



CLEARWATER
BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL • BAY TO BEACH

Parks and Recreation

VOLUNTEER

HANDBOOK



Welcome and History

Thank you for your interest in volunteering! This handbook has been produced to help keep you informed about the volunteer process in Parks and Recreation. This manual will share our philosophy, history, practices, policies, and benefits of participating in the program.

We hope to answer your questions about the volunteer program in the handbook. We depend on you to ensure success at our many events and programs throughout the year. Your work is important! Please don't hesitate to ask questions. The volunteer specialist will gladly help in any way possible. It is our goal to make your volunteer experience as meaningful as possible, while you give back to your community and make lasting friends and memories.

The Volunteer Program in Clearwater Parks and Recreation started in the early 2000s. The mission of the program is to assist with and improve city programs, services, facilities and beautification by recruiting, training and retaining volunteers from the local community. In other words, we jump in when we need to fill in the gaps to provide the best service for our community.

During the past year volunteers donated over 44,000 hours back to Clearwater. For every dollar the city invests in the program, \$15.21 is given back in volunteer services. The Volunteer Program partnered with 85 businesses, neighborhood associations, sports teams, booster clubs, troops, and service organizations to ensure the success of special events, tournaments and environmental projects throughout the year.

Our volunteers are extremely committed to the mission, cheerfully giving of their most valuable asset, their time! People travel from all over Tampa Bay to participate in our programs because they are valued, appreciated, and shown that they truly make a difference!

Ways to get involved

- **Recreation Centers** - We have opportunities at our recreation centers to assist with coaching, mentoring/tutoring, special events, beautification projects, and administrative duties. The recreation volunteers donated over 21,000 hours last year to assist with activities like animal husbandry and invasive removal to coaching youth and teaching seniors how to use smart phones, tablets and computers.
- **Special Events** – Throughout the year, Clearwater hosts many special events at Coachman Park and throughout the city. Volunteers help with activities like music concerts, 5K walks, open houses, parades, and holiday festivals. Special event volunteers donated over 8,400 hours for events last year.
- **Athletics** – As Clearwater takes a bigger stage in sports tourism, bringing teams in from all over the world to train and compete, volunteers play a critical role at these events, from hosts to scorekeepers. Clearwater hosts NCAA softball tournaments, tennis and

basketball tournaments, and swim meets throughout the year. Athletic volunteers donated nearly 3,000 hours last year.

- **Environmental** – Volunteers assisted with over 100 projects last year, like planting and landscaping, trash clean-ups, invasive plant removal, and general facility improvements. Volunteers donated 5,900 hours making Clearwater bright and beautiful!
- **Adoptions** – There is a formal Adopt-A-Park, Trail, and Street program where groups commit to a certain number of cleanups each year. A sign is placed with the group name at the entrance for recognition purposes.
- **Clearwater Greenies** – The Clearwater Greenies is a kayaking club that cleans Clearwater waterways once a month throughout the city. Volunteers bring their personal kayaks and all other supplies are provided, like trash bags, gloves and garbage grabbers. Please visit Meetup.com and search for the Clearwater Greenies page. There you will find the annual calendar, volunteer opportunities, and photos.

Our Commitment

The Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program is committed to:

- Offering you a positive and worthwhile experience.
- Providing a wide variety of opportunities and flexible schedule for volunteers.
- Offering local students a variety of opportunities to earn education service hours for clubs, Bright Futures hours and other scholarships.
- Creating opportunities for scouts to obtain their Eagle Scout or Gold Star awards.
- Completing a local law enforcement background check and Florida Sexual Offender check on all registered, long-term volunteers working in the recreation centers.
- Making safety the highest priority for all volunteers, staff and citizens who interact with us.
- Acknowledging the efforts and time of all volunteers through various means of appreciation.
- Treating all volunteers equally regardless of age, sex, color, race, national origin, religious preference, political beliefs, or disabilities that do not prohibit performance of a volunteer.



