**Thank you for development of this handbook and for sharing it with other cities:**

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**Employee Volunteer Handbook**

This handbook has been developed to serve as a guide to your role and responsibilities in our volunteer program. Volunteer Services is here to support you and your volunteer. Thank you for thinking about engaging volunteers into your department.

# OVERVIEW

## City Manager Statement

*Dear City Employee,*

*As a staff member, you have the unique opportunity to increase work output and maximize resident’s dollars by developing meaningful relationships and fostering an environment for residents in the community to engage in volunteer opportunities. You can do all of this by considering what contribution a volunteer can have in any City project or event.*

*Edina has always utilized volunteers in some form or fashion and is hoping to cast a wider net by creating a solid volunteer program with the support of City staff. Through a formalized program, residents work side-by-side with City staff in a variety of programs and venues.*

*Establishing a volunteer program as an integral part of the City will help us extend City resources and offer additional services to the residents. Our residents are enthusiastic, skilled and committed to the City. Engaging them into a program to share their valuable time and skills will support staff efforts to stay focused on work plans and complete tasks that otherwise would have gone undone. While a volunteer program gives volunteers a chance to boost their skills, it also gives you, as an employee, a chance to learn new supervising skills.*

*I encourage you to take a look at ways a volunteer could enhance your job. Join your co-workers who have already discovered the benefits of utilizing volunteers can bring to the City and the community. Start the conversation with your supervisor and reach out to the Volunteer Services office that can help you recruit, screen and find you the right volunteer to meet your needs. The opportunities are endless.*

*Sincerely,*

*City Manager*

## Volunteer Services Mission

The City volunteer program creates and sustains a culture of community engagement throughout the City by supporting the utilization of volunteer contributions in impactful ways, while recognizing the value of volunteer and staff commitments.

## Volunteer Services Vision

The Volunteer Services department will build the capacity of citizen engagement through the development of meaningful service opportunities where residents can share their skills and talents. The Volunteer Services department will ensure volunteers are fully and effectively integrated into the City and supported by all staff members. The City volunteer program will be a key resource to residents, staff and City Council to support the mission and needs of the City.

## Volunteer FAQ

**Why should I utilize volunteers? What is the benefit?**

* Encourages community involvement as volunteers vote, write letters to the editor, attend town meetings, and have their own extensive networks
* Volunteers who feel valued, and understand the importance of the work they are doing can become a powerful positive constituency for your City and community
* There are many individual benefits to you, as well as benefits to the organization and community
* Volunteers can stimulate creativity and offer new ideas that give you a new perspective about your departmental needs
* Volunteers can lessen your workload (I would be very cautious with how this might be perceived, a) fear of staff being eliminated? b) reality is that volunteers take time for planning, supervision, etc – same as having staff. Maybe just remove that part of the statement and leave the second half?? , freeing you to do the things that you are specifically trained to do
* Qualified volunteers can handle aspects of your work that keep you from completing your higher level tasks what about highly skilled volunteers who can take on skill based opportunities/needs?

**How much time does it take to train a volunteer?**

In truth training a volunteer to do a task is very similar to training someone who is being paid. Up front you have to expend training time, but in a short time, you will be freed from time consuming tasks, and have time to focus on your priority tasks. See comments above

**Can a volunteer replace paid staff?**

While volunteers are an excellent support to staff they cannot replace the expertise of paid staff. Volunteers are supplemental to staff.

**Will a volunteer be as accountable as a staff person? Do they understand confidentiality and data privacy?**

Some volunteers will have prior work experience and knowledge of working with protected information. However, if they don’t Volunteer Services includes confidentiality training in orientation and can assist staff in providing a second level of training with the individual volunteer. All volunteers receive the same background check and training as a paid staff.

**Can volunteers be fired?**

Volunteers can be let go for a valid reason. If a volunteer has dependability or performance issues, or just isn’t working out as you’d envisioned you can contact the Volunteer Services department with your concerns to talk through the process. If the issue is job compatibility, the volunteer will be reassigned, but if it is a more serious concern the volunteer’s time with the City can be terminated.

**What if I need to adjust the service responsibilities listed on the service description?**

If the volunteer is expected to do things that are unrelated to the original description, the volunteer may feel the project was misrepresented and not want to continue the work while others might enjoy the challenge. If you want to adjust the role of the volunteer speak with the Volunteer Services department first.

**What is the most important thing to increase my odds for having a successful volunteer position?**

When volunteers start they will feel in the dark just as any new hire does. It is your job to help them understand their role in the project and how their contributions will help. Make them part of the team!

# VOLUNTEER SERVICES ROLE

## Role of Volunteer Services Department

The Volunteer Services department is here to help staff when it comes to involving volunteers into their department.

