



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

JULY 1, 2018

PIERCE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
9112 Lakewood Drive SW, Lakewood, WA 98499

WELCOME!

Thank for making a difference in our county by sharing your time and talents with Pierce County Parks and Recreation. Volunteers are vital to the success of many of our programs and special events as well as to the beautification and maintenance of our parks and facilities.

Volunteers are an important part of our team; therefore we have prepared this handbook for you, which details our volunteer policies, procedures and responsibilities. Please read through this handbook carefully. It is designed to provide you with the information necessary to make your volunteer experience with Pierce County Parks and Recreation both safe and rewarding.

Thank you again for your contribution and service in support of our county parks and programs. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, issues, or ideas. We look forward to working with you!

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PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Vision & Mission

Pierce County Parks and Recreation's vision is to be a leader in creating livable communities by providing opportunities for people to connect with nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices.

Volunteer Program Goals and Rights

Pierce County Parks & Recreation seeks to match volunteers with the type of work that most interests the volunteer. We strive to provide each volunteer with a well-rounded "hands on" experience that includes meaningful and rewarding work.

Benefits to the Volunteer include:

- A sense of community ownership, achievement and pride
- Opportunities for meeting a diverse range of people; social networking
- The chance to experience professional development, gain work experience, and learn new skills
- The opportunity to enjoy rewards and recognition events

Benefits to Pierce County include:

- Greater levels of trust and loyalty among our residents, customers, and visitors
- Enhancement of the county's image and reputation
- Increase in employee productivity
- Direct labor cost savings

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to Pierce County Parks & Recreation and to the community and shall be extended the right to:

- Meaningful service assignments
- Effective supervision
- Recognition of work done

In return, volunteers:

- Perform responsibilities as assigned
- Remain loyal to the vision and mission of the department
- Reflect the values of the department

2. THE VOLUNTEER PROCESS

Application Requirements

Any Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) staff person may provide the applicant with a volunteer application, including a waiver of liability and background check permission, along with an explanation that a completed application is not a guarantee of placement in a volunteer task or position. Applicants must be age 15 or above unless participating in the Pitch in for Parks program or volunteering alongside a parent or guardian. Once the completed application has been received and reviewed by the department's Volunteer Coordinator, a phone interview may be arranged if appropriate and adequate volunteer work/hours are available. If there are not open volunteer opportunities available for which the volunteer applied, the applicant will be contacted and informed that their application will be kept on file and they may be contacted in the future if a volunteer opportunity becomes available.

After the interview process is complete and the background check has been processed, the Volunteer Coordinator will work with the volunteer to establish training if needed, volunteer goals, tasks, and a one-time or regular work schedule.

Volunteer applicants are required to comply with the following:

- Volunteers are to complete an application, including a waiver of liability and background check, and understand that any omissions or misrepresentations may be cause for refusal of placement or immediate dismissal.
- By signing the application, the volunteer certifies that all information is true and complete to the best of their knowledge.
- The volunteer's signature provides PCPR authorization to investigate all information contained in the application.
- Volunteers are responsible for keeping the Volunteer Coordinator advised about any changes of contact information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- Volunteers agree to obey all rules and procedures established by PCPR.
- Volunteers understand that their services and time to PCPR are unpaid and therefore not entitled to any benefits.
- Volunteers assume all risks and/or hazards associated with participation in the volunteer program and do hereby agree to hold harmless Pierce County and/or its employees as agreed to in the waiver of liability.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 are required to have a parent or guardian co-sign the volunteer application.
- National background checks will be processed by Verity. Forms will be provided to the volunteer with the volunteer application. The fee for the background check is covered by PCPR. Volunteers will not be able to participate until the results have been received by the Volunteer Coordinator.

Recruitment

Pierce County Parks and Recreation participates in ongoing volunteer recruitment. Potential volunteers may learn about opportunities through recruitment fliers available at PCPR facilities and community resource fairs, through the department's quarterly activity guide, direct emailing to previous volunteers, and online at www.piercecountywa.gov/parks. In addition, PCPR maintains a volunteer profile with VolunteerMatch.org as well as United Way of Pierce County, which allows for recruiting online.

Orientation

Volunteers have a right to an orientation of PCPR that includes an overview of the department and organizational structure, ways that the volunteer can remain safe, and the level of support that the volunteer can expect from the department. Normally this orientation will include a phone conversation with the Volunteer Coordinator and a hands-on orientation with the supervisor of the volunteer's assignment.

Training

Very often, volunteers will learn certain work skills on the job or by working alongside another more experienced volunteer or staff person. Essentially, *volunteers learn by doing*. Please do not feel that you are expected to be proficient right away. If you have a question or need clarification on ANY volunteer task or project, please ask a staff person as training may vary greatly by the assigned worksite.

