

Volunteer Program Guide

THE CITY OF
Anna

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Chapter 1 - The Volunteer Program

1.1 Overall Guidance on Utilization of Volunteers

The City of Anna's Volunteer Program is a unique occasion for community members to share their gifts and talents. Volunteers who are placed in a rewarding experience often become instrumental team members who not only enhance the capabilities of the city but also become lifelong advocates. Volunteers are rewarded by the intrinsic altruism of their experience. The city is benefited by the increased resources made possible through the volunteer. To this end, the city accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at various levels within appropriate programs and activities. All staff members are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive volunteer roles, and in the recruitment of volunteers from the community.

1.2 Purpose

Volunteer guidelines are provided for overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer programs. These policies are intended for guidance only and do not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The city reserves the exclusive right to change any of these guidelines at any time and to require adherence to such changes. Areas not specifically covered by these guidelines shall be determined by the volunteer program manager. Additions to this document may not conflict with the existing standards provided within these guidelines without approval of the City Manager. In matters of interpretation of these guidelines the City Manager shall have final authority.

1.3 Scope of Volunteer Guidelines

Unless specifically stated otherwise, these guidelines apply to all non-elected volunteers in all volunteer programs and projects undertaken on or on behalf of the city.

1.4 Role of the City's Volunteer Program Administrator

The productive utilization of volunteers requires a planned, organized and unified effort. The function of the city's volunteer program administrator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management city-wide. A volunteer program administrator is responsible for assisting city staff in identifying volunteer opportunities, recruitment, tracking, evaluations, policy, and appreciation. *Note that a person serving as a volunteer program administrator may have a different official title and additional roles and responsibilities within the organization.*

1.5 Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the city. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the city prior to performance of the task. Except as expressly set forth in these guidelines, a volunteer is not an employee of the city.

1.6 Classification of Volunteers

Volunteers are classified as:

Credentialed Volunteers – These are volunteers who have passed the city’s background clearance.

General Volunteers – These are volunteers who are not working with vulnerable populations and are likely special event or short-term volunteers.

1.7 Employees as Volunteers

The city may accept the services of staff as volunteers. This service is accepted only if the volunteer service is provided freely of the employee’s own volition without any coercive nature, involves work which is outside the scope of normal staff duties in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and takes place outside of normal working hours. Family members of staff are eligible for volunteer service.

1.8 Service at the Discretion of the City

The city accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the city and the department providing the volunteer opportunity. Volunteers agree that the city may at any time, for whatever reason, terminate the volunteer’s relationship with a department and potentially the city.

The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the relationship with the city. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer’s supervisor.

1.9 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the city, its staff and its customers. This program is designed to allow volunteers to:

- Be given meaningful assignments.
- Be given activity descriptions, goals and expectations.
- Be treated with respect as volunteer members assisting the city/department team and receive effective supervision.
- Receive recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the department and city.

1.10 Scope of Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be utilized in all programs and activities of the city and serve in various aspects as appropriate. Volunteers shall not, however, be utilized to displace any paid employees from their positions.

Chapter 2 - Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1 Maintenance of Records

An electronic volunteer management system will be maintained by the city to store volunteer records, including addresses, phone numbers, emergency contact information, dates of service, duties performed, evaluation of work and awards received. Volunteers and designated staff shall be responsible for updating all appropriate records and information in a timely and accurate fashion.

To the extent permitted by law, volunteer records shall be treated with the same confidentiality as staff personnel records and shall be subject to open records in accordance with all applicable state laws.

2.2 "Two Hat" Statement

Members of the City Council and Council-appointed boards and commissions can be accepted as direct service volunteers with the city provided there is no conflict of interest.

2.3 No Representation of the City

Volunteers are unauthorized to act as representatives of the city. Volunteers may not act or speak on behalf of the city and may not bind or obligate the city in any manner.

2.4 Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all confidential, proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, customers, clients or other persons or involves overall city business. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in some corrective action or termination of the volunteer's relationship with the city and could also constitute a criminal violation.

2.5 Worksite

The city shall endeavor to provide an appropriate worksite for volunteers with necessary facilities, equipment, and space for the designated activities to be performed effectively. Volunteers shall immediately cease volunteer activities and notify city staff of any unsafe or inappropriate conditions or activities at a worksite.

2.6 Dress Code

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a good image to neighbors, visitors, and the broader community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties, as defined by their supervisor.

2.7 Logging Hours

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of their hours served. Volunteers will be asked to log their hours online or submit their hours to their supervisors monthly at a minimum. When possible, electronic login will be available on site. When this is not feasible, volunteer supervisors will be provided with a time sheet by the volunteer program administrator to be completed and returned.

