

Volunteer Program Management Manual



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Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

Objective of the Manual

- Identify the volunteer management structures within Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (District)
- Outline District services that can be augmented through volunteer participation
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the District and volunteers
- Provide a uniform management tool for both staff and volunteers to use as a resource in District volunteer programs

Section 2: Commitment to Volunteerism

The Importance of Volunteerism

Volunteerism is essential to the operations of the District because they assist in a variety of tasks with an emphasis on building and strengthening our unique communities throughout the District. It also encourages individuals to help others in a selfless way when volunteering and supporting causes. Overall, volunteering is beneficial and is a positive impact throughout the community.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is an individual under the direction of Department personnel who, of his or her own free will and without compensation or financial gain, contributes goods or services to assist Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District in the accomplishment of its Vision and Mission.

The Role of the Volunteer

A volunteer assists with programs, events and activities organized by the volunteer department or site supervisors. They work cooperatively as a reliable team member to complete volunteer assignments pertaining to their role and location.

The Role of the Site Supervisor

Site Supervisors provide supervision and appropriate support. Supervisors are involved throughout the volunteer process. Initially, supervisors identify a need at their site which is then communicated to the Volunteer Services Division. In addition, they interview volunteers for potential placement, provide on-site orientation and on-the-job training, manage scheduling of volunteer resources, and conduct evaluations.

The Site/Program Responsibilities

Each site/program is responsible for maintaining an environment where volunteers are accepted as “part of our team.” In addition, each site will refer volunteers who are recruited at the site/program to the Volunteer Services Division for processing.

Section 3: Financial Support for the Volunteer

What are Some Costs of the Volunteer Program?

- Administrative costs (postage, printing, equipment, supplies, employees' salaries and benefits, telephone, etc.)
- Recruitment and Marketing (brochures, posters, flyers, displays, advertisements, booths at fairs)
- Enrollment costs (screening and background checks)
- Identification costs (identification badges, uniforms)
- Volunteer training and development (materials, travel, conference registration fees)
- Volunteer tracking database (set-up, support package)
- Recognition for volunteer efforts (formal and informal)
- Supporting funds (reimbursement for mileage and/or parking)
- On-boarding materials

Sources of Funding for the Volunteer Program

- District operating fund
- Collaborations with partnering support groups (friends' groups and foundations)
- Special initiative and development grants from private and public organizations
- In-Kind contributions (printing, catering, use of facilities, recognition items, training and professional development opportunities offered by local corporations for their associates, giveaways or prizes are excellent in-kind gifts)

Section 4: Developing Volunteer Positions Descriptions

The District relies heavily on volunteers to provide services to the community, the District offers positions that are attractive to individuals who want to volunteer while meeting District needs.

Job Description

Develop volunteer positions in a variety of areas based upon the needs of the District.

Position descriptions allow the District to:

- More effectively recruit volunteers.
- Facilitate more productive volunteer performance.
- Better allocate work between employees and volunteers.
- Ensure greater retention of volunteers.
- Improve the quality of volunteer experience.
- Provide more opportunities to engage volunteers' skills.

In addition to considering volunteers' motivations, skills, availability, and District needs, it is also important to identify these factors when designing meaningful volunteer positions:

The Process of Position Design

- Examples of essential tasks to be done.
- Any information necessary regarding screening.
- A list of required skills and experience.
- An estimate of the term of the assignment (caretakers/camp hosts).
- The purpose of the position.
- Working conditions.

Episodic Volunteers

At times, the District may offer volunteers (or groups of volunteers) the opportunity to be involved through episodic projects. The Volunteer Services Division will use the "Adopt-A-Trail" work plan to develop mini-position descriptions to be used for the single task or project.

Section 5: Volunteer Interest, Recruitment, Screening, & Selection

The District seeks to attract the best-qualified volunteers to support the mission, vision, and values of the District.

Interest in Volunteering

Potential volunteers can express interest through a variety of sources including the District website, phone, and in person. To ensure that consistent and up to date information is provided to potential volunteers, all inquiries should be referred to the Volunteer Services Division and/or District website.

District Website

This is the primary method the District uses to capture volunteer interest. Individuals may download and submit an application via the District's website.

Phone

Individuals should be referred to the District website. Anyone collecting interest via phone should collect the individual's name, phone number, and email address and submit to Volunteer Services Division who will send an introductory email to the individual along with a link to the online application.

In person

During events or day to day operation of sites, individuals may express interest in serving with the District. The District representative should refer the individual to the website and collect their name, phone number, and email address. Submit this information to the Volunteer Services Division who will send an introductory email to the individual along with a link to the online

application.

Recruitment

Recruitment is an on-going process. Each year, the Volunteer Services Division will meet with Site Supervisors to develop a year-round, structured recruitment plan that considers the District's needs for the current year. There may be specific times of the year when the District needs volunteers more than others for specific projects and events. Episodic needs for volunteers, such as park clean-up days, trail clean-up days, fishing derbies, fund-raising event, corporate engagement, or national days of service should also be included in the annual recruitment plan, and the plan itself should be in alignment with the District's strategic plan, goals, and objectives.

