



Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer Tyler

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WELCOME TO VOLUNTEER TYLER

Welcome from Mayor Warren –

Thank you for your commitment to serve the City of Tyler by becoming a volunteer. Throughout your service we will do our best to make sure that you understand how appreciated you are by the City, but it's important to know that as Mayor, I recognize your contributions beginning your first day.

The “Called to Serve” spirit is a term we frequently use with City employees because, like you, they genuinely want to invest in and improve our community. By partnering with the City, you help us serve the greater community, share ideas and advance objectives.



My hope is that you will enjoy serving as part of our Volunteer Tyler team. We strive to ensure that our volunteer assignments are meaningful and engaging. We will become a better organization with your help and continue to improve how we can impact our community together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Don Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Don Warren



Welcome Volunteer!

The City of Tyler welcomes you!

Because of you and other volunteers like you the City is able to better serve its Citizens. Volunteers each bring their own unique set of skills and perspectives that aid the City in reaching and helping more people throughout our community.

You will have the opportunity to SERVE side-by-side with City of Tyler employees in many diverse roles and departments. The City will undoubtedly reap positive impacts through your service and your generous choice to volunteer. It is our genuine hope that you find your volunteer journey to be fulfilling and that yours and the lives of those you work with are greatly enriched through the process.



You are truly valued by the City of Tyler and we thank you for volunteering with us.

With sincere gratitude,

Regina Y. Moss, JD
Dir. of Organizational Development



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General Statement of Guidelines

Definitions

For the purpose of this manual the governing body, departments and facilities owned or operated as the City of Tyler will be referred to as the City.

The City Volunteer Services Coordinator will be referred to as City Coordinator.

Volunteer is anyone who performs a task or tasks with no expectation of compensation, monetary or otherwise. Volunteers with the City must go through a formal application and acceptance process before being allowed to perform any task on behalf of the City.

Recurring Volunteers are volunteers with a recurring schedule who perform a specific task in an assigned area.

Special Project Volunteers perform a task with a defined end point. These volunteers often have a special skill or talent that can be useful when applied to a specific project. Examples include, but are not limited to, instructors teaching a tennis class or a computer expert creating a database.

Special Event Volunteers are those who participate in a one-time special event such as Fall Festival, Spring Easter Egg Hunt, Festival on the Square, etc.

Volunteer Guidelines Statement

The City's goals can best be served when the citizens become involved as active participants in achieving those goals. To facilitate this, the City accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers on all levels and within appropriate programs and activities. All City staff members are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles where volunteers may serve the interest of the City and to help recruit quality volunteers to participate in this program.

The program's objectives:

- Recruit and orient a pool of qualified volunteers to augment paid staff members in serving citizens.
- Provide an opportunity for and encouragement of citizen participation in City Government for a greater understanding of City operations.
- Provide volunteers with opportunities to share knowledge and expertise with City staff and citizens.
- Volunteers are not to cut or replace paid staff positions, but to expand the quality of services the City provides.

Scope of Guidelines

Unless specifically stated, these guidelines apply to all volunteers and all City personnel.

Program Structure

Planning and organization is essential to the productive use of volunteers. The City Coordinator will provide a central administrative coordinating point for management of volunteer service. The City Coordinator is also responsible for coaching staff and volunteers to work together to provide the highest level of service.

Each City Department with volunteers will have a Department Coordinator to oversee the day-to-day functions of volunteers in their respective departments. The Department Coordinator will provide feedback to the City Coordinator detailing volunteer efforts in their department.

Service at Discretion of the City

It is understood that volunteer service with the City is completely at the discretion of the City. The City may, at any time, terminate the service of a volunteer without a stated reason.

A volunteer may, at any time, decide to sever their relationship with the City. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the volunteer's supervisor or the City Coordinator.

Volunteer Information

Conflict of Interest

Anyone with a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the City, whether personal, philosophical or financial will not be accepted as a volunteer.

Representation of the City

Volunteers are to seek prior consultation and approval from their assigned Department Coordinator before making any statement or taking any action that reflects on the City. Examples of such action include but are not limited to:

- Public comments to media representatives
- Coalition efforts with other organizations
- Agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations

Volunteers are representatives of the City when specifically indicated within their job descriptions and only within those guidelines.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information they may be exposed to in the course of their duties. Such information may include, but is not limited to, personal information about a staff member, other volunteers or a client of the City.

