

**City of Mendota Heights, Minnesota**

**VOLUNTEER POLICY**

CONTACT: City of Mendota Heights  
1101 Victoria Curve  
Mendota Heights, MN 55118  
651-452-1850

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## **1. Overview**

### **1.1 Purpose of Volunteer Policies**

The City of Mendota Heights is benefited through the engagement, participation, and contributions of community volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. This policy is intended for internal management guidance only, and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The City reserves the exclusive right to change any portion of this policy at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Areas not specifically covered by this policy shall be determined by the City Administrator.

### **1.2 Scope of Volunteer Policies**

Unless specifically stated, this policy applies to all non-elected volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken by or on behalf of the City, and to all City departments and sites of operation.

### **1.3 Definition of ‘Volunteer’**

A “volunteer” is anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the City. A “volunteer” must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Mendota Heights Volunteer Program prior to performance of the task. Volunteers are not considered “employees” of the City under state or federal law.

### **1.4 Types of Volunteers**

The City has two types of volunteers: Adult and Junior. Adult volunteers are those who are 18 years and older. Junior volunteers are under 18 years old. Youth under the age of 18 may volunteer either through their enrollment in a group or with a parent/guardian, providing the volunteer project is age appropriate. The sponsoring group or guardian must adequately provide all of the adult supervision necessary for all minors to perform the activity safely. The City shall not be responsible for providing adequate adult supervision for groups including minor volunteers.

### **1.5 Special Case Volunteers**

At times, the City will encounter emergency situations that will call to action “emergency volunteers.” Depending on the circumstances and the quick turn around to assist, emergency volunteers might not be registered volunteers and the City is not required to keep records on them.

### **1.6 Service at the Discretion of the City**

The City accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the City. Volunteers agree that the City may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer’s relationship with the City. The volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever the volunteer’s relationship with the City. Notice of such a

decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor and/or Mendota Heights Volunteer Coordinator.

## **2. Volunteer Management Procedures**

### **2.1 Program Management**

The Mendota Heights Volunteer Program will be managed by the Assistant City Administrator with the support of the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **2.2 Conflict of Interest**

A person, who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the City, whether personal or financial, can be accepted to serve as a volunteer with the City as long as said conflict of interest is disclosed and does not affect the ability to effectively perform in the position.

### **2.3 Maintenance of Records**

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer with the City, including dates of service, positions held, and duties performed. Volunteers and appropriate staff are responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information.

### **2.4 Service Descriptions**

All volunteer opportunities will be approved via service description which is mutually agreed upon by both the City and the volunteer. The service assignment will articulate the scope of the volunteer opportunity and volunteer's responsibilities. If the city does not have a service assignment for a proposed project, members of the public may propose a project to staff to review and potentially develop a new service assignment.

## **3. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection**

### **3.1 Recruitment**

Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, status with regard to public assistance, or membership or activity in a local commission. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to perform a task on behalf of the City. 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 specific function.

### **3.2 Recruitment of Junior Volunteers**

Volunteers, who have not reached the age of 18 prior to submitting an application, must affirm they have obtained parental/guardian permission when they complete the volunteer application. See also limitations in Section 1.4.

### **3.3 Criminal Records Check**

As appropriate for the protection of participants and the public, volunteers will be asked to submit to a background criminal check upon signing up as a Mendota Heights City volunteer. On occasion the City may ask volunteers to re-consent to the background check after a number of years. Volunteers who do not agree to a background check may be refused assignment, however, a past offenses do not necessarily preclude a person from volunteering. Human Resources will handle each background check on a case by case basis. The following criteria will be used by the Assistant City Administrator to determine if the applicant can volunteer: 1) Relationship of the offense to the volunteer position(s) 2) Amount of time since the offense 3) Upon conducting a follow up, whether the person is rehabilitated.

### **3.4 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 Human Resources.

## **4. VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION**

### **4.1 Absenteeism**

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties as scheduled and in a timely manner. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform their staff 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.

