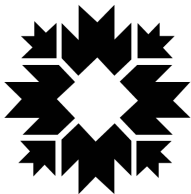


Volunteer Handbook



Get involved!



**CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON**
PARKS AND RECREATION

Revised July 2024



Please recycle this booklet.

Revised July 2024

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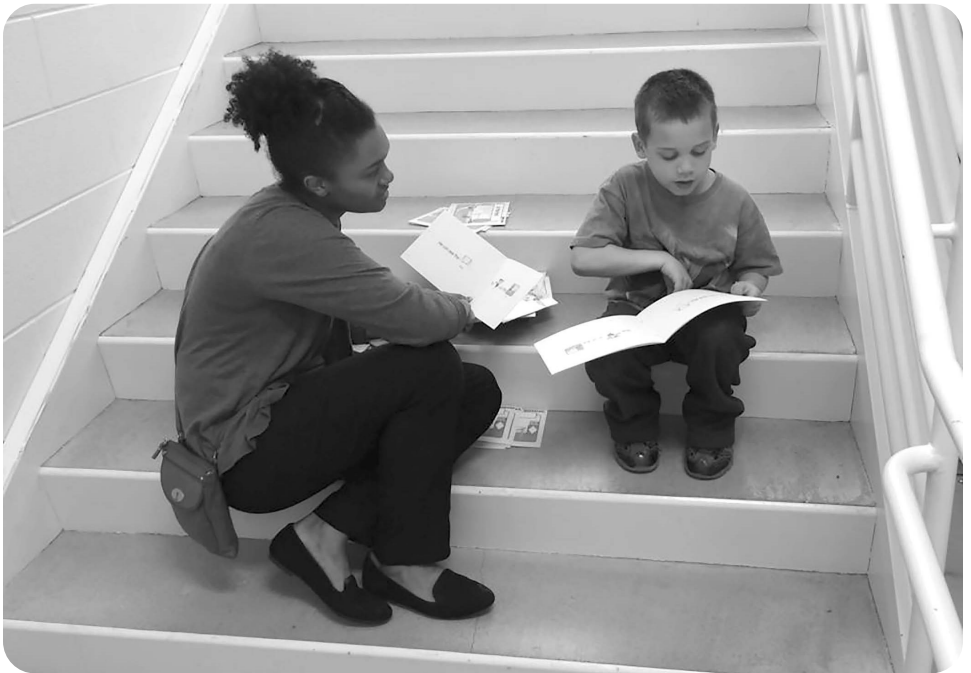
Welcome!

The City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department welcomes you as a volunteer. Throughout the year, the Department receives many requests concerning volunteer opportunities. Volunteer opportunities are “service learning” experiences.

To assist new volunteers in learning about the Parks and Recreation Department and their specific volunteer functions, the Department has designed a volunteer orientation process. We hope to provide each volunteer with a solid training foundation which includes our mission, goals, policies, procedures, program responsibilities, and general guidelines as they relate to your experience.

The Department asks all volunteers to become familiar with the information presented in this handbook. As a volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department, you are expected to function within these guidelines. If a situation should occur that is not addressed in the following pages, contact your immediate supervisor for direction or contact the Community Relations Coordinator at 812-349-3739.

All volunteers are required to sign and complete specific volunteer forms. Thank you for offering your time to the programs of Bloomington Parks and Recreation. Your involvement has a tremendous positive impact on our organization and our community.



Mission

We equitably enrich community well-being by providing quality parks, trails, facilities, programs and services, and through the stewardship of natural spaces.

Quality

The Department strives to maintain high quality services by:

1. Providing safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing parkland and facilities.
2. Providing the best possible supervisors, leaders, instructors, and volunteers who are trained to perform at a high level and with exceptional customer service skills.
3. Providing a variety of programs, services, and special events for our community that are safe, fun, develop the individual, provide a sense of community, and encourage healthy lifestyles.
4. Providing opportunity for input from community residents concerning programs, services, fees, and facilities.

Objectives

The Department emphasizes the following objectives for the volunteer program:

1. Ensure that programs and events offered to the Bloomington community are safe, comprehensive, and enjoyable for all participants.
2. Unite individuals from varying backgrounds and with varying skills who have a common interest in service learning and community involvement.
3. Encourage the adoption of active lifestyles and highlight the importance of individual growth and community involvement.

Your Responsibility

While you are performing your volunteer responsibilities, it is extremely important to keep in mind that you are a representative of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department at all times. Whether you are leading a game, registering participants, or working in a park, your appearance, attitude, and personality is a direct reflection of this department. What you say and do creates an image for our public. Those participating in an activity or visiting a facility will make important judgements and form opinions concerning this department based on you and your ability and desire to provide quality customer service. Be cheerful, courteous, and polite. Remember, your volunteer role is to help participants enjoy their leisure experience.