Those volunteers assigned to areas such as the Police Department, Fire Department, Municipal Court Administration, Municipal Judge's Office and Human Resources Department may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement specific to that department.

Any person who releases or procures the release of Texas Criminal History information held by the Criminal Identification Section is guilty of a misdemeanor according to Section 411.085 of the Texas Government Code.

The release of criminal information to the public might also be considered a felony.

The citizens of Tyler have a right to privacy. Any and all information pertaining to police records or other clearance level documents is to be kept strictly confidential. Anyone in violation of this provision will not only be terminated as a City volunteer but may also be prosecuted.

Safety

Each department where volunteers are assigned is responsible for conducting safety training for their specific worksite. Safety training should include operation of any machinery, tools or other equipment that the volunteer may be asked to use or work in close proximity.

Leave of Absence

Volunteers are asked to notify their Department Coordinator if they expect to be absent from a position for an extended period. The Department Coordinator will notify the City Coordinator. The City Coordinator will make a notation in the volunteer record that the volunteer will be absent.

Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a reasonable regular schedule as agreed upon by the volunteer and the Department Coordinator. If a volunteer expects to be absent, the volunteer should contact the Department Coordinator as soon as practical prior to the missed time. This will allow the Department Coordinator to make adjustments in the department's schedule and make alternate arrangements. Chronic absenteeism will be reviewed by the Department Coordinator to determine if there is a schedule conflict or if the volunteer is not suited for the position.

Grievances

In the event the volunteer wishes to register a grievance, they should present it in writing to their immediate supervisor. A copy of the grievance should be forwarded to the City Coordinator. All grievances will be handled in accordance with City Policy. The City Coordinator will be kept apprised of the process, corrective actions and final outcome of the process.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are a valuable resource to the City of Tyler, the City's paid staff and the entire community. Volunteers have the right to expect meaningful assignments, effective supervision and recognition for work well done.

In return, volunteers have the responsibility to perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to be loyal to the goals and procedures of the City of Tyler.

The City expects volunteers to:

1. Be Reliable:
 - Arrive on time for work.
 - Carry out assignments to the best of your ability.
 - Fulfill your commitments.

2. Be Dependable:
 - Use reasonable judgment in decision making and check with a supervisor when in doubt.
 - Know your own limitations. Discuss difficulties with your supervisor.
 - Respect the confidentiality of information.

3. Be a Team Member:
 - Be supportive of the City of Tyler's goals and mission.
 - Adhere to the City's policies and procedures.
 - Accept training requirements and constructive suggestions from supervisors.

Volunteer Management

Maintenance of Records

A records system similar to personnel files will be maintained by the City Coordinator. Volunteer records will include the original application material and time | attendance data.

Department Volunteer Coordinator's Duties

Each Department Coordinator is responsible for on-site training of volunteers assigned to their department. This person keeps the monthly records of volunteer activities and sends them to the City Coordinator. Department Coordinators work with the City Coordinator in developing new opportunities within the various City departments, recruitment of new volunteers and rewarding the efforts of their volunteers

Accountability

Time | Attendance Record

Each volunteer will be responsible for maintaining an accurate record of their service using a timesheet.

The Department Coordinator will collect the volunteer timesheets at the end of each month and forward them to the City Coordinator. The timesheets will be added to the database and used for program reporting.

Job Descriptions

The purpose of job descriptions is to give the volunteer a clear definition of the task they are asked to do.

Recruitment

Recruitment of new volunteers is an ongoing effort carried out primarily by the City Coordinator. However all City staff members should be alert to opportunities to recruit new volunteers on a daily basis.

The intent of recruitment is to expand the involvement of volunteers in the City departments. Volunteers shall be recruited regardless of sex, disabilities, age, race, religion or other conditions. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability and availability to perform a task on behalf of the City. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function.

The age requirements of volunteers with the City will vary in accordance with the areas or programs in which the individual volunteers. All individuals who wish to volunteer must complete an application.

Criminal Records Check

All volunteers who apply with the City will be subjected to a background check. The extent of the check will be determined by the department and will be based on the position the volunteer will be filling and contact with the public or money.

