

VOLUNTEER STAFF

updated 4/29/2009

“A volunteer staff member is any person who enters into or offers himself/herself for any regularly scheduled service of his/her own free will without compensation.”

Following are the policies set forth for volunteer staff by the Department of Parks and Recreation:

Categories

There are two (2) categories of volunteer staff. Each category has its own registration requirements that address the County’s legal and insurance responsibility as well as the mission of the volunteer staff. The required forms for each category are explained below.

- 1) ***Regular Volunteer Staff*** – Requires any combination of education equivalent to graduation from High School. Complete Volunteer Registration Form, Workers’ Compensation Information and Acknowledgement Form, and Volunteer Information Disclosure Form.
- 2) ***Group Volunteers*** – Volunteers in organized groups who volunteer together may complete a Group Registration Form. The group leader must have any combination of education equivalent to graduation from High School and complete background check. Regular staff should meet with the group leader to review the timesheet requirements. Individuals in the group do not have to register, but by signing a timesheet the day of the activity, they will be covered by the County’s Workers’ Compensation. A timesheet must be completed by the group leader the day of the event and turn into the Volunteer Services after the event is complete.

PLEASE NOTE: We do not allow youth or teens to volunteer as individuals in any of our programs.

All forms requiring signatures must be returned to Volunteer Services prior to participation by the volunteer staff.

- Call Volunteer Services at 239-432-2159 if you have any questions.
- All regular volunteer staff will have background checks completed by the Volunteer Services Coordinator prior to working in any capacity.

General Policies

- Volunteer staff should be matched to their skill level.
- An effort should be made to limit volunteer staff from being utilized for skilled labor tasks.
- Volunteer staff are permitted to drive County vehicles on and off of County property once they have a valid Florida Driver’s License, attended the Defensive Driving course and completed a DMV check.
- Volunteer staff are permitted to drive workhorses, golf carts, mules, etc. on County property while volunteering.

- To minimize County liability, volunteer staff should be limited in their driving of personally-owned vehicles on County business.
- Volunteer staff should never handle County or Lee County Extension money without direct supervision of a Volunteer Staff Supervisor.
- Volunteer staff are covered under Workers' Compensation for medical benefits while volunteering.
- Information on accident and injury procedures are explained in the Workers' Compensation Form and each volunteer staff is required to sign a Signature of Understanding.
- Volunteer Staff Supervisors should review this information with each volunteer staff to clarify procedures.
- If an incident occurs, a Lee County Supervisor Accident Investigation Report – WC Form must be completed within 24 hours and faxed to the Parks Safety Manager (239)485-2304, Risk Management (239)485-2262, (239)-485-2154, and Volunteer Services (239)432-2030.
- The Volunteer Services Coordinator will complete a background check on all individual volunteer staff and e-mail the Volunteer Staff Supervisor on clearance status. If the background check reveals a record, the Volunteer Services Coordinator will solicit an opinion from HR and/or County Attorney.
- If a Volunteer applicant does not clear the screening process, the Volunteer Services Coordinator will contact the individual and mail an adverse letter letting the individual know who he/she can contact if he/she needs to clear up any misunderstanding. The Volunteer Services Coordinator will advise the Volunteer Staff Supervisor the individual is not able to be a part of the volunteer staff.
- The Volunteer Staff Supervisor needs to orient the volunteer staff to the County policies and procedures in dealing with children (see Parks and Recreation Operations Manual, Chapter 7 “Child Abuse Guidelines”).
- Volunteer staff can not be supervised by family members.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) states public sector employers may not allow their employees to volunteer, without compensation, additional time to do the same work for which they are employed. A Lee County employee can not volunteer for the same department he/she works for.

Volunteer Staff Supervisor's Responsibilities

- The Volunteer Staff Supervisor is the individual who recruits, interviews, supervises, orients, trains, and assigns the jobs to the volunteer staff.
- The Volunteer Staff Supervisor will also communicate information to the volunteer staff and establish a system for collecting the hours of service. This can be in the form of a logbook where volunteer staff signs in and out on the days worked. Or, if jobs are scheduled at various sites, it may be better to ask the volunteer staff to be responsible for his or her own timesheet, mailing it to the Volunteer Staff Supervisor quarterly.
- Volunteer Services is available to assist the Volunteer Staff Supervisor in establishing the best policy for his/her location.
- The Volunteer Staff Supervisor will submit a quarterly report of his/her volunteer staffs' hours to Volunteer Services by the due date.

- Volunteer Staff Supervisors are encouraged to provide their own recognition for their volunteer staff and to encourage participation with County-wide Volunteer Services activities.
- Please communicate with Volunteer Services if you are planning any recognition activities for your area.
- Volunteer Staff Supervisors need to email any volunteer staff request to Volunteer Services no less than two weeks prior to when volunteer staff are needed.

Reporting Volunteer Hours

- Every three months (quarterly) Volunteer Services will mail to each Volunteer Staff Supervisor a listing of the volunteer staff who are assigned to jobs at their worksites.
- The total hours of service for the previous three months for each volunteer staff should be listed next to his/her name.
- The report will be mailed or faxed and returned according to the following schedule:

Quarter 1: October 1 through December 31 – return to Volunteer Services by January 7*
Quarter 2: January 1 through March 31 – return to Volunteer Services by April 7*
Quarter 3: April through June 30 – return to Volunteer Services by July 7*
Quarter 4: July 1 through September 30 – return to Volunteer Services by October 7*

*These dates comply with reports due to our agency and other partnering agencies. Late reports will result in an inaccurate report. If volunteer staffs' hours are not reported, they may lose incentives and opportunities.