RECRUITMENT/TRAINING/SUPERVISION

Recruitment

The Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department has volunteer opportunities available throughout the year. We place volunteers in positions as need requires. Volunteer opportunities are publicized on our volunteer website, announced in a variety of media outlets through the efforts of the Bloomington Volunteer Network, and distributed to a number of organizations, groups, and individuals via our electronic newsletter.

Information regarding volunteer opportunities is available at our office from 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday. Placement in an ongoing position may be based on an individual's level of experience in recreation leadership roles, references, and other considerations. Background checks are completed on all ongoing volunteers, due to the nature of public work. The Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Bloomington are committed to the policy that all persons have equal access to all programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or political affiliation.

Training

All volunteers are trained in all aspects of their placement. This training is done through orientations, clinics, pre-service trainings, staff meetings and/or in-service programs. Prior to placement, volunteers may be required to attend a series of training programs. These programs may consist of an orientation, on-site training with various staff members, or online certification. Attendance at all parts of the training program is required. Volunteer hours accumulated in trainings are included in your service hours.

Supervision

Volunteers are assigned a placement supervisor. Before leaving orientation, be sure you are clear as to who this is and how to reach him or her. Contact information is outlined on the volunteer job description. Placement supervisors serve as your first point of contact on issues related to your position. The Community Relations Coordinator and Advocate for Community Engagement (ACE) serve as additional supervisory support. If you have a concern about or issue with your placement supervisor, contact the Community Relations Coordinator. Consult all supervisors on issues concerning your schedule.

UNIFORMS/BADGES

Dress Code

All volunteers are strongly encouraged to wear the volunteer name tag that is provided to them while volunteering. Warm-up suits and shorts are acceptable when volunteering in an active and hands-on position. Unacceptable clothing includes any garment or accessory that promotes smoking, drinking, or includes derogatory or offensive messages.

Shoes shall be low heeled with enclosed toe. No strapless, heeled shoes are allowed with the exception of volunteers at pool facilities in attendant, guard, instructor, or office positions. In general, most volunteer positions require that you wear only closed-toe shoes. For specific exceptions regarding your volunteer work, consult your placement supervisor.

Property Agreement

All volunteers are required to utilize Department property issued for use, including ID badge, uniforms, keys, etc., in an appropriate fashion and as they were intended. Misuse or ill-intended use can result in immediate dismissal.

CONDUCT

On-the-Job Conduct

All Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department volunteers are expected to report to work at least five minutes prior to their scheduled starting time in an alert, clear state of mind, and in proper attire. Personal problems or concerns should not affect job performance.

While on duty, volunteers shall not:

1. Consume alcoholic beverages or use controlled substances
2. Smoke or vape
3. Sleep
4. Participate in any sport, class, or workout unless related to your placement
5. Study or read (unless approved)
6. Eat in public if it deters from assigned duty (breaks and eating are allowed in break areas or as approved by a supervisor)
7. Display discourteous and/or disrespectful behavior to supervisors, fellow volunteers, or participants
8. Appear in attire that does not comply with the department's dress code.

Any improper actions will be noted and corrected. Penalties for violation of on the job conduct rules range from verbal warning to termination, depending on the severity and number of violations.

Illness Prior to Scheduled Shift

Volunteers should avoid volunteering while ill. If ill and unable to report to your volunteer assignment, call your on-site supervisor to inform him or her. When at all possible, attempt to give a minimum two-hour notice.

Time Off

When time off is needed, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform his or her supervisor. This applies to school breaks, exam preparation, and scheduled vacations.

Program Cancellation

Many department programs correspond with the Monroe County Community School Corporation's inclement weather cancellations. If you are participating in a program that takes place on a weekend, your on-site supervisor will notify you of program cancellations. If in doubt, contact your on-site supervisor or the Community Relations Coordinator.

Documenting and Reporting Hours

Banneker Afterschool Program volunteers have an on-site time sheet system requiring check-in at each shift. Volunteer hours are recorded in a volunteer database and used for statistical purposes and are available to volunteers, if verification is needed.

Telephone Procedures (when applicable)

Cell Phone Use—When direct interaction with participants is a component of your volunteer position, silence your personal cell phone and refrain from texting during your shift.

Personal Calls—Use phones only for communication directly related to your volunteer assignment. Personal calls should be limited in time and frequency.

