supplies or instructions. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and share any concerns with staff throughout the shift. Staff should check in with the

volunteers frequently throughout their shift and provide breaks as appropriate. If paid staff have breaks throughout the day, the volunteers should them as well.

Feedback and Surveys

After events or recurring programs, volunteers may be asked to complete a brief online survey that will be communicated via email. Information collected from surveys will be leveraged to help staff identify what worked well and what could be improved. Volunteers may also opt in to receive updates about future opportunities.

VI. POLICIES & VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers play a vital role in delivering high-quality programs and services. To create a safe and respectful environment for all, the following expectations should be clearly communicated and consistently applied.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to act respectfully, follow staff direction, and treat all community members with kindness and professionalism. They should maintain appropriate boundaries, avoid disruptive behavior, and reflect the city's values in their interactions.

Attendance and Communication

Timely attendance helps ensure smooth operations. Volunteers who need to cancel should notify staff as early as possible. Frequent no-shows or late arrivals may affect future volunteer eligibility.

Dress and Appearance

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the activity and weather. For outdoor or active roles, closed-toe shoes are recommended. When provided, volunteers should wear identifying items such as T-shirts, vests, or name tags.

Safety and Risk Management

Volunteers will be trained in safety procedures relevant to their role. Any injuries, unsafe conditions, or concerns should be reported to staff immediately. Volunteers should not attempt any task that feels unsafe or unclear.

Harassment and Discrimination

The City of Shakopee is committed to a harassment-free, inclusive environment. Discrimination, bullying, or inappropriate behavior is not tolerated. Volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns to a staff supervisor or coordinator. Reports will be handled with care and confidentiality with partnership from the Human Resources Department.

Photography and Media

Volunteers may be photographed at public events for use in city materials. If a volunteer prefers not to appear in photos, they should notify staff prior to their volunteer assignment. Volunteers should not photograph participants unless they receive explicit permission from a supervisor.

ADA and Accessibility

The City welcomes volunteers of all abilities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. Volunteers needing accommodation should contact staff at least two weeks in advance of their shift.

Dismissal Policy

While rare, there may be situations where it is necessary to end volunteer service. This may include repeated absenteeism, unsafe behavior, or conduct that violates safety or efficacy of City programs or events. When possible, staff will work with the volunteers to resolve issues before ending the placement.

VII. REPORTING & EVALUATION

Volunteer hours are tracked annually to measure the overall impact of service on the organization. Each hour is valued at $34.79 (2024), based on the national rate established by Independent Sector and adjusted annually for inflation.

Volunteer performance is evaluated both informally and formally:

- Informal evaluations occur through ongoing feedback, including compliments, coaching, and small adjustments in performance. This often takes place during or immediately following an event or program.
- Formal evaluations may be conducted for ongoing or long-term positions. In these cases, volunteers are informed at the time of acceptance that their role will include a performance evaluation, and evaluation criteria are shared in advance. Criteria may vary by position but should be determined prior to extending the offer for the ongoing or long-term position.

Staff are also encouraged to reflect on the effectiveness of volunteers for their programs and events. Staff feedback helps determine whether volunteer roles should be repeated, adjusted, or expanded in the future, ensuring volunteer efforts are meaningful and aligned with organizational goals.