### **4.2 Corrective Action**

In appropriate situations, corrective action may be taken. Examples of corrective action include the requirement of additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension of the volunteer, or dismissal from volunteer service.

### **4.3 Resignation**

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the City at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure.

## **5. VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION**

### **5.1 Access to City Property and Materials**

As appropriate, volunteers shall have access to City property and materials necessary to fulfill their duties and shall receive training in the operation of any equipment. Property and materials shall be utilized only when directly required for City purposes.

### **5.2 Accidents or Injuries While Volunteering**

In the event of a medical emergency, the volunteer should seek treatment immediately at the nearest and most appropriate medical center. If an accident or injury occurs while volunteering, it must be reported as soon as reasonably possible to the staff supervisor. If the volunteer-related injury requires medical treatment, the volunteer will be directed to seek medical attention at a provider of their choosing. The supervisor will complete a written report titled "Volunteer Accident Form" with all the known details and circumstances related to the accident or injury, as well as the names and of all and any witnesses to the accident. The completed form must be immediately forwarded to the Human Resources Department for processing.

### **5.3 Authority to Represent the City**

City Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsibility. However, volunteers are not representatives of the City in any official or legal capacity.

### **5.4 Respectful Work Environment.**

Maintaining a respectful public service work environment is a shared responsibility. This policy is intended to express to all employees, volunteers, members of boards and commissions, applicants, contractors/vendors, elected officials and members of the public the expectations by the city of Mendota Heights for respectful workplace conduct both in the workplace and other city-sponsored social events.

While the city has a strong commitment to customer service, the city does not expect volunteers to accept verbal and other abuse from any customer. A volunteer may request that a supervisor intervene when a customer is abusive, or the volunteer may defuse the situation themselves, including professionally ending the contact.

If there is a concern about the possibility of violence, the individual should use his/her discretion to call 911, and as soon as feasible, a supervisor. Volunteers should leave the area immediately when violence is imminent. Volunteers must notify their supervisor about the incident as soon as possible.

The following behaviors are unacceptable and therefore prohibited, even if not unlawful in and of themselves:

- (a) **Violent behavior:**  
Includes the use of physical force, harassment, bullying or intimidation.
- (b) **Discriminatory behavior:**  
Includes inappropriate remarks about or conduct related to a person's legally protected characteristic such as race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, gender, pregnancy, marital status, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, familial status, or status with regard to public assistance.
- (c) **Offensive behavior:**  
May include such actions as: rudeness, angry outbursts, inappropriate humor, vulgar obscenities, name calling, disparaging language, or any other behavior regarded as offensive to a reasonable person based upon violent or discriminatory behavior as listed

above. It is not possible to anticipate in this policy every example of offensive behavior. Accordingly, employees are encouraged to discuss with their fellow employees and supervisor what is regarded as offensive, considering the sensibilities of employees and the possibility of public reaction.

If a volunteer is unsure whether a particular behavior is appropriate, the employee should request clarification from their supervisor or the city administrator.

(d) Sexual harassment:

Can consist of a wide range of unwanted and unwelcome sexually directed behavior such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submitting to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in volunteering; or
- Submitting to or rejecting the conduct is used as the basis for an assignment decision affecting an individual's participation in the volunteer program ; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or result of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive volunteering environment.

(e) Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances. This means stalking, patting, pinching, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling or any other similar physical contact considered unacceptable by another individual.
- Verbal or written abuse, kidding, or comments that are sexually oriented and considered unacceptable by another individual. This includes comments about an individual's body or appearance where such comments go beyond mere courtesy, telling "dirty jokes" or any other tasteless, sexually oriented comments, innuendos or actions that offend others. The harassment policy applies to social media posts, tweets, etc., that are about or may be seen by other volunteers, employees, customers, etc.
- Requests or demands for sexual favors. This includes subtle or obvious expectations, pressures, or requests for any type of sexual favor, along with an implied or specific promise of favorable treatment (or negative consequence) concerning one's current or future assignment.

**Names and Pronouns:** Every volunteer will be addressed by a name and by pronouns that correspond to the employee's gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required.