



Handbook for Volunteers



Welcome!

From the Cities of Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, Rosemount and West St. Paul

Each of our Cities value the contributions that volunteers bring to making our communities stronger and more vibrant. All aspects of our communities (businesses, schools, churches, civic organizations etc.) benefit from the commitment of caring volunteers.

This information outlines what to expect when making a commitment to volunteer. It includes our CORE values as organizations and detailed information on what it means to be a City volunteer. What is not written on these pages is the deep commitment of each City to work with you, and all volunteers, as a valued member of our organization.

The Volunteer Services program strengthens our community by:

- ✓ Providing unique opportunities for local residents to contribute to City government.
- ✓ Facilitating active partnerships between City staff and community members.
- ✓ Enriching City programs and services through volunteer involvement and participation.
- ✓ Helping citizens become more familiar with City programs, services and issues.

The integrity of the volunteer program requires that individuals will only be placed in volunteer positions in which there is the best opportunity for success. This means that volunteer candidates will be matched to volunteer positions based on the skills and personality that are necessary for each position. With these components in place, the volunteer experience will enrich the volunteer, the staff and the Cities as a whole.

We are pleased that you have chosen to volunteer. Your participation as a volunteer helps to strengthen our community, making it a better place to live, work and play. Volunteers demonstrate that they believe in their community by wanting to volunteer. Volunteers are also ambassadors of goodwill, sharing their time, energy and talents.

Volunteers are important because they:

- ✓ Bring new ideas and energy.
- ✓ Complement and expand the services of staff by sharing their unique skills and abilities.
- ✓ Relieve staff of duties that can be delegated.
- ✓ Enrich and increase the quality of programs.
- ✓ Offer additional services to citizens and the City's customers.
- ✓ Bring diversity of backgrounds and experiences.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for community members to be involved.
- ✓ Promote community support and increase community knowledge.

We want you to feel part of the team of staff and volunteers who work together to support our Cities. We want your volunteer involvement to be satisfying and rewarding. We value your ideas, suggestions, and feedback.

Volunteer Guidelines

We ask all volunteers to comply with the following guidelines:

- Respect the confidentiality of your work as a volunteer. You may read, hear, or observe information that is private or confidential.
- If you are issued an ID badge or t-shirt identifying you as a volunteer please wear it while volunteering.
- Clarify your duties and responsibilities with your supervisor to avoid any misunderstandings.
- If you come into contact with City residents, remember they are our customers — they deserve patience, respect and consideration. A friendly greeting goes a long way...and lasts!
- Be prompt and dependable. People are relying on you.
- Notify your supervisor if you are unable to come in at a scheduled time. It is important to **contact your supervisor**, rather than the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Communication is important. Ask questions and arrange for a time with your supervisor to give suggestions.
- Document your hours of volunteering. This is valuable for many reasons:
 - Recognition
 - Tax deductions
 - Reference purposes
 - Statistical records (Future funding for programs is often dependent on accurate recordkeeping.)
- Keep the volunteer office informed about changes to your contact information including name, address, phone and/or email address and volunteer status or availability. Contact 651-208-4840 or derickson@cityofwsp.org with changes.
- Scheduling of the volunteer's time should be a mutual agreement between the volunteer and the staff supervisor, although some positions will have specific hours.

We want your volunteer involvement to be satisfying and rewarding. The most effective recruitment method is for satisfied volunteers to share their enthusiasm about volunteering with people they know. We hope you will tell your friends and family about your wonderful experiences and encourage them to volunteer as well.

Both the volunteer and the staff supervisor can contact the Volunteer Coordinator if there are questions, concerns or issues:

Diane Erickson
651-208-4840
derickson@cityofwsp.org

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

A volunteer has the Right to:

- Have a job description.
- Be treated with respect.
- Be given work that is meaningful and satisfying.
- Decline a job assignment.
- Receive orientation, training, on-the-job supervision and support as needed.
- Be heard and feel comfortable making suggestions.
- Understand how the work s(he) is doing fits into the larger scheme.
- Receive ongoing feedback.
- Be recognized for a job well done.
- Expect that suitable tasks have been planned.
- Be kept informed about what is happening in the organization.
- Be given an opportunity for advancement, if available.
- Flexible hours.

A volunteer has the Responsibility to:

- Arrive on time; call when unable to come in.
- Be sincere in the offer of service.
- Carry out duties promptly and reliably.
- Accept guidance and supervision.
- Be willing to participate in orientation, training and meetings.
- Continue to learn on the job.
- Maintain a smooth working relationship with paid staff.
- Be a positive representative of the City.
- Maintain ethical standards and confidentiality.
- Know personal limits.
- Work as a member of the team.
- Follow organizational guidelines and respect the City's policies.
- Use time wisely and not interfere with others' performance.
- Consult with the supervisor when unclear about the job.
- Give constructive feedback that will improve the program's effectiveness.
- Record hours of service.
- Provide contact information updates to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Provide feedback and suggestions to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteer Policies

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION/DATA PRIVACY:

As you work with the staff, you may be placed in a position where some private or confidential information is accessible to you in order to do your job. If so, you must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any City records, reports, or documents without prior approval.

