



City of Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Department Volunteer Policy

Vision Statement

The fulfillment of the mission of the Kansas City Missouri Parks and Recreation Department is only accomplished through the active participation of citizens of the community. To this end, the Department accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels and within all appropriate programs and activities. Department employees assist in the creation of appropriate, meaningful, and productive roles in which volunteers might serve, and assist in the recruitment, management, and recognition of department volunteers. The goals of the volunteer program include increasing and improving the capabilities of the Department through the effective utilization of community volunteers and more importantly, to provide a means for people to participate in their community in a fun and fulfilling way.

Guidelines

The Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing the highest level of care for our park facilities, and natural and historic resources, while at the same time offering top quality programming to those we serve. We believe that the benefits of parks and recreation are far-reaching and vital to every individual, family and organization in Kansas City.

Authority to Permit Volunteers to Provide Services

As a function of its authority under the City Charter to plan, develop, extend, maintain and operate a parks and recreation system, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners has historically provided a multitude of volunteer opportunities. By Resolution 080866 the City Council asked the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners to establish appropriate policies for its volunteer programs.

Goals and Objectives

Volunteers are valuable supplements to the Department. As such, volunteers shall be extended meaningful and productive assignments, be treated fairly, be assisted through effective supervision, be provided an opportunity for full involvement and participation in the work of the Department insofar as appropriate, and be recognized for service provided to the Department. Volunteers shall actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals, rules and procedures of the Department.

Volunteers do not replace paid staff; rather, volunteers enhance the staff's ability to achieve the Department's goals in accordance with its priorities. No volunteers shall be appointed to serve in a position where there is a conflict of interest with an activity or program of the Department, whether personal, philosophical, or financial.

The Department accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Department.

Volunteers agree that the Department may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to no longer accept the volunteer's service to the Department. Of course, the volunteer may choose to stop their activities at any time. Volunteers are asked that when possible the Department be informed of their decision to allow time for planning for the Volunteer's absence.

Definitions

Volunteer means a person who, of their free will, provides services to the Board or to a Department employee or appointed official without receiving monetary or material compensation, except that Commissioners serving on the Board of Parks and Recreation or member of any task force or committee formed by the Board or the City shall not be considered a volunteer for the purposes of this article.

Regular service volunteer means a volunteer engaged in service activities on an ongoing or continual basis.

Periodic volunteer means a volunteer who offers to provide a one time or occasional voluntary service.

Special case volunteer means a volunteer participating in student projects, a student who is receiving qualified educational credit for their service commitment or a student performing community service-oriented projects.

Community Service Worker is a person who is ordered by any judge to perform community service as a sentencing alternative. A Community Service Worker is not a volunteer but performs work similar to that of a volunteer.

Designation of Volunteers/Community Service Workers

Each person providing volunteer services must be designated as a regular service volunteer, a periodic volunteer, a special case volunteer, or a community service worker by the person or entity authorizing the person's service as a volunteer. The designation must be communicated to the person.

Use of Volunteers to Replace/City Employees Prohibited

Volunteer services will not be used in a manner that would result in an existing City employee losing his or her employment with the City.

Minors as Volunteers

Volunteers who have not yet attained the age of 18 years must have written consent of a parent or legal guardian before being assigned to any volunteer services. Students volunteering for service-learning credit hours for their school must submit their school name and contact information before being assigned to any volunteer services.

Community Service Workers/Organized Groups

The Metropolitan Community Service Program (MCSP) established in November 2001, recognizes the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department as a working environment for the assignment of individuals who have been ordered by a judge to complete community service. The MCSP works under the guidance of the courts and must properly and timely report back to those courts the completion or failure of an individual to complete the community service that has been ordered. The Parks and Recreation Department selection and approval as an MCSP worksite adheres to certain policies and procedures and are followed by the Community Service Program. Other community service worker programs as organized and administered through other court jurisdictions may be utilized as they are available. MCSP workers or other Community Service Workers are not to be working, supervising, teaching or in any manner be involved with youth or children, the elderly, or individuals with any form of disabilities.

Community Service Workers shall be supervised at all times by Law Enforcement and and/or Parks and Recreation Department staff while engaged in work activities on City properties per agreed upon work site rules and regulations with the sponsoring community service provider.

Volunteers Cannot Direct and/or Supervise

Volunteers do not have the authority to give direction to any City employee or City elected or appointed officials.

Family Members of City Employees

Family members of City employees and elected and appointed officials of the City may provide services to the Parks and Recreation Department as a volunteer. However, no person generally can be placed within the same division, office or workplace in which a family member is a city employee when the volunteer may be under the control, authority, or supervision of such a family member or when such volunteer assignment may create a conflict of interest.

Reimbursement of Expenses & Acceptance of Goods & Food

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of pre-approved, actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred while engaging in volunteer service. All expenses for which reimbursement is sought must be supported by receipts. Volunteers are ineligible to receive reimbursement related to travel to and from volunteer assignments. Periodic and special case volunteers may receive articles of clothing and other goods and food and refreshment offered at the activities, events, or assignments to which they are assigned. Volunteers may not travel on behalf of the City.