The development of the annual recruitment plan requires the Volunteer Services Division to communicate with employees, volunteers, and support groups. This will include:

- Various representatives from sites and programs that utilize volunteers
- Representatives from groups to be targeted - especially those who are already a part of the District volunteer program
- Marketing staff
- Appropriate community contacts, including leaders from civic, neighborhood and professional associations, from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups and from volunteer referral organizations such as the United Way, Community Connect, and "friends of" agencies that support the work of the District

Steps in the Recruitment Process

The VSPM is responsible for the recruitment process which includes:

1. Identifying District volunteer needs overall and specific to sites and programs.
2. Identifying the human and material resources needed to conduct a recruitment campaign.
3. Developing strategies for collecting the required resources and for reaching targeted audiences.
4. Adding recruitment timeline to the District calendar.
5. Ensuring that District supervisors are ready to begin interviews for new volunteers.
6. Evaluating the results of recruitment efforts.

Marketing

Central to any volunteer recruitment plan is implementing effective marketing tools and strategies to clearly communicate the District's needs for volunteers, the opportunities available and the impact District volunteers have in the community.

Multiple marketing methods will be used as appropriate, including but not limited to:

- Personal phone calls
- Presentations to community groups

- Endorsement by local radio and TV stations
- Articles in the local newspaper
- District website
- Word of mouth
- Handwritten correspondence
- Through other County departments
- Through community-based organizations including volunteer clearinghouses
- Local businesses
- Informational meetings about volunteer program
- Brochures in community buildings
- Newspaper articles about District volunteers
- Recruitment contests among existing volunteers
- “Friends of” and support groups
- Local colleges - work with sororities and fraternities
- Volunteer Match
- Use of new media including social media

Targeting by Need

Often, there are groups that can help with the recruitment of volunteers. This is especially true for finding episodic and short-term volunteers. As appropriate, the District will partner with organizations such as:

- Educational organizations: Middle and High School, Colleges, and Universities
- Veterans Services
- Corporation for National and Community Services; AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, Senior Corps
- “Friends of” groups
- Local volunteer organizations such as United Way, Community Connect, and others

Recruitment and Diversity

In recruiting, it is important to know the community in order to mirror it in the District’s volunteer workforce. The Volunteer Services Division will reach out to local organizations who serve specific populations or demographics to assist in targeted volunteer recruitment efforts.

Screening & Selection

The Riverside County Human Resources Department administers countywide procedures for

volunteer programs run by individual county departments, agencies, and districts. These procedures comply with Board Policies, Resolutions, and Ordinances. ***All volunteers must complete a process that includes application, screening (including background checks), placement, and training. Background checks involve criminal history and fingerprinting.*** The procedures can be found on the County's Workforce Exchange intranet site.

The District complies with County Requirements and procedures. In order to establish and maintain a volunteer workforce that is qualified, properly placed and ethically positioned to accomplish the needs of the District, we conduct and maintain responsible screening methods and practices for all employees and volunteers.

- Determine the potential volunteer's skill and motivation for volunteering
- Explain the role of the Volunteer Services Division
- Provide an overview of the District
- Encourage the potential volunteer to ask questions and describe his or her interests.
- Help match skills, knowledge, interests, and motivation to various job opportunities.
- Provide information on the scope of available positions, the duties and skills related to them, the time required, the training needed and any dress code considerations.
- Help identify those who would be a good fit for the District and those who are undesirable candidates. Careful attention at this time may eliminate later problems and possible termination.

If the volunteer applicant is interested and qualified for a position not currently in open recruitment, the Volunteer Services Division will accept the application and will do one of the following:

1. Coordinate with site/program supervisor to interview the potential volunteer.
2. Develop a waiting list for next volunteer opening.
3. Reject interest until the position is available for recruitment.

Site/Program Interview

- The time and place of an interview should be set up for the convenience of both the potential volunteer and the supervisor.
- If multiple interviews are taking place simultaneously, adequate space must be provided between interview stations to provide for privacy.
- Duration of the interview should be adequate to the task while also being respectful of the volunteers' time.
- In coordination with the Volunteer Services Division, questions are formulated before the interviews and potential volunteers are asked the same questions for the same positions to identify and discuss volunteers' skills, interests, and qualifications.
- A form or outline with the interview questions should be available for documenting

responses.

Personal and Professional Reference Checks

- In what capacity have you known the applicant? For how long?
- How does the applicant relate to (co-workers, youth, and people in position of authority)?
- How would you describe the applicant?
- How does the applicant manage conflict, frustration, or other stressful situations?
- Would you be willing to have this person work for you again? Why?
- Is there anything more you would like to relate about the applicant?

Selection Process

- The site/program will submit all interview documentation to the Volunteer Services Division.
- Contact applicant to make an offer of volunteer service contingent upon completion of background check and District volunteer enrollment documentation.
- Contact remaining applicants via letter indicating their rejection for specific position and offer information on other volunteer opportunities.
- Coordinate the scheduling of a DOJ background check, set appointment for volunteer enrollment documentation meeting, and schedule volunteer for a District orientation.