* Help staff create volunteer service descriptions or develop volunteer roles
* Recruit volunteers
* Interview and conduct talent assessments on applicants
* Maintain a database of existing and potential volunteers
* Conduct evaluations about volunteer and staff’s experiences
* Manage volunteer retention through recognition and acknowledgment efforts
* Address concerns and resolve volunteer issues
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## Volunteer Placement

Volunteer placements are determined by the volunteer’s skills, interests and abilities, and the City’s needs. If these factors are not in alignment, the potential volunteer may be declined or may be referred to another agency. Be assured that steps have been taken to ensure a successful volunteer placement for both the volunteer and the supervisor.

* There is a formal process to becoming a volunteer that begins with the potential volunteer completing a volunteer application.
* If the volunteer seems to be a match based on the application an interview is scheduled with the Volunteer Coordinator
* If the candidate appears promising at the time of the interview, he/she is invited to meet directly with a Department Supervisor
* After the volunteer is placed, but prior to the first day of service, he/she must undergo a criminal background check, and any other specific requirements of your department
* The volunteer is also given a Volunteer Handbook to read prior to their training.

# VOLUNTEER SUPERVISOR ROLE

## Your Responsibilities

As a volunteer’s supervisor you play a vital role in the success of the volunteer program (role or experience or partnership instead of program?). Since you are the expert for the area in which the volunteer has been placed you will be responsible for orientating and working with your volunteer.

**Orientate/Train**

* Block off some time to spend with the new volunteer
* Take the volunteer on a tour of your work area and other parts of the building they may need access to
* Provide your volunteer with information specific to your department and team along with information on their project and work responsibilities
* Training requirements will vary with the demands of each specific assignment, but it should be ongoing

**Be Ready**

* Have the volunteer’s work assignment or project ready with enough work to fill their shift
* Have supplies needed for the task available
* Let your volunteer know how important the work they are doing is, even if it seems tedious, and how it benefits the City
* Accept a volunteer’s right to say “no”+

**Be Clear**

* Explain your instructions clearly and concisely and take time to discuss all aspects and the purpose/big picture of each assignment
* Be sure to allow time for questions and periodically check in with your volunteer. Remember to give reassurance as needed
* Ask specific questions to confirm that the volunteer truly understands the assignment and expectations
* Tell him/her where and how he/she can get more information or help
* Define the standards and the results that you expect, including timelines. Explain how you will monitor the project
* Coaching is part of any learning process and is both corrective and reinforcing. Assess actions and outcomes, not people and personalities

**Plan Ahead**

* Discuss their work schedule and set expectations
* Break larger jobs into manageable pieces that can be accomplished within the volunteer’s shift, provide sequential instruction
* Talk about assignments to work on the next time they come in
* make sure they know who to call if they need to cancel a shift

**Keep Them in the Loop**

* Invite them to attend in-house training or work development opportunities
* Be sure to allow time for questions and periodically check in with your volunteer. Remember to give reassurance as needed
* Keep volunteers up to date on changes that have occurred since their last shift that impacts their work
* Develop a system or procedure for on-going communication, most performance problems are, in fact, communication problems

**Establish a Relationship**

* Build a working relationship with your volunteer, and provide the volunteer feedback on his/her performance, along with recognition and thanks
* Give corrective feedback as soon as possible, while the situation is fresh and relatively minor versus delaying and allowing situations to develop into something more major
* You are the primary giver of positive feedback, and delivering that feedback will make a big difference in the continuing service of the volunteer

## Being a Good Volunteer Supervisor

Here are some tips:

* Be fair, supportive and available
* Give clear instruction and feedback
* Communicate expectations upfront
* Be a good listener
* Act in a pleasant and professional manner
* Recognize the volunteer’s efforts and celebrate their successes
* Have “real” work prepared or call the volunteer in advance and reschedule
* Take action early to correct performance or attendance issues
* Show concern for the volunteer and make them feel valued
* Daily thank you’s and on-going recognition of and appreciation for the volunteer’s contributions

# VOLUNTEERS ROLE

## Responsibilities and Expectations

Volunteers are an integral part of the City’s work. The way volunteers can assist staff and departments is unlimited. When a volunteer is on-boarded by the City they are held to the same standards as paid employees. You can expect your volunteer to:

* To carry through with their commitment to the City
* To perform the duties they committed to, to the best of their ability and to ask for assistance when needed
* To be responsible, reliable, and loyal to the City, the program/department, and the community we serve
* To maintain confidentiality in their activities
* To accept the leadership of the staff supervisor
* To consult with the City staff for clarification of policy and/or procedures
* To participate in the orienting and training programs
* To represent the City in a positive manner when dealing with the public
* To wear a name tag/identifying badge as required
* To be informed about their responsibilities and limits
* To be part of the team

# ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTEER POSITION

## Ideas for Possible Volunteer Positions

There are endless possibilities for utilizing volunteers in the workplace. Think outside of the box and if you want to explore an opportunity more, connect with the Volunteer Services department. Consider…

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Grant Writer * Data Entry * Tour Guide * Human Resources * Finance * Event Planner * Computers * Inventory * Engineer * Poster/Flyer Delivery * Mailings * Graphics Designer * Chaperones * Database Management | * Data Entry * Public Relations * Public Speaking * Business Planning * Real Estate * Photographer * Technical Writer * Organizer * Contract Negotiator * Tree Inventory * Trainers * Gardener * Teen Volunteers * Stewards | * Billing Assistant * Designer * Emergency Management * Greeters * Program Coordination * Assessing Aides * Analyst * Fine Arts * Focus Groups * Instructors * Marketing * Research * Safety and Patrol * Surveys |

## Volunteer Service Description

Every volunteer who serves with the City has a service description associated with their position. The description is important for several reasons.

* It helps the staff person formulate the details of the position
* It assists the Volunteer Services Department in talking about the position with a potential volunteer
* It defines the position for the volunteer
* It aids the staff person in evaluating the volunteer’s performance
* Provide information needed to conduct appropriate recruitment
* It defines boundaries and is the first step in risk management

The service description outlines:

* Purpose of the position
* Population served
* Time Commitment/Length
* Qualifications/Desired Skills
* Service Duties
* Outcomes/Learning Opportunities
* On-boarding/Training Requirements
* Supervisory Plan

If you would like to establish a volunteer position in your department contact the Volunteer Service department to talk more about the opportunity and receive a service description template.

## Training Check List

To ensure consistency and competency for a new volunteer into a position, the volunteer staff supervisor is asked to develop a training check list to accompany the volunteer service description. This training check-off list will be completed the first day on the job.

# ON-BOARDING VOLUNTEERS

## Recruitment

Once the volunteer position has been established, the Volunteer Services department will advertise the opportunity to the public and recruit volunteers that match the desired qualifications. If staff has connected with someone about the position, they can direct the applicant to apply via on-line and notify the Volunteer Services department of the inquiry.

## Application

All interested candidates will apply through the Volunteer Application located on the Volunteer Services website \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Interview & Talent Assessment

All applicants will interview with the Volunteer Services department who will conduct (needed a space) a talent assessment to ensure an appropriate volunteer placement. When possible, staff who supervise volunteers are encouraged to participate in the interview process.

## Background Check

Applicants who are offered a volunteer position will need to complete a background check prior to starting, and will not be scheduled for their first shift until the background results have been reviewed.

## Volunteer Orientation

Before beginning their volunteer position, volunteers will attend a general volunteer orientation conducted by the Volunteer Services department. Orientation will include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Information about the City * City Leadership * Volunteer Opportunities * Sign Photo Release | * Confidentiality Training * Data Practices * Volunteer Policies and Procedures * Watch Welcome Video |

## Volunteer Training

After orientation, the volunteer is ready to begin. The first day on site should include the training outlined on the training check list, acclimation and a tour of the volunteer space and department where the volunteer will be performing their duties. All of the volunteer’s training does not need to be completed in one shift.

# VOLUNTEER POLICIES

## Code of Conduct

Need to get this language from the employee handbook.

## Conflict of Interest

Need to get this language from the employee handbook.

## Time Records

Volunteers are responsible for signing in and signing out on the computer, when possible. When a computer is not on site, volunteers can report their hours to their supervisor or enter them on-line at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Dress Code/Identification

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a positive and professional image to the Community. Volunteers are asked to dress appropriately for the conditions and tasks involved with their volunteer service.

Volunteers will be issued some type of volunteer identification, such as a badge. ID badges or other identification are property of the city and must be returned upon resignation. Volunteers are only allowed to wear their identification while volunteering.

## Use of Technology

Volunteers must use information technology and all city communication systems in a lawful, ethical, and professional manner. There is no expectation of privacy in anything created, stored, sent, or received on the computer system that is the property of the City of Edina. See XXXXX policy.

## Scheduling

If a volunteer is going to be absent from a scheduled assignment, we ask them to notify their supervisor or Volunteer Services department as far in advance as possible. The City is closed on major holidays.

## Youth Volunteers

Volunteers who are not yet 18 years old must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer work assigned to a minor shall be performed in a non-hazardous environment and will comply with all appropriate requirements. Volunteers must be at least 13 years of age to serve.

## Public Statements

Volunteers must refer all media inquiries regarding the City and its operations to their staff supervisor. No volunteer, unless specifically designated, is authorized to make public statements on behalf of the city, its departments, programs, etc.

***“Nothing’s stronger than the heart of a volunteer.****”*

* General Doolittle in the movie, Pearl Harbor