

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Revised June 2023

Thank You!

There is nothing more important and rewarding than finding a way to devote your time and passion by giving back to your community and helping your friends and neighbors.

Your community and the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department want to express our sincere gratitude for your volunteer efforts and contribution to our success. Without your continued assistance, our achievements would be limited and our Parks and Recreation Department would not meet its potential.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all you do to make our park system the treasure we all enjoy and love.

Please continue to help us and once again, thank you!

Steve McDaniel
Director
Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation

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Introduction

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Mission

The mission of the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department is to enhance the quality of life in Fort Wayne by providing positive opportunities for leisure time and by being stewards of parklands, facilities, public trees and other resources entrusted to our care.

The Volunteer Program

The volunteer program functions to serve the community and to provide assistance to the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department's various operations. If you have questions about your role as a volunteer, please speak with the volunteer contact at your location.

Volunteer Purpose and Responsibilities

- Volunteers assist the full- and part-time staff members in facility operations and /or in implementing park programs and special events.
- Volunteers may assist youth participants in working on specific goals and becoming as independent as possible.
- Volunteers work with customers or participants in a positive, enthusiastic manner.
- Volunteers assist program leaders in maintaining a safe environment for program participants.
- Volunteers offer suggestions and comments on improving current programs and ideas for new programs.
- Volunteers adhere to all applicable City of Fort Wayne policies and procedures, including those set forth in this volunteer manual.

Becoming a Volunteer

Where do I start?

If interested in becoming a volunteer you should first complete a volunteer application form. This form is available at the Parks and Recreation Department. You may:

- Stop in the administrative office located at 705 East State Boulevard;
- Call 427-6000 to request an application by mail;
- Download an application form from our web site at www.fortwayneparks.org

What are my volunteer opportunities?

Program/Facility	Phone Number
Children's Zoo	427-6800
Community Center	427-6462
Lindenwold Preserve	427-6005
Salomon Farm	427-6005
Botanical Conservatory	427-6442
Greenhouse	427-6424
Youth Centers	427-6921
Adopt-a-Playground	427-6401

How do you find your volunteers?

Many of our volunteers learn about our opportunities by word of mouth. Additional recruitment methods include signs posted at facilities, newspaper advertising, www.fortwayneparks.org, and mailings sent to previous participants and volunteers

The Volunteer Selection Process

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation staff review every volunteer application to determine which area would be best for each volunteer. After receiving a volunteer application for their area, the staff member contacts the applicant to explain the position or has the applicant come into the office for an interview. At this time the volunteer learns more specifics about the Parks and Recreation Department and the position that is available while the staff member learns more about the volunteer's interests. Potential volunteers may be asked to bring a list of references to the interview. Depending on the volunteer work, you may be required to have a police background check and/or drug screen.

Job Assignments

After you are selected, the volunteer coordinator will contact you. Volunteers are placed in accordance with their training, interests and abilities as well as the Parks and Recreation Department's needs. Every effort is made to accommodate your preferences.

Orientation Process

The orientation process will be conducted once you have agreed to a specific work area. Some areas do one-on-one training while others conduct extensive classroom training. For those wishing to become docents or receptionists at either the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory or Lindenwood Nature Preserve additional training is given. Items that will be covered in your orientation include, but are not limited to:

- Tour of the facility
- Review of job duties
- Work rules and responsibilities
- Sign-in/Sign-out procedures
- Parking and entering the facility
- Dress code
- Meals and rest breaks
- Restricted areas
- Telephone or other electronic device usage
- Emergency procedures
- Other items specific to the facility

Time Dedication

Your time is valuable. Hours will vary by our need, your availability, and your desire to assist us. Some areas may require a minimum number of hours a year to remain active. Other areas require a specific time, such as when assisting with a special event. Your volunteer contact will work with you on this aspect.

Supervision and Evaluation

The volunteer contact in your area of interest will supervise and evaluate your performance. Volunteer performance is evaluated on an informal basis. Suggestions for improvement are offered as needed. Volunteers are encouraged to ask their supervisor for clarification or explanations whenever it is needed. Volunteer recognition is ongoing; some facilities have formal recognition programs.

Volunteer Policies

Media

Volunteers, like employees, are not authorized to make statements to the press, officially or unofficially, at any time. Refer any members of the press to the main office of your facility. This policy allows the Parks and Recreation Department to provide consistent, accurate information to the public through the media.

Weather Conditions

As a volunteer, you are not expected to take unnecessary risks during bad weather or adverse driving conditions. Please contact the volunteer coordinator if you are unable to report for an assignment.

Emergencies/Illness

We recognize you may have personal emergencies or illnesses that prevent you from fulfilling your volunteer assignments. You and your family's health is important, so please contact your volunteer coordinator if you are unable to work.

Personal Property

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to protect your personal property. If possible, leave valuables at home.

Alcohol, Drugs and Weapons

The use of alcohol, the use of drugs, and/or the possession of weapons is prohibited at all Parks and Recreation Department facilities. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in termination of your volunteer assignment.

Harassment/Hostile Work Environment

The City of Wayne promotes a productive work environment and does not tolerate conduct by any employee or non-employee that harasses, disrupts or interferes with another's work performance. No form of harassment will be tolerated, including for: sex,

race, religion, national origin, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, military status or any other characteristic protected by law.

Age of Volunteers

The minimum age for a volunteer will vary based upon the location, duties, and level of supervision. The volunteer coordinator for each site will determine the appropriate minimum age for volunteers.

Special Events

Some special events do not require an application, but may require a signed waiver or other documentation

Group Projects

Organizations may help with specific tasks or projects. The Fort Wayne Park and Recreation department will work with these groups to determine appropriate age, supervision levels, and skills needed for particular projects.

Other Policies & Procedures

Volunteers are expected to adhere to applicable City of Fort Wayne policies and procedures. Your supervisor will review these during your orientation.

Equal Volunteer Opportunity

Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and conducts its personnel practices in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. This organization is committed to the principle that all volunteer assignments and volunteer hiring decisions shall be made on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to an applicant's or volunteer's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. All management and supervisory personnel have a continuing responsibility for administration of and compliance with this policy.

Notes

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation

Volunteer Interest Form

Name _____
First
Initial
Last

Address _____
City
State
Zip

Phone _____
Home
Cell/Other

E-mail address _____

Emergency Contact _____

Relationship _____ Telephone _____

Your Interests/ Hobbies/ Skills: _____

Availability	Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Are there any restrictions that we should be aware of?

Who or what prompted you to volunteer?

Desired Location (Mark all that apply):

- Community Center
 Salomon Farm
 Zoo
 Greenhouse
 Botanical Conservatory
 Youth Centers
 Lindenwood

References: (Please supply full name, address and telephone number)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____



FORT WAYNE
PARKS AND
RECREATION

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