Background Checks

Effective in 1997, all County employees and volunteers must be background-checked Pursuant to County Board Policy C-33 – Background Check Policy, adoption of Resolution 2005-058 Authorizing Background Checks and Live Scan Fingerprinting Services, and pursuant to State of California Penal Code Sections 1105(b) and 13300(b) (10).

Section 6: Enrollment, Orientation, Onboarding, and Training

District volunteers have a highly visible role to our customers at the sites they serve, and effective volunteer enrollment, orientation, onboarding, and training will enhance their ability to perform their duties as well as provide excellent customer service while remaining consistent with staff, District branding, and promotion of the District's mission. The volunteer program approaches volunteer enrollment with great care and professionalism.

Enrollment

- Volunteer Application
- Assignment Acknowledgement Form
- Authorization to Drive Riverside County Vehicle (Form 30)
- Standard Release Form

- Completion of DOJ Background Check

Site Coordination Required During Placement

Volunteer placement is not just the responsibility of the Volunteer Services Division; it requires the collaborative efforts of all staff that have a stake in the effective involvement of the new volunteer. For this reason, the Volunteer Services Division ensures that the following actions are taken:

- Supervisor is informed of the applicant's qualifications and verifies that the position is still available.
- Volunteer is mailed a letter of appointment and job description to along with the orientation schedule.
- Orientation, on-boarding, and training dates are arranged with the volunteer.
- Availability is verified of someone on site who will introduce the site supervisor, key employees, and fellow volunteers to the volunteer on his/her first day.

Orientation

- Review of the District mission, vision, and tactics
- A welcome by the General Manager or other senior management member
- A brief overview of District history
- Overview of sites, programs, and the customers the District serves
- Overview of the Volunteer Program
- Overview of the Organizational Chart
- The importance of volunteers to the District
- The breadth of volunteer involvement at the District
- A Review of Policies and Procedures
- Hazardous Communications/Right to Know training
- Training Opportunities
- New employee and volunteer documentation
- Review of the volunteer handbook
- Tour of the site
- Importance of exit interviews, which provide the District valuable information on how to better its programs
- Information brochures, written data, etc. regarding the potential exposures the volunteer may encounter during their assignment

Essentials in a Group or Episodic Orientation

1. Abbreviated version of the full orientation
2. District mission, vision, and tactics
3. A brief overview of sites and services
4. Review of safety issues relevant to project/site
5. A description of and instructions for the work to be done
6. Identify supervisor for the day
7. Collect emergency contact information
8. Short welcome by a staff member
9. Issue an invitation to become an ongoing volunteer with the District
10. Use a sign-in sheet that includes a Waiver of Liability for the event or project

On-boarding and Site Induction

In addition to the District orientation, each site supervisor will provide an onsite specific induction which includes:

- Welcome volunteer and introduce to employees, volunteers, and other coworkers
- Location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency exits
- Location to secure personal belongings
- Instructions on the use of office equipment such as fax, phones, computers, etc.
- Overview of software applications (i.e., Reservation software, point of sale system)
- Provide keys or other district materials necessary
- Instruct whom to notify if they are unable to report to work
- Demonstrate how to report volunteer hours
- Review job description, expectation, and schedules
- Provide on-site specific operational training
- Hold regular meetings with employees and volunteers
- Treat volunteers as valued staff members

Training Volunteers

Types of volunteer training may include:

- On-the-job training
- Meetings, workshops, and conferences
- On-going upgrade of skills

Job coaching, one of the most effective informal training methods, supplements training and

is used by District supervisors regularly. Supervisors assume the role of job coach by:

- Demonstrating a skill or technique on the job
- Sharing current techniques and new information
- Encouraging teamwork, group-sharing, problem-solving, buddy systems and mentoring
- Seeing the volunteer doing something well and complimenting him or her

Section 7: Supervising and Evaluating Volunteers

The District provides regular supervision and informal annual evaluations for all volunteers. Supervisors provide various forms of supervision directly or indirectly through designated employees. This includes training and development in specialized tasks, holding regular staff meetings that include both employees and volunteers, developing a positive working environment to mitigate potential conflicts, recognizing the contributions of volunteers, and providing constructive feedback when necessary.

Section 8: Volunteer Insurance Program

The Volunteer Insurance Program is a countywide program that provides coverage for volunteers in the areas of Excess Medical, Excess Volunteer Liability, and Excess Automobile Liability. As described, each specific type of coverage is more than the volunteer's personal coverage. The District maintains the following list and forms which may be requested at any time by CountyHR:

List containing the following information:

1. Dates and Times Volunteered
2. Work Location
3. Work Duties

Forms:

1. Volunteer Application

District Related Policies:

[District Policy, 4.5 Employee and Volunteer Recognition](#)

[District Policy, 4.7 Volunteer Interest, Recruitment, and Screening District Policy, 4.9 Volunteer Separation](#)

[District Policy, 7.3 Employee and Volunteer Use of District Facilities](#)