Answering the Phone—Always answer the phone with a courteous greeting, and identify the site where you work and yourself. Example: "Twin Lakes Sports Park, this is Chris, may I help you?" Ask for assistance with office phones if necessary.

Making a Call—Dial 9 to get an outside dial tone, then dial the local number being called.

Long Distance Calls—No volunteer shall make a long distance personal call that would be billed to the Department. Supervisors must approve long distance calls for business purposes.

Information Dissemination

Email is the primary tool used to share relevant information with volunteers. If you prefer an alternative method of receiving information, please notify your on-site supervisor. As an active, ongoing volunteer, you'll receive other general parks information. If you wish to be removed from any contact list, please notify the sender or utilize the email unsubscribe instructions.

Supervising Participants

Volunteers may be in charge of participants as long as a supervisor/staff person is in close proximity. Example: A volunteer/s (maintaining adult/youth ratios) can take participants outside to play behind the Banneker Community Center as long as there is a paid staff person in the facility and easily accessible.

Transportation of Participants/Public

Participants must not be transported by volunteers to, from, or during class time by private or city vehicle. Only those employees trained to transport participants in Department vans are authorized to perform this task, and only as scheduled by program staff. No unauthorized or unscheduled transportation on behalf of the Department shall occur.

Transportation of Volunteer

Prior to riding in a City of Bloomington vehicle, the volunteer or the guardian of the volunteer (if the volunteer is a minor) must complete the appropriate release form. This form will hold harmless and indemnify the City of Bloomington, its employees, officers, and agents for any claims that may arise out of any accident.

Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department to maintain a workplace free of harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation for any employee and volunteer. Harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, and unwelcome and/or offensive sexual comments.

A volunteer who believes he or she has been subject to harassment as defined in this handbook shall report the incident to the Department Administrator.

Media Relations

All persons working for the press requesting information concerning the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department must be referred to the supervisor on duty. Once you have notified your on-site supervisor of the presence of a member of the media, you are welcome to answer questions from the media regarding your volunteerism.

Confidentiality of Participants

Sensitive issues occasionally arise within a volunteer experience. Volunteers are asked to respect the individual participating in Parks and Recreation programs and keep sensitive issues in confidence.

Parking

Be sure to follow all parking ordinances when arriving for your volunteer shift. If your placement is at City Hall, a part-time pass will be issued allowing parking in the designated lot. Banneker Afterschool Program volunteers can utilize street parking in the near west side neighborhood where permitted, or park in the back teacher's lot bordering Eighth Street. All other park facilities have designated parking lots.

VOLUNTEER SAFETY/RISK MANAGEMENT

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers are utilized for a wide variety of events and programs. Volunteers are required to exercise due care in the course of their responsibilities in order to prevent injury to themselves, other volunteers or employees, and to the participants in the programs.

Volunteers should:

1. Report all unsafe conditions to supervisory staff immediately while making sure that facilities where programs are being conducted are safe to use.
2. Learn and observe the safety rules, procedures, and policies.
3. Take an active interest and part in the safety program.

Insurance

The City of Bloomington does not provide workmen's compensation to volunteers who are injured while assisting in Department-sponsored programs, or assisting at a work site. The City does not pay hospitalization bills or medical claims of any nature for volunteers. All volunteers are strongly urged to obtain their own insurance coverage before participating or volunteering in any program or activity sponsored by the Department.

Waivers

A waiver is essentially a contract between two parties, in which one agrees to forego pursuit of any legal claim in exchange for some benefit conferred by the other party. Indiana law allows the use of waivers, and will uphold them when the parties' intent is clearly expressed on the signed document. Thus, the Department is within its rights to use waivers, and may reasonably rely upon their enforceability.

A. General Waiver and Release Information

1. The Department provides three primary waiver forms to be used for all appropriate programs:
 - a. Volunteer waiver statement
 - b. Waiver statement for adult participants
 - c. Waiver statement for children
2. Although it is always more desirable to have each participant sign a waiver for each event, program staff may use one waiver form followed by an attached list of signatures for events or programs that require a large number of volunteers. When this format of a "mass waiver" is incorporated into a program, it is imperative that the complete waiver language be at the top of each signature page.
3. A person who volunteers frequently throughout the year for several different activities may also use one form, making sure each activity name is listed separately.
4. Children under the age of 18 years cannot sign waivers for themselves. A minor's parents must sign a participation waiver prior to that minor's participation in an event or activity.

Use of Personal Vehicle while Volunteering for the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department

Volunteers who use their personal vehicle to perform tasks of a volunteer nature and who are involved in a vehicle accident while performing the volunteer service will not receive City of Bloomington liability insurance coverage. The responsibility for repair of the volunteer's personal vehicle is borne by the volunteer's insurance company.

