



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 Programs was created in 1996 to provide opportunities for Columbia residents to contribute in making our city a better place to live, work, learn and play. In 2010, the program became a division of the Office of Neighborhood Services and is now part of the Community Development Department. The program is a resource both to the 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.

WHO VOLUNTEERS?

Everyone! Groups, faith groups, youth, businesses, schools, families, students and seniors donate their talents, skills, dedication and interests to help the City enhance its delivery of services. They are people representing all walks of life, willing to lend a helping hand.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

The City believes in creating outstanding opportunities for life. As a volunteer, you become a partner with Volunteer Columbia to implement programs that benefit you, your neighbor, and the community as a whole. At the same time you can meet new people, explore new careers, stay active after retirement, or spend quality time with your family. Best yet-you're helping others make a difference in your community.

WHAT CAN I DO?

The City offers innovative volunteer opportunities that foster personal growth, development and satisfaction. The City will work to find a volunteer assignment that will fit both the talents and the time you want to share.

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, ages 12-15, to provide service in a structured and supervised environment. Our student led "Teens in Action" program for older teens going into 10, 11 or 12th grade, is a great way for older teens to volunteer.

Screening

Some opportunities with the City of Columbia require a criminal background check, often for positions of great responsibility or authority or providing care to children. 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 provided by the volunteer through our online background screening platform. Background checks are conducted at no cost to the volunteer. 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 email. We will share updates with you about specific programs you are involved with and inform you of other activities with the City of Columbia. To ensure our office has a volunteer's most up-to-date information, volunteers are encouraged to use our Volunteer Information Center through our online platform, Volgistics, where they can update their volunteer profile (i.e. contact information, preferences, report hours and self-schedule for upcoming volunteer

opportunities). Our website, www.CoMo.gov/volunteer is also a great resource of information. The site features an event calendar that includes information on many city volunteer events.

Reporting your hours

Volunteers give nearly 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. To record your volunteer hours, Volunteer Programs uses an online volunteer system. This allows volunteers to not only self-report hours but also to check their hours for accuracy.

Recognition & 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 variety of events throughout the year. City staff may nominate outstanding volunteers for other award programs at the local, state and national levels.

Use of Images

We may photograph or take a video of you while volunteering and the media may be invited to the location or event 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 recorded on video.

Safety & 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 by City staff. This applies to claims made by the public where a volunteer was involved. As a City volunteer, through you are not insured for injury, you are insured for liability.

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. Volunteers understand and agree to abide by all rules, instructions and directions as instructed by any City staff member. Volunteers who work outside the direction of City staff may be terminated.

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.

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