Our Expectations

The Parks and Recreation Department expects all volunteers to:

- Complete the volunteer application, including a local law enforcement background check and Affidavit of Good Moral Character, when required.
- Keep all volunteer information current in Volgistics, the tracking software for the program.
- Treat all volunteers and staff with respect. We are all members of the same team and should work together to achieve the common goals. If there is ever an issue with another volunteer, please notify the volunteer specialist or staff representative for a change of duty or location. If there is a staff issue, please contact the volunteer specialist directly. The key is to treat people the way you would like to be treated.
- Practice good customer service skills. While volunteering with us, you are a representative of the City of Clearwater. If you encounter a difficult person that makes you uncomfortable, please contact staff or police to handle the situation for you. That is our job to manage for you.
- Be accepting and flexible when it comes to job duties and situations. Due to unexpected circumstances, you may be asked to change your original job duty. Examples: short staffed in an area because someone does not show up or an area is added at the last minute, is busier or slower than expected.
- Provide feedback. This helps us to continue to improve and grow the program, address issues and respond to volunteer needs.
- Please do not smoke, eat or take cell phone calls at your job site during your shift. All volunteers should take a break for these purposes. At Coachman Park, volunteers are provided drinks, food/snacks located at the check-in tent during each shift. Volunteers should never eat food in the VIP area.
- Absolutely no alcohol consumption before or during your volunteer shift. If you wish to purchase and consume an alcoholic beverage after your shift, you are required to remove your volunteer tag and any other indication that you are involved with the City of Clearwater.
- Come to every assignment ready to serve and complete the duties assigned. If you are volunteering solely to see a free show or gain free admission to an event, you will need to purchase a ticket.
- Sign in and check out for every assignment so staff knows your area is covered and volunteers are accounted for at the end of the event. Your safety matters!
- Most importantly, enjoy yourself and leave with a sense of accomplishment knowing you have made a difference in your community.

Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures

Standards of Conduct

By volunteering with the Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department, you have a responsibility to your fellow volunteers and patrons to provide a safe and pleasant working environment. Failure to follow policies can be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Substance Abuse

Possession, sale or use of any mood altering substance, including alcohol, while volunteering is prohibited. This is a violation of safe work practices and grounds for immediate dismissal from the volunteer program.

Background Check

All prospective volunteers for Clearwater Parks and Recreation will be required to submit to a local law background check prior to acceptance as a volunteer in any recreation center. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted as a volunteer. An affidavit of good moral character must also be signed and submitted with the background check form. All recreation volunteers must be approved before beginning to volunteer.

Equal Volunteering Opportunity

Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department provides volunteering opportunities for all individuals regardless of age, sex, color, race, national origin, religious preference, political beliefs, or disabilities that do not prohibit performance as a volunteer. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon the individual's ability to perform the volunteer task, as well as, dependability and reliability.

Vehicles and Parking

The City of Clearwater will not pay for loss or damage to your vehicle to and from volunteer assignments or while parked during your shift. The City of Clearwater expects volunteers to carry insurance on their own vehicles covering liability and all property damage. The City of Clearwater does not validate parking. All volunteers are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from assignments and finding appropriate parking.

Harassment

The City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department intends to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses which might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment of any sort; verbal, physical or visual will not be tolerated.

Dress Code

Personal appearance should be a matter of concern for each volunteer. Volunteers shall be neat and clean in their person and attire when volunteering. Please no halter/crop tops or short shorts. Take your lead from the staff and dress appropriately for the task you are performing.

Special Events Policy

Coke Wagon Procedures – Volunteers may not drink the product stocked in the coke wagons. All of these bottles are inventoried and tracked. Volunteers may not give vendors free product. Vendors must pay for any cokes and water. Any volunteer caught trading coke products for food from a vendor will not be invited back to volunteer. Volunteer food and beverage is located at the volunteer check-in tent.

No Eating, Smoking or Cell Phones in work area – The Events and Festivals staff request that volunteers not eat, smoke or use cell phones in their work areas. This is a Health Department policy, which we strictly enforce. All volunteers should be allowed a break for eating and restroom breaks during their shift. Snacks and/or meal and beverages will be provided at Coachman Park events. Alcohol consumption before or during your shift is strictly prohibited.

Assigned Areas – We do our best to place all volunteers in their requested areas. Sometimes there are circumstances that surprise us, like a volunteer that can't fulfill their commitment or an area gets busier than expected. In these cases, it is often necessary to relocate volunteers to where we need them the most. Please understand that we rely on your flexibility if you are asked to work an alternative location.

Worker's Compensation:

Volunteers are eligible for Worker's Compensation as provided by law. In case of an accident, please notify your supervisor immediately. The City of Clearwater is self-insured for Worker's Compensation. The contact in case of injury is the city of Clearwater Risk Management Division, which is located at 100 South Myrtle Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33758. The telephone number is 727-562-5650. You may receive medical care for an injury sustained while performing volunteer duties for the city, but only from an authorized medical provider. To seek medical services, please visit Med Express Walk-In Clinic at 26812 US 19 in the Lowes parking lot. Please contact the volunteer specialist or volunteer coordinator immediately at Valerie.Christou@myclearwater.com 727-503-5049 or Natalie.Lamb@myclearwater.com 727-503-5051.