Weather

If your volunteer position involves frequent visits to parks or trails, assess weather conditions before your outing. Consult the weather radar, if necessary, and use good judgment. Appropriate attire reflects current and changing weather conditions.

Weather hotline numbers:

Community Events: 812-349-3754

Frank Southern Ice Arena/Bryan Park and Mills Pools: 812-349-3741

EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT REPORTING

Emergency Procedures

Notify on-site supervisor immediately.

First Aid Certified Volunteers

Volunteers who are certified in first aid with the American Red Cross may perform first aid should the need arise.

Reporting of Personal Accidents and Injuries

All accidents and injuries sustained by volunteers or participants in Bloomington Parks and Recreation activities shall be reported to the office within 24 hours of the accident, using the required accident report form. The report must be submitted to the supervisor in charge.

General Information Regarding Participant Accidents/Injuries

1. Avoid making a statement of opinion regarding the severity of the injury or accident. Give only the facts to authorized individuals.
2. Use judgement in keeping spectators away. Maintain control and supervision of other participants and programs.
3. The Department does not have insurance that covers participants' injuries due to their own actions. Do not tell the injured party we will pay for treatment.
4. Make no statements about the accident to anyone but the police or authorities.
5. Do not call hospitals or families of injured participants seeking information about the participant's condition.
6. If any participant or third party complains to the volunteer about property damage they consider to be the responsibility of Parks and Recreation, the volunteer should inform their supervisor and direct the complainant to Risk Management at 812-349-3438.



TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Violation of policies as described in this handbook and/or unsatisfactory job performance can result in termination of your volunteer opportunity. The following criteria and procedures for disciplinary action have been established to benefit volunteers as well as the Department.

Suspension/Dismissal

If a volunteer violates policy and/or procedures as indicated in this handbook, discussed at staff meetings, or documented through memos, disciplinary actions may be taken.

This disciplinary action will occur in the following order depending on the severity of the violation.

1. This first step is verbal warning of the infraction to the volunteer.
2. If repeated violations occur, a written warning may be sent to the volunteer and placed in their file.
3. If violations continue, the final step is a written suspension or dismissal.
4. Note that any violation of a severe nature may result in immediate suspension or dismissal.

All disciplinary action is taken after a thorough investigation into the incident and careful evaluation of the facts. The volunteer is given an opportunity to express their views and opinions on the violation during the investigation.

Once a ruling is made, the volunteer is given three business days to respond to the proposed disciplinary action. This response should be used to explain why such disciplinary action should not be imposed. The response should be given to the volunteer's supervisor. If the volunteer feels that they have received unfair treatment, he/she has the option to appeal the ruling through the organizational chart with a final appeal to the Director.

Thank you for your involvement!



APPENDIX A—Child Abuse Reporting

Protection of Children

Children are a designated group for which the Parks and Recreation Department provides major program participation. All staff who perform services for the Department—including full- and part-time staff, contractors, and volunteers—are considered mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. Mandated reporters are required to report any known or reasonable suspected child abuse to their immediate supervisor.

Procedure for Reporting Child Abuse

1. Report any suspected child abuse immediately to your on-site supervisor, who will then alert his or her Division Director.
2. Department policy requires that the volunteer, with the support of his or her on-site supervisor, complete an Incident Report including details. Be sure to note the name of the individual to whom you report the incident.
3. Complete and file the Incident Report form within 24 hours of the observable incident. Provide a copy for yourself and deliver the report to the Parks and Recreation administrative offices within the allotted timeline.
4. Contact your immediate supervisor to inform him or her of the situation.

Reporting Responsibility

Reporting duties are individual and cannot be delegated to another. If two or more mandated reporters are present in a situation, and are all jointly aware of a known or suspected child abuse, a mutual agreement may be made to designate one to phone the incident in and write the report. This does not release the liability of others observing the incident if the report is not made or completed properly.

Failure to Report Suspected Child Abuse

Any employee or volunteer who fails to report suspected child abuse shall be suspended immediately until such time as the investigation into the failure to report is complete. At the completion of the investigation, the employee or volunteer may be terminated dependant on the findings. Further legal actions are possible against any mandated reporter failing to report suspected child abuse.