Chapter 3 - Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

3.1 Activity Descriptions

Volunteer activities require clear, complete, and current descriptions of the goals of each program. Prior to any volunteer assignment or recruitment efforts, an activity description must be developed for each volunteer activity. This activity description will be made available to each accepted volunteer and utilized in subsequent management and evaluation efforts. Activity descriptions should be reviewed and updated whenever the work involved in the activity changes substantially. All activity descriptions shall include a description of the purpose and goals of the volunteer services, a designated supervisor and worksite, a time frame for the performance of the activity, a listing of qualifications and a description of activities. The volunteer program administrator is available to assist staff in the development of volunteer activity descriptions.

3.2 Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for volunteers shall be submitted to the volunteer program administrator by interested staff, complete with a draft activity description and a requested time frame. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting activities and by advance notice.

3.3 Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited by the city/department on a proactive basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on a voluntary basis. Volunteers may be recruited through either an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a general or specific function.

3.4 Minor Volunteers

General volunteers who are 16 - 18 years of age may participate unaccompanied, not including the Anna Community Library which will allow for volunteers 13 and up to participate unaccompanied. Volunteers under 16 years of age will be required to be accompanied by an adult at four children to one adult ratio. Not all volunteer activities will be suitable for all ages. Staff and the volunteer program manager will determine an appropriate age range for each activity. No minor shall be one on one with another adult volunteer or staff member. Minor volunteers are never permitted to drive motor vehicles, operate heavy machinery, or participate in any hazardous activities as part of their volunteer activities.

3.5 Screening

Prior to being assigned or appointed to a program, volunteers will be screened to ascertain their suitability for and interest in that program. The screening should include communications to determine the basic qualifications of the volunteer and their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the service and should answer any questions that the volunteer might have about the program or service. The screening may include an interview process and/or a background investigation as determined by the volunteer activity.

3.6 Background Checks

Volunteers working with vulnerable populations, secure areas, or sensitive information must complete a background check screening before beginning an assignment. Vulnerable populations include youth, elderly, or intellectually challenged. Volunteer denial due to background check results will be consistent with the Volunteer Screening Policy. Background checks may also be required for certain volunteer activities as determined by the Volunteer Background Screening Policy. Written consent for background checks shall be obtained from those seeking to volunteer and volunteer denial due to background check results shall be determined by the City of Anna volunteer program manager. The volunteer program manager will issue a denial letter in a confidential manner.

3.7 Professional Services

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification or licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certificate or license should be maintained by the volunteer program manager.

3.8 Length of Service

All volunteer assignments shall have a set term of duration. It is highly recommended that this term shall not be longer than one year, with an option for renewal at the discretion of both parties. All volunteer assignments shall end at the conclusion of their set term, without expectation or requirement of reassignment of a program or service to any volunteer. Also, as stated in Section 1.8, volunteer service is provided on an at-will basis and may be terminated by the city/department at any time, with or without cause.

Volunteers are neither expected nor required to accept further service in a position at the end of their set term. However, they are welcome to do so or may instead seek a different volunteer assignment within the city/department or decline further volunteer service.

3.9 Leave of Absence

At the discretion of the supervisor, leaves of absence may be granted to volunteers. This leave of absence will not alter or extend the previously assigned time frame of the volunteer's activities.

Chapter 4 - Volunteer Training and Development

4.1 Training While Serving

Volunteers may receive specific training or instruction during an assigned service to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. The timing and methods for delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the activity and the capabilities of the volunteer.

4.2 Staff Involvement in Orientation and Training

General orientation to the city's mission, vision and values will be available on-line. Those staff who will be in a supervisory role to volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of any training or instruction to volunteers assigned to them.

Chapter 5 - Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

5.1 Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who is assigned to a program with the city must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer's assigned task. This supervisor shall be responsible for the management and guidance of the work of the volunteer for the duration of the task. The volunteer program manager shall serve as this supervisor, unless assigned otherwise, and be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

5.2 Volunteers as Volunteer Supervisors

A volunteer may act as a supervisor of other volunteers provided that the supervising volunteer is under the responsibility of a paid staff member.

5.3 Volunteer Staff Relationships

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the city. It is essential to the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other. Volunteers do not replace the need for adequate staffing.

5.4 Staff Volunteer Management Training

An orientation on working with volunteers will be provided to all staff, as necessary, by the volunteer program administrator. In-service training on effective volunteer utilization will be provided on request to those staff members who are highly involved in volunteer supervision.

5.5 Volunteer Involvement in Program Evaluation

Examination of effective utilization of volunteers may be a component in the evaluation of volunteer programs. In such cases, supervisors should ask for the input and participation of volunteers in evaluating program performance. Evaluations will be submitted to the volunteer program manager for review and will be used to assess the volunteer management program.

5.6 Staff Involvement in Volunteer Evaluation

Staff should be involved in all evaluation and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected, providing assistance and input to the supervisor in the evaluation process.