Volunteer Services Responsibilities

- Volunteer Services will maintain a database of information on registered volunteer staff, worksites, and volunteer jobs for Lee County Parks and Recreation and Lee County Extension.
- Statistical information will be supplied to Risk Management and Parks and Recreation management upon request.
- Volunteer Services will provide information and training on volunteer program enrichment.
- Volunteer Services will recruit through outreach in the community.
- Countywide volunteer staff recognition will be planned yearly. Volunteer Staff Supervisors provide assistance with this recognition.
- The incentive program is organized and administered by Volunteer Services.
- Volunteer Services is available to Volunteer Staff Supervisors for consultation in any volunteer staff matter.
- Volunteer Services will communicate regularly with Volunteer Staff Supervisors via emails, phone calls and newsletters.
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How to Contact Volunteer Services

- Volunteer Services is located at the Parks and Recreation Support Services facility located at Rutenberg Park.
 - Mailing Address
3410 Palm Beach Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33916

- Physical Address:
6490 South Point Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33919
- Phone: (239)432-2159
- Fax: (239) 432-2030
- E-mail: Kcahill@leegov.com

All Volunteer Services paperwork can be located on the S:/ drive at Terry Park or under the administration part of the website. Paperwork can also be obtained by contacting Volunteer Services.

Volunteer Training, Review, and Performance

- In Parks and Recreation we have a variety of opportunities that the volunteer staff assist fulltime staff with.
- Job training is sometimes approached as OJT (on-the-job training); a formal series of trainings, ongoing formal trainings, or a 15-minute explanation of the job before an event takes place.
- It is difficult to determine a training policy for all our volunteer staff, but an important aspect of *retaining a volunteer*, is how well the volunteer staff feels he/she understands the requirements and is doing a good job.
- If you utilize volunteer staff for regular assignments, it is important to take the time to train the volunteer staff. (Refer to the Employee Section of this Chapter for training volunteer staff).
- There should be a clear understanding of the job; it is a good idea to give the volunteer staff a written description of the job.
- Explain Policies and Procedures; leave the door open for questions.
- Introduce the volunteer staff-to-staff and explain their roles.
- Review your mission; explain how and where they record their time. There is a period of adjustment and learning.
- Please take an opportunity to give a volunteer staff a pat on the back or to coach where needed.
- Volunteer staff are a valuable part of the Lee County Parks and Recreation staff, and should be treated as such.

Volunteer Staff Not Meeting Expectations

- Review written job description and discuss what is expected of the volunteer staff.
- Give the volunteer staff an opportunity to explain reasons for the problem.
- Together, come up with a solution to keep the problem from recurring, and document the resolution.
- **A Conference Report Form** (obtain from Volunteer Services) will help you organize and document this discussion. It is a tool that can be used at any time by request of either the Volunteer Staff Supervisor or the volunteer staff.
- Keep a copy of the Conference Report Form in the volunteer staff's file. It will be an invaluable tool in the future.

Terminating a Volunteer

- First and foremost, respect the volunteer staff's privacy and dignity. If after coaching the volunteer staff and completing a Conference Report Form, he/she does not seem able to perform the job, it is time to confront the situation.
- Again, documentation, via the Conference Report Form, is necessary. There is a real risk in not confronting the situation. Not only will the work be done poorly, other volunteer staff will see that your standards are low.
- If you want to show volunteer staff that good work is rewarded, you must act to solve problems.
- If you feel there is real value to the volunteer staff, but not in his/her specific job, discuss reassigning the volunteer staff to another job within the Volunteer Program.
- Refer him/her back to Volunteer Services to discuss this possibility.

A Volunteer May Be Terminated Immediately by a Job Supervisor if He/She:

- Abuses confidentiality.
- Repeatedly fails to meet commitments to scheduled times without notifying supervisor.
- Disregards safety rules or endangers patrons.
- Uses alcohol or drugs on County property or at a Parks and Recreation activity. Is rude, critical, or disrespectful of Parks and Recreation staff, or undermines morale.
- Makes derogatory remarks or statements regarding sex, race, ethnicity, age, or religion.
- Acts in any way contrary to the best interests of Parks and Recreation.

When a volunteer staff is terminated for any of the above reasons, it should be clear that he/she will not be allowed to return to any volunteer staff position with Parks and Recreation. Any Parks and Recreation property (name tags, vests, keys, etc.) should be returned to Volunteer Services.

A Volunteer Conference Report should be submitted to Volunteer Services within 24 hours of the termination (Fax #239-432-2030).

The volunteer staff should be made aware at the time of termination that he/she has 10 days to comment on or dispute the termination in writing and submit this document to Volunteer Services for review. Volunteer Services will review the information and take any further action, if necessary.

Please note: In the described situation, the originals of any forms completed should be sent to Volunteer Services. Copies may be kept in the Supervisor's file.