The Minnesota Data Practices Act specifies what information is public. Please check with your supervisor.

DRESS/APPEARANCE:

The dress and appearance of City volunteers is a direct reflection on the professionalism of our services. Volunteers are expected to project a clean, neat, well-groomed appearance.

Please check with your supervisor for the appropriate attire for your position.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE:

All Cities are drug free workplaces. The possession, sale or use of mood altering substances while volunteering shall be a violation of safe volunteer practices and will be cause for ending the volunteer relationship.

TOBACCO USE:

All City buildings and vehicles have been designated as no smoking areas, meaning that smoking tobacco or other substances are prohibited. Please see your supervisor for designated smoking areas at the facility where you will be volunteering. E-cigarettes and chewing tobacco are considered to be tobacco products.

FIREARMS:

Possession or use of a dangerous weapon is prohibited on City property, in City vehicles, or in any personal vehicle which is used for City business, other than by licensed sworn police officers.

Any firearm brought onto City-owned parking areas by a volunteer must be placed out of sight in the personal vehicle and the vehicle must be locked.

HARASSMENT:

It is the policy of the City to maintain a comfortable and professional work environment free from violence, discrimination, intimidation, harassment of any person based on protected class status, including sexual harassment, and other disrespectful or degrading remarks or conduct. Report any forms of harassment to your supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. Reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated.

GIFTS OR GRATUITIES:

Do not accept any gifts from citizens or businesses. We do not want to create an atmosphere where our citizens feel obligated to reward City staff or volunteers for doing their job.

INTERNET/PHONE USE:

Depending on the volunteer position, volunteers may be given access to the Internet. This access should be used for official City business. However, as with the phone system, incidental and occasional personal use is permitted. The City reserves the right to access and disclose as necessary all information sent over the Internet or via email without regard to content. Do not use this access to transmit any messages or data that you would not want read by a third party.

USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES:

The City will provide access to City equipment and supplies necessary to perform volunteer work. Examples of equipment may be, but not limited to, copy/multi-function machines, office supplies, hand tools, personal computers, etc.

These items are to be used to assist with City related tasks and may not be used for personal reasons. All City-issued items must be returned on the last day of your volunteer assignment.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Ultimately what we do, we do for the public. Social media, like Facebook and Twitter, can be a great tool to keep up with friends, but it also needs to be used with caution. If you mention that you are a City volunteer on a social media page, please be respectful and keep in mind that almost anything on the Internet can be accessed by the public.

MEDIA RELATIONS:

In the interest of providing the media with accurate information, volunteers are asked to adhere to the following: if a volunteer is contacted by a media representative for an interview regarding his/her volunteer activities, the volunteer must notify his/her supervisor first and obtain permission. Team interviews with City staff are strongly encouraged since this will ensure that the media representative is provided both with accurate information about the volunteer's activities and technical information about City policies and programs. It is important to remember that volunteers only address questions about their volunteer activities.

Questions about City programs and policies should be referred to the appropriate staff person. In any media situation, individuals must identify themselves as volunteers.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES:

It benefits the City and its volunteers to report an incident as soon as possible. Incidents fall generally into two main categories: personal injuries on the job and vehicle/equipment and property damage accidents (including damage or injury to other persons/property).

All accidents and injuries must be reported immediately to your supervisor.

Volunteers injured while working should seek medical attention immediately, except for minor injuries. Contact your supervisor if unsure whether you should seek medical treatment.

Volunteers and supervisors should promptly complete any required accident/injury reporting forms.

DRIVING/USE OF CITY VEHICLES:

Volunteers whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle must present and maintain a valid driver's license and an acceptable driving record. Any changes in your driving record must be reported to your supervisor immediately.

When driving for a City, a volunteer agrees to obey all traffic laws, safely operate the vehicle, wear a seatbelt and ensure all passengers wear seatbelts, and maintain the appropriate driver's license for lawful operation.

LIABILITY:

Liability insurance is provided for all volunteers provided they are involved in the activities described in their volunteer position.

SECURITY:

To be able to identify authorized personnel, you may be issued an ID badge or t-shirt identifying you as a volunteer to wear while volunteering.

ENDING YOUR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT:

While we hope both you and the City will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize it may become necessary for you to leave your volunteer position with our organization. If you anticipate having to resign your position, please notify your supervisor as far in advance as possible.

If a volunteer cannot meet the City's standards, he/she will be asked to discontinue volunteering.