5.7 Lines of Communication

Volunteers will be provided with information pertinent to the performance of their work assignments. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in appropriate memos, materials, and meetings relevant to the work assignments. To facilitate receipt of this information on a timely basis, volunteers should be included on the distribution schedule for receipt of information distributed in their absence. Primary responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with the direct supervisor of the volunteer.

5.8 Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

5.9 Substitution

Volunteers may be encouraged to find a substitute for any upcoming absences which might be filled by another volunteer. Such substitution should only take place following consultation with a supervisor, and care should be taken to find a substitute who is qualified for the service. Substitutes may only be recruited from those who are currently enrolled as volunteers in the same activity.

5.10 Evaluations

As needed, volunteers shall receive evaluations to review their work. The evaluation session is utilized to review the performance of the volunteer, to suggest any changes in work style, to seek suggestions from the volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer's relationship with the department, to convey appreciation to the volunteer and to ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in that role. Evaluations should include both an examination of the volunteer's performance of responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the project and goals with which the volunteer is connected. The evaluation session is an opportunity for both the volunteer and the department to examine and improve their relationship.

The description of goals and standards of performance for a volunteer project should form the basis of an evaluation. A written record should be kept of each evaluation session.

5.11 Staff Responsibility for Evaluation

It shall be the responsibility of the volunteer program administrator to schedule and perform a periodic evaluation as needed and to maintain records of each evaluation.

5.12 Corrective Action

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken following an evaluation. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, reassignment of a volunteer to a different project or supervisor, suspension of the volunteer or dismissal from volunteer service. A written record should be kept of any corrective action. Prior to corrective action of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the volunteer program administrator.

5.13 Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the department or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. The volunteer may be given an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with the supervisor. If, after the volunteer has received specific feedback from the supervisor, the problem is not eliminated and there are no reasonable options for reassignment, the volunteer should be dismissed. Prior to dismissal of a volunteer, staff should seek the consultation and assistance of the volunteer program manager.

5.14 Reasons for Dismissal

A volunteer may be dismissed at any time, with or without cause. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of department equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of co-workers or other individuals, failure to abide by departmental policies and procedures, excessive absenteeism and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

5.15 Concerns

A volunteer shall contact the volunteer program manager to express any concerns involving the volunteer program.

5.16 Notice of Departure or Re-Assignment of a Volunteer

In the event, that a volunteer leaves a department, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, or is reassigned to a new project or department, it shall be the responsibility of the project volunteer supervisor to inform those affected staff and clients that the volunteer is no longer assigned to work with them. In cases of dismissal for cause, this notification should be given in writing and should clearly indicate that any further contact with the volunteer is outside any scope of relationship with the department and the city.

5.17 Resignation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice in writing of their departure and a reason for their decision.

5.18 Communication with the Volunteer Administrator

Staff members who supervise volunteers are responsible for maintaining regular communication with the volunteer program administrator on the status of volunteers and are responsible for the timely provision of all necessary information in the city's volunteer management system (i.e., volunteer applications, waivers, hours, status, qualifications, etc.). The project volunteer supervisor should be informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and should be notified before any corrective action is taken.

5.19 Annual Volunteer Report

The volunteer program manager will present an annual report to the City Council using data collected from the city's volunteer management system and from on-site coordinators.

Chapter 6 - Volunteer Support and Recognition

6.1 Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for the department. However, it is essential that prior approval be sought for any expenditure.

6.2 Access to Departmental Property and Materials

As appropriate, volunteers may be given limited access to city property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment deemed necessary. Volunteers are bound to the same standards as employees involved in the operation of equipment (i.e., trainings, licenses, etc.). Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for city purposes.

6.3 Insurance

Volunteers are not eligible for any City benefits. In the event of an incident, please follow guidelines for reporting.

6.4 Informal Recognition

All staff and volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake ongoing methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition should range from a simple "Thank you" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as important participants in various programs.

6.5 Formal Recognition

Special awards will be given during the yearly volunteer recognition event. We recognize that the many activities, services, and events are successful because of the quality of volunteers that service our organization.

Volunteer of the Year Award

This award recognizes volunteers contributing the highest hours within a 12-month consecutive period. One adult volunteer will be selected. A junior volunteer may be recognized as appropriate.

- Awards will be earned based upon eligible volunteer service during the 12-month period beginning January 1st and ending December 31st of the same calendar year.
- Volunteer service must be documented through the Anna Volunteers database.

- Junior volunteers are considered between the ages of 12 years old through 17 years old.
- Adult volunteers are any volunteer 18 years of age and older.
- Volunteers must participate in at least two of the volunteer opportunity categories: Beautification, Special Events, Youth Sports, Recreation Programming, Administrative, Anna Community Library.