Computer and Internet Usage

The City may provide a volunteer access to computers and the Internet to assist a volunteer in performing his or her duties. However, no volunteer shall be granted access to the City's Electronic Communication System or any other access to confidential information or documents unless approved by the person or Board designating the person as a volunteer.

Termination of Volunteer Services

A person's ability to serve as a volunteer may be terminated by the person or entity authorized to designate the person as a volunteer at any time and for any reason without any showing of cause to the volunteer.

Department Expectations of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to act on behalf of the Department, in the best interests of the Department, and according to the Department's Policies and Procedures.

Benefits to the Volunteers

Volunteers receive personal gratification by becoming involved in the community. The Board may also honor volunteers at meetings, and staff may recognize volunteers at www.kcparks.org or on KC Parks social media sites. Volunteers may also receive tokens of appreciation such as shirts, caps, coffee mugs, etc.

Application

Volunteers will officially express their interest in volunteer opportunities by completing a Parks and Recreation Volunteer Services Program Application (regular service or special case).

Background Investigation

All volunteers who are responsible for the safety and well-being of participants involved in the Parks and Recreation program on a regular basis will be subject to a background screening consisting of a sexual offender registry search and a criminal history search. Any of the following offenses will disqualify a volunteer from any service activities.

- a) All Felony Offenses – kidnapping, aggravated burglary, carjacking, arson, drug related crimes, etc.
- b) All Sex Offenses – child molestation, sexual assault, rape, sexual battery, indecent exposure, child exploitation, etc.
- c) All Violent Offenses – murder, manslaughter, aggravated assault, robbery, an offense involving a weapon, etc.

If any disqualifying offenses are reported in the background check, the Parks and Recreation Department staff will notify the volunteer that they are disqualified, and their service be immediately terminated.

Health Information

Volunteers should notify their supervisor immediately if they are injured during their period of volunteering.

Dress Policy

Supervisors will inform volunteers of any dress policy which they will be asked to follow.

Preventing Accusations of Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Inappropriate Behavior

In addition to the information that follows on Sexual Harassment, a volunteer should not allow individuals to sit on their lap; should not lift, hold or carry an individual except in the case of an emergency; should never touch an individual in their private areas; should never use teasing, abusive or cruel language; should never force an individual into a seat, shake them, grab them or use punishment that can be perceived as abusive. (*Reference Appendix 5: City of Kansas City Missouri, Human Resources Rules & Policies*).

Sexual Harassment

Volunteers are strictly prohibited from conduct that could be perceived as any form of harassment or abuse. “Sexual Harassment” refers to verbal or physical conduct that is unsolicited, offensive, and detrimental to an individual, whether or not directed specifically to a person. (*Reference Appendix 5: City of Kansas City Missouri, Human Resources Rules & Policies*).

Discrimination/Harassment Policy

Discrimination against or harassment of City employees or by City employees against any other person on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation is prohibited and will not be tolerated in the City workplace.

Retaliation against any person because he or she has made a report, testified, assisted or participated in any matter in an investigation under this Policy or opposed to any practice prohibited by this Policy is prohibited and will not be tolerated in the City workplace.

Inappropriate sexual activity in the workplace, even between consenting adults, is prohibited and will not be tolerated in the City workplace.

Zero Tolerance Policy Regarding Threats or Acts of Violence

It is the goal of the City of Kansas City, Missouri and the Parks and Recreation Department to provide a workplace in which every employee can be free from violence. It is our belief that everyone with whom we come in contact in our work deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect. This means that we treat each other, citizens, suppliers, and all others in this manner. As a result, we must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of incidents of work-related violence.

Therefore, any employee, volunteer or citizen who makes a threat of physical violence against oneself or others will be taken seriously, and the threat will be dealt with immediately.

A threat is defined as an expression to inflict injury, harm or menace, causing one to be placed in reasonable fear for their safety (e.g., "I'm going to knock your block off," "I'm going to kill myself.")

Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

It is the Department's policy to ensure a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free workplace for all employees, volunteers, and patrons of the Department's facilities and programs. Being under the influence, using, possessing or distributing controlled or dangerous substances including alcohol and tobacco, at any time during volunteer service is prohibited.

Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following the volunteer guidelines policies and procedures. Supervisors of program volunteers will review the Department's volunteer policies with volunteers. Any violation of policy may result in a verbal or written explanation of the improper actions from a supervisor, a suspension, or dismissal from the program.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all confidential or privileged information and documents to which they have access while serving as volunteers. Volunteers will not be placed in situations where they may have access to confidential personnel and/or financial records.

Summary

These Guidelines are designed to give volunteers to the Parks and Recreation Department's facilities and programs the framework for an enjoyable and valuable experience. Your service to the City, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and the Parks and Recreation Department is greatly appreciated. By volunteering you become part of a legacy of Kansas Citizens dating to the 1890s providing volunteer services to the City, Board and Department.

Should you have any questions about these Guidelines or your service, please know your Departmental supervisor is always available to answer questions.