Performance of Duties

- Check in at your assigned worksite. Please arrive on time. Check with the activity's supervisor for any instructions or special projects for your assigned shift.
- Stay visible. If you need to leave your assigned work area for any reason or need a break, please ask another volunteer or staff person to replace you.
- At the end of your shift, leave your work area clean. Be sure to clean and put away any equipment or materials you may have used during your shift.
- Notify a staff person before you leave.
- Daily duties may vary greatly by your assigned worksite. Please check with a supervisor at your assigned worksite for more information.

Hours Log

Volunteers will be required to submit to a tracking system for attendance to record hours accurately. Pierce County Parks and Recreation monitors the hours worked by volunteers to recognize them more effectively, and report to the community on the contributions made by volunteers. Volunteer group leaders and individual volunteers should report their hours to the department's Volunteer Coordinator at the end of each month or at the end of their shift for one time only volunteers.

Status

A volunteer may go “inactive” after a period of time of no activity. Any volunteer who is inactive for a period of 12 months or longer will need to resubmit an application upon return.

Additionally, long-term volunteers may be asked to resubmit an application or background check yearly.

Successful Completion

A volunteer has successfully completed a volunteer assignment when the commitment of hours, duration, and/or project have been completed and approved. The activity supervisor and volunteer must be in agreement that the objectives have been met.

3. TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS

There are three categories of volunteers within PCPR. They include: Regular Volunteers: Ongoing, Temporary Volunteers: Community Service, and Temporary Volunteers: Court-ordered. The description for each category is as follows:

Regular Volunteers: Ongoing

Ongoing volunteers includes teens (ages 14-17) as well as adults (ages 18 and above) that choose to volunteer with PCPR on an ongoing basis (ie. golf marshals, youth sports coaches, advisory groups). These individuals are required to complete a volunteer application and go through a phone or in-person interview process. An application is not a guarantee of placement in a volunteer task or position. Ongoing volunteers may choose a regular work schedule, remain “on-call”, volunteer a minimum of once per month, or volunteer on an as-needed basis for special events.

Teen volunteers are permitted a more flexible schedule and typically volunteer more often during the spring, summer, fall, or winter intersession breaks. Regular/ongoing volunteers that become inactive and do not contribute volunteer hours for 12 months or more may be required to repeat the application process if they desire to remain a volunteer and continue service with the PCPR.

Temporary Volunteers: Community Service

Community Service volunteers are individuals who wish to volunteer, on a temporary basis, as required by an educational organization such as a high school, community college, trade/technical school, or university, or as required by a professional or social organization such as a club, non-profit entity, church, scout troop, or corporate group. Regardless of the length of service intended, a completed and signed volunteer application is required before any volunteer work can begin. Please note, an application is not a guarantee of placement in a volunteer task or position. These volunteers will go through an informal phone or in-person interview to establish qualifications, responsibilities and availability. The VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR will work one-on-one with the volunteer and department staff in regards to scheduling, training, and completion of the temporary volunteer task(s).

Once the volunteer has completed their required hours they may request proof of completion from the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR. Proof of completion is a written acknowledgement of the number of hours of volunteer service provided, which is generally documented on PCPR letterhead. If any other documentation is needed by the volunteer, such as a signature form or timesheet from a school or other organization, it is the volunteer's sole responsibility to present these materials to the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR or other designated PCPR staff person in order to be signed upon completion of the volunteer's service.

Temporary Volunteers: Court-ordered

PCPR may provide volunteer opportunities for individuals who are required to provide community service hours as ordered by a judge or as a condition of probation. All court-ordered volunteers must be screened and interviewed by the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR and approved by department staff before service begins. Consideration regarding the applicant's background and the nature of the offense committed will be given in determining whether or not to accept the individual into the volunteer program and, if they are accepted, what type of work assignment would be appropriate.

Occasionally, PCPR may not have appropriate work or hours available to accommodate requests by court-ordered volunteers. All applicants must understand that a completed application is not a guarantee of placement in a volunteer task or position.

Court-Ordered volunteers must be forthright and honest on their background check. Withholding information on the background check and/or failure to fully complete the background check will delay the placement of an applicant and may exclude the applicant from volunteering. The applicant must include the number of hours required and deadline for completion of those hours on the application.

The court-ordered volunteer is responsible for his or her own paperwork related to or required by the court system.

PLEASE NOTE: Individuals who have been convicted of or charged with any crime involving or relating to child abuse/neglect, child pornography, child abduction, theft, or any violent offense, including domestic violence, kidnapping, rape or any sexual offense, or who have ever been ordered by a court to receive psychiatric or psychological treatment in connection with such crime or crimes will NOT be accepted as a volunteer with PCPR.

4. VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Attendance

Good attendance and punctuality are vital to the success of the operation of the PCPR. Volunteers are expected to be at their worksite on time for their assigned days. Volunteers may change schedules with advanced notice by notifying the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR or designated staff person in a timely manner. Volunteers unable to fulfill a scheduled shift should call the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR or their worksite and speak with department staff to report an absence as soon as possible. Excessive absences, tardiness, or no-call/no-show for a volunteer shift will not be tolerated, and are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program with or without prior notice.

Scheduling

The Volunteer Coordinator or department staff and the volunteer jointly determine schedules. Youth/teen volunteers (ages 14-17) may not work more than five hours in one day. Any volunteer that works a four-hour shift is entitled to a 15-minute break. Volunteers working a longer shift may take a 30-minute to one-hour lunch break. Breaks and lunch periods are determined by the activity supervisor.

Volunteer schedules vary greatly and are dependent upon the length of service intended and PCPR program needs. Volunteers are by no means required to commit to a regular five-day work schedule. Some volunteers work once or twice a week, while others contribute hours just once a month. Many volunteers remain "on-call" for special events and programs and are scheduled as needed or when available. All volunteers, especially full-time students, winter visitors, or those with more limited availability are encouraged to speak with the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR or department staff at their worksite to establish an appropriate and flexible schedule.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether the information involves a staff person, volunteer, or overall business of PCPR. Confidential items may include, but are not limited to: all internal-use documents as well as the personal contact information of county staff or other volunteers, or the names/addresses and other personal information of PCPR's customers. Violation of confidentiality may be cause for immediate dismissal.

Scope of Authority

Only employees of Pierce County Parks and Recreation are authorized to financially or contractually obligate Pierce County Parks and Recreation. Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate PCPR, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from PCPR supervisory staff. These actions may include but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations or agreeing to serve in any official capacity on behalf of Pierce County Parks and Recreation.

Dismissal

If a volunteer fails to meet his or her commitment to abide by PCPR's policies and procedures, the VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR or department staff will discuss the situation with the volunteer. Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to: poor attendance; excessive tardiness; dress code violations; gross negligence; relaying inaccurate or overly subjective information to our residents, customers, and visitors; misrepresentation of PCPR or its objectives; or placing anyone at risk. Depending upon the infraction, the volunteer will be provided with an opportunity to improve their performance. If the volunteer fails to improve, the department staff reserves the right to dismiss the volunteer. A notice of dismissal will be fully discussed with the volunteer.

Media and Public Relations

Media Requests: If approached by a member of the media, volunteers are required to direct any media personnel or media inquiries to a Pierce County Parks and Recreation staff person. Volunteers are not authorized to speak as a representative of Pierce County Parks and Recreation or Pierce County.

Right of Publicity: Participation in Pierce County Parks and Recreation Volunteer Programs shall constitute permission to use the name, likeness or any other identification of the participant, photographs or videos taken of volunteers for promoting County programs and events in print, tv, or on the website without compensation to or right of prior review or approval by the participant or his/her parent or guardian (except where prohibited by law).

Dress and Appearance

Volunteers should come to their assignment clean and neat and dressed to meet the appropriate safety requirements of the position. For volunteer work performed outdoors, attire may be in accordance with the type of physical labor being performed. As a general rule of thumb, dress for comfort and for the weather. Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes, and consider using a hat and sunscreen as well.

Volunteers are restricted from wearing:

- Any article of clothing with violent, obscene, or offensive images or insignia
- Any article of clothing with text, artwork, logos or graphics which promote the use of controlled substances, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco
- Open-toed shoes, flip-flops, sandals, or high-heeled shoes, unless appropriate for the volunteer activity
- Jewelry that could become lost, damaged, or snagged while volunteering

Access to Pierce County Parks and Recreation Property & Materials

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to department's materials that are necessary to fulfill their duties. Any equipment provided to the volunteer must be used only for PCPR purposes. This includes use of tools, office equipment, gloves, safety equipment, or literature.

Security and Safety

In ANY emergency, please call 911 or 9-911, if calling from a PCPR phone, and contact a PCPR staff member about the incident as soon as possible. For non-emergency issues, the volunteer should notify the senior staff person (such as a supervisor) onsite immediately. Volunteers are not to give out home/cell phone numbers for themselves, staff, or other volunteers to any customer, resident, or visitor. If an individual requests to contact a staff person, the volunteer may give them the person's work phone number and/or business card.

The onsite Pierce County Parks and Recreation staff is responsible for providing a safe work environment by:

- informing volunteers of the locations of: first aid kits, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, emergency exits, and other safety supplies;
- immediately reporting any work-related injuries, or accidents/incidents involving volunteers to Risk Management, and then to the Volunteer Coordinator within 12-hours

Feedback or Concerns

If you have comments or suggestions to improve procedures in your volunteer work area or a concern about something, bring these issues to the Volunteer Coordinator or other Pierce County Parks and Recreation staff at the earliest possible time. Volunteer feedback is welcome at any time.