

Thank you for your interest in volunteering!

As a volunteer with the City of Columbia, you have the opportunity to meet new people, interact with the public, contribute to a better Columbia, build community pride and engage your unique skills, talents and passions in helpful and beneficial ways.



As a new volunteer, your contact information and preferences will be added to our volunteer database and we will contact you as opportunities come up that fit your skills and interests. Your name and information will be shared with city staff who work in

the departments that match your interests.

On occasion, we may share your information with other local agencies who are seeking volunteer assistance.

Screening

Some opportunities with the City of Columbia require a criminal background check, often for positions of greater responsibility or authority. Although there are a number of applicants who do not qualify for a position they are interested in, we will make every effort to place volunteers in an appropriate role. Sensitive personal data used for background checks is deleted from our records after the check is complete.

Some volunteer programs have limited capacity for participation and positions are filled on a first come, first serve basis.

Communication

Communication is an important part of a successful volunteer experience. You will receive regular communication from the City of Columbia by e-mail or mail. We will share updates with you about specific programs you are involved with and inform you of other volunteer activities with the City of Columbia.



Your feedback, ideas, and suggestions are always welcome. If you have questions or concerns about any volunteer program we invite you to contact our office at volunteer@GoColumbiaMO.com or 874-7499. We are located in the fifth floor of City Hall in the Community Development Department. Please contact us before visiting our office as we have a small staff and are frequently away from our office.

Our website, www.GoColumbiaMo.com/Volunteer is also a great source of information. The site features an event calendar that includes information on many city volunteer events.

Reporting your hours

Volunteers give over 40,000 hours of service to the City of Columbia each year. We appreciate your help in reporting your hours. Keeping track of hours is important for several reasons: to measure the value of your time and service, illustrate to the City Council and public the important role of volunteers and help us identify areas of strength and weakness in our volunteer program. Your reported hours are also important for recognition purposes.

Recognition and appreciation

Volunteers play an important role in the City of Columbia and it is our goal to let volunteers know they are appreciated. The City of Columbia holds a volunteer recognition event annually. Volunteers who have recorded at least one hour of volunteer service, and that we have a way to contact, will be invited.

Other recognition includes special events or newspaper ads depending on the specific program that you are serving.

Each month the City of Columbia identifies a Volunteer of the Month. These honorees have been nominated by city staff for unique and outstanding contributions to the City of Columbia. Honorees will be featured in the "City Source" newsletter, on our website, and at the city-wide volunteer reception. Honorees may be individuals or groups.

City staff may nominate outstanding volunteers for other award programs at the local, state, and national levels.



Use of images

The City of Columbia may photograph or video you while volunteering and the media may be invited to the location or event where you are serving. These are opportunities for us to develop marketing items and promote volunteerism. Your participation as a volunteer serves as your permission to be photographed or videotaped.

Safety and Insurance

The City of Columbia makes every effort to keep volunteers safe in their activities by providing adequate instruction and safety equipment. Volunteers are encouraged to ask about safety procedures and take precautions. The City of Columbia does not provide personal insurance for volunteers. Should an individual be injured while volunteering, he or she is responsible for all expenses. The City of Columbia's General Liability insurance provides coverage against claims resulting from volunteer activities completed as directed or instructed by City staff. This applies to claims made by the public where a volunteer was involved. As a City volunteer, though you are not insured for injury, you are insured for liability.

For volunteers 55 and older, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, RSVP, provides liability insurance, as well as opportunities, support and recognition. If you would like to learn more about RSVP, call 443-1111 or email RSVP@BooneAging.org.

Ending of service

There are a number of volunteers who leave our program due to work, family and personal responsibilities. If you end your volunteer service please let us know and return any uniforms or tools that are property of the City of Columbia.

The City of Columbia reserves the right to ask a volunteer to leave our program if their participation does not meet expectations. Volunteer expectations vary by activity and will be communicated when you begin your service.

Youth volunteering

While many positions with the City of Columbia require the volunteer to be at least 18 years of age, we also have a number of tasks, especially at festivals and special events, that can be done by volunteers of any age.



Our summer "Youth In Action" volunteer program is a great way for kids 12-15 years old to provide service in a structured, supervised environment. Also, a directory of summer youth volunteer activities is available on our website.



Help us spread the word!

The city's Volunteer Program uses many methods to recruit volunteers but word of mouth remains one of the strongest ways to build our volunteer program. If friends, family members or co-workers wish to share the benefits of volunteering, we encourage them to contact our office so we may discuss opportunities with them.



About the city's Volunteer Program

Our Mission: The city's Volunteer Program provides valuable opportunities to build community while volunteering in city government.

The Office of Volunteer Services was created in 1996 to provide opportunities for Columbia residents to contribute in making our city a better place to live.



In the city's 2010 fiscal year, the program became a division of the Office of Neighborhood Services. The program is a resource both to citizens who want to serve their community and to city departments who need assistance.



Columbia is one of the few cities in the nation with an office devoted solely to municipal volunteer involvement.

The city's volunteer program supports the summary that was created from the Imagine Columbia's Future Vision Project: *Columbia will be a connected, informed and engaged community.*



**City of Columbia
Community Development
Department
Office of Neighborhood
Services
Volunteer Programs**

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City of Columbia Guide to Volunteering