Orientation

Prior to starting in a new position, volunteers will attend a general orientation to the program conducted by the City Coordinator. The orientation will cover the Volunteer program's nature, purpose and activity for which they are recruited. Additional orientation and training will be conducted by the Department Coordinator.

Placement

In placing a volunteer, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met; no volunteer should be assigned to a "make work" or "busy work" position and no position should be given to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer. Volunteers may be placed in a safety sensitive area such as the Airport, Police Department or Water Treatment Plant with approval from the respective Department Head and by passing the appropriate security clearances required by that Department.

Once a volunteer is found to be acceptable, the City Coordinator will contact the volunteer and set up an orientation that includes the department coordinator from the department where the volunteer will be working.

Volunteers may choose to work in as many departments as they desire as long as they meet the criteria for those departments. Volunteers may transfer from one department or position by notifying the City Coordinator or their current Department Coordinator.

On-the-Job Training

Volunteers will receive on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The training will cover the complexity and demands of the position.

Volunteer Supervision

Requirement of a Supervisor

Each department will identify the Department Coordinator and the person who will be directly responsible for supervising the volunteer. The supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer and will make themselves available to assist the volunteer.

Acceptance of Volunteers by Staff

Department Coordinators should consult with members of their department's staff before assigning a volunteer to work with any staff member. Volunteers are valuable resources and staff is encouraged to seriously consider

creative ways in which volunteers might be of service. All staff members are free to consult with the City Coordinator if they feel in need of assistance or additional training.

Staff Volunteer Management Training

All Department Coordinators should receive training from the City Coordinator on how to effectively use volunteers. The Department Coordinators are responsible for training departmental staff members on using and supervising volunteers. A Supervisor's Handbook will be provided to all staff members involved in volunteer supervision along with a copy of these guidelines.

Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not follow the guidelines and procedures of this program or the City policies and procedures may be considered for dismissal. Prior to dismissal, the volunteer will be permitted to discuss the issue with the chain of command. Volunteers will normally be given an opportunity to present their viewpoint prior to dismissal.

There are some circumstances in which a volunteer may be terminated immediately. In the event of a serious case of misconduct, the supervisor may dismiss a volunteer at the time of discovery of the misconduct. This should be followed up by contacting the Department Head and City Coordinator who will ask the volunteer to meet for further discussion and formal dismissal that includes the return of any City-issued property.

Volunteers may face immediate dismissal under these circumstances:

- Falsifying information on application
- Arriving at work in an impaired state (either from drugs or alcohol)
- Committing a criminal offense (including violence, weapons, sexual, theft, etc.)
- Failure to maintain confidentiality in relation to sensitive material
- Willful destruction of City property
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients or co-workers
- Failure to abide by City policies or procedures

For less serious offenses, the City's volunteer program will use a three-strike guide for general issues of poor performance or refusal to follow guidelines and procedures. The first time a volunteer fails to meet performance standards, the supervisor will verbally address the issue with the volunteers and inform the Department and City Coordinator. This verbal correction will be noted in the volunteer's file including the date of the correction and the suggested corrective actions.

The second time a volunteer fails to meet standards, the Department Coordinator will make a written report of the performance including the explanation given by the volunteer. The Department Coordinator will then write the appropriate steps for the volunteer to follow. Both will sign a statement of agreement saying the volunteer agrees to follow the guidelines as set down in the correction report. A copy of this report will be forwarded to the City Coordinator for inclusion in the volunteer record.

Should there be a third occurrence, a detailed report of the incident will be forwarded to the City Coordinator along with a recommendation concerning whether to retain or dismiss the volunteer. The City Coordinator will meet with the volunteer's Department Head and Coordinator to discuss the recommendation and determine the appropriate action which may include dismissal.

A volunteer may appeal their dismissal through the Department's chain of command, up to the City Manager.

In the event a volunteer is dismissed from service or leaves volunteer services by choice, the City Coordinator is responsible for ensuring those affected are notified as soon as possible. The volunteer should return all City-issued property to the department coordinator or City Coordinator.

If a volunteer chooses to resign from service with the City, the volunteer is asked to give advance notice and sit for an exit interview with the City Coordinator. The exit interview is the volunteer's opportunity to discuss reasons for leaving the program and to give an assessment of their volunteer experience.