Unattended Children—Instruction or Structured Program

Since children compose a major participant service component for the Department, all employees and volunteers are required to ensure that children registered for programs are safe during the program and as they leave a program site. Children shall not be left unattended while awaiting parents or others to pick them up. If a child has permission to walk or bicycle home (some programs receive a sign-out sheet for parents to sign before a child may leave the site), be sure to dismiss him or her and observe the time he or she leaves. If the child is to wait for a ride, Department staff or volunteers shall not leave the child unattended after the program's end. In the event the child's ride is excessively late, contact the Bloomington Parks and Recreation office or your supervisor for assistance. If the office is closed, or you cannot contact the supervisor, contact the Bloomington Police Department via their non-emergency number: 812-339-4477.

APPENDIX B—Youth Program Policies Department Handbook

Program Registration

Registrations should be directed to the Bloomington Parks and Recreation office, 401 N. Morton St., Suite #250. (Individuals wishing to register may complete on-site registration only with supervisory approval. No on-site registration is to be accepted by staff without authorization). All on-site registration inquiries should be directed to the on-site supervisor.

Children are not accepted on a drop-in basis for any programs except where an admission fee is charged, and then only if the child is old enough to participate. A health information form must be on file before a child may participate in any activity or program other than exceptions found in specific program procedures.

Participants must register by the program and/or session deadline. Prorating or hourly rates are not permitted.

Sign-in and -out Procedures

Children must be signed in and out at the beginning and end of each program/day by parents or guardians. No child may sign himself or herself in or out, and children will only be released to authorized adults. NO EXCEPTIONS can be made on pick-ups.

Safety

1. Children need to be accompanied everywhere. Be sure to always supervise children directly at all times.
2. Supervisors should provide volunteers with specific rules for all playgrounds and park areas where there will be children playing. No child should ever be out of sight of adult supervisors.
3. All facilities should be “child proofed” by putting away potentially dangerous objects, keeping closets locked, cabinets closed, sharp objects out of reach, and the like.
4. Be sure to keep an appropriate ratio of children to staff. For each room or area, the prescribed ratio is 10:1 for elementary school and 6:1 for preschool-age children.
5. Continually conduct head counts and encourage children to keep with a “buddy”, especially when off-site.
6. Always approach any stranger who comes into a facility or area where children are and ask, “May I help you?” If the stranger refuses to identify himself or herself or will not leave the area, send for a supervisor immediately.

Discipline of Youth

The goal of the Department’s youth development philosophy is to promote and maintain a safe, positive, and pleasant environment for children, which contributes to a child’s self-esteem, sense of belonging, understanding of their community, and personal growth. Unfortunately, there may be a time when a child experiences an off day. This is understandable, and the staff needs to encourage appropriate behavior when behavior is inappropriate. The following consequences should occur in a situation requiring discipline.

1. The adult will explain the rule that was broken and help redirect the child to correct his/her behavior.
2. If the child breaks the same rule again, he/she will sit for 5–10 minutes in a designated “time-out” area. When his/her time is finished, the adult will briefly discuss the rule with the child, and then he/she will be allowed to fully participate.

3. If the rule is broken again, the child will have a “time-out” session with the Program Supervisor. The supervisor will discuss the problem with the child and the consequences of breaking the rule for a third time. Depending on the severity of the situation, the supervisor will use discretion when considering taking one of the following actions: a discussion time with the child, revoking a privilege (such as a swimming period), immediately calling the child’s parents, or calling a conference with the child and parent.
4. Suspensions will occur if a child’s behavior is dangerously unsafe to himself or herself and others, continually disruptive to the group, or causes injury to anyone, including himself or herself.

Trips

1. All trips taken must be approved by program staff. In addition, there must be at least two staff attending any field trip.
2. While off-site a staff member shall have child health forms on their person at all times.
3. Staff shall ensure they have been assigned appropriate first aid materials and safety gear (e.g. stop signs and safety vests).
4. Staff shall double check for health forms, first aid kits, and travel information before they leave the site.
5. Staff shall be very aware of safety while walking near roads with children. Children will hold hands with their buddies. Staff members shall always walk at the head and the end of any line of children on a trip.
6. When crossing the street, an additional staff member must come forward to the front of the line. When the road is clear, or when the crosswalk signal flashes “walk”, this staff member shall step into the middle of the street holding up the stop sign until the last child crosses. Other staff members shall lead the children across the street.
7. If a child becomes ill, or an emergency situation arises, staff members shall seek the aid of another staff member before leaving their group.
8. Avoid all interactions with strangers while out in the community, including friends you might see.
9. Staff shall always take a head count or roll call (or both) of children on the trip when entering and leaving a field trip site.



Find additional Parks and Recreation Department volunteer opportunities online at bloomington.in.gov/parksvol.



**401 N. Morton, Ste. 250
Bloomington IN 47404
812-349-3700**

bloomington.in.gov/parksvol



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Revised July 2024