



## Meridian Parks and Recreation Department ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

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**SUBJECT:** City of Meridian Volunteer Program

**PURPOSE:** To establish the terms and conditions under which volunteers participate in volunteer activities for or with the Parks & Recreation Department.

**POLICY:**

### 1. Definitions:

- a. **Volunteer:** An individual who contributes time, energy, or talent directly to the City of Meridian, and/or participates in volunteer activities, without payment and without the expectation of payment. The term “Volunteer” includes both Program Volunteers and Project Volunteers.
- b. **Program Volunteer:** A volunteer who commits to one or more volunteer shifts as part of an established MPR Volunteer program, e.g. Front Desk Program, Park Ambassador Program.
- c. **Project Volunteer:** A volunteer who commits to one or more volunteer shifts for a special event or specific activity.
- d. **Volunteer Activity or Volunteer Activities:** Work undertaken by a Volunteer, and any and all associated tasks, activities, and responsibilities.
- e. **Volunteer Organization:** An organization, whether formally or informally organized, that commits its members to one or more volunteer shifts for a special event or specific activity.

2. **Volunteer program objective.** The objective of the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department (“MPR”)’s volunteer program is to invite members of the community to connect with and serve the Meridian community, provide opportunities for volunteers to supplement the work done by City staff, and establish a network of people working alongside City staff to support the City’s mission and CARE values (Customer service; Accountability; Respect; and Excellence), as directed by the Volunteer Program Coordinator or designee.

3. **Volunteer Program Coordinator.** The duties of the Volunteer Program Coordinator include recruiting, inviting, and onboarding volunteers; placing volunteers in appropriate roles; scheduling and coordinating volunteer shifts; and supporting volunteers in exemplifying the City's CARE values through ongoing training, coaching, and communication. In the case of a policy violation, or where such action would serve the City's interests, the Volunteer Program Coordinator may, in his/her sole discretion, conclude the volunteer's services for the City.
4. **Authorization Process.** Volunteers shall follow this process prior to undertaking volunteer work or participating in volunteer activities. Completing this process does not guarantee volunteer placement. Whether, when, and where to schedule volunteers is in the sole discretion of the Volunteer Program Coordinator or his/her designee.
  - a. **Program Volunteer authorization.** Prior to being scheduled for volunteer work, each Program Volunteer must complete a Registration Form and Waiver Agreement and turn it in to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Park Ambassador applicants must provide verification of driver's license and shall be subject to an annual criminal background check.
  - b. **Project Volunteer authorization.** Project Volunteers may undertake volunteer work without prior completion of the Registration Form and Waiver Agreement, but remain subject to all terms and conditions of this policy. Project Volunteers under 18 years of age are encouraged to obtain permission from their parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering, but written permission will not be required.
  - c. **Volunteer Organization authorization.** Prior to being scheduled for volunteer work, one Organizer, on behalf of the Organization whose members or affiliates seek to volunteer, must complete a Registration Form and Waiver Agreement and turn it in to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. The Organizer must be duly authorized and willing to:
    - a) act as the representative and agent of the Organization and all of its members or invitees undertaking volunteer work;
    - b) bind Organization to the obligations set forth in the Waiver Agreement, and to accept the liabilities set forth therein; and
    - c) convey information about the City's Volunteer Program and Policy to all of its members or invitees undertaking volunteer work.
5. **Criminal history.** Persons who have entered a guilty plea or been convicted of any of the following crimes, in any jurisdiction, are ineligible to do volunteer work for the City:
  - a. Any charge involving theft or fraud;
  - b. Any charge of battery, assault, domestic battery or assault, telephone harassment, stalking, or violation of a protective order;
  - c. Any charge involving, or related to, a child or children, elderly persons, and/or other vulnerable persons; or
  - d. Any crime involving, or related to, use of or possession of drugs or illicit substances.

6. **Equal opportunity.** The City invites volunteers to serve without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or marital status.
7. **Unlawful Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.** It is the City's policy to foster and maintain a work environment that is free from unlawful workplace discrimination, harassment, retaliation, intimidation, hostility, or other offenses that might interfere with work performance. All persons have a right to work in an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, retaliation, intimidation, or ridicule based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age (40 or older), disability and genetic information (including family medical history), current, past or future military status, or any other applicable legally protected status. The City will not tolerate unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of any kind in communication with staff, volunteers, or members of the public. Volunteers are expected to show respect for each other and the public at all times. The City strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation. Any volunteer who believes a form of harassment has occurred must report it immediately to the Human Resources Department, and/or the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
8. **Injury.** Any Volunteer who is injured on City premises or while doing volunteer work for the City shall contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator immediately, or as soon as practical after obtaining medical treatment, to report the incident and nature of such injury.
9. **Drugs and alcohol.** Volunteers must be drug and alcohol free while participating in volunteer activities. Volunteers may not be under the influence of alcohol, an illegal drug, or improperly used prescription drug while volunteering. Volunteers may not use, sell, purchase, transfer, or possess an illegal drug on City premises, and may not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol on City premises.
10. **Ethics.** Volunteers must follow all policies of the City, be attentive to their assigned tasks, and respect the City's technology, property, and resources. Volunteers are City officials as defined by Meridian City Code section 1-14-2. As such, Volunteers shall comply in every respect with Title 1, Chapter 14, Meridian City Code, regarding Ethics in Government, including the following rules:
  - a. Volunteers may not grant or make available to any person any consideration, treatment, advantage or favor, beyond that available to the public at large.
  - b. Volunteers may not use or permit the use of any publicly owned property, vehicle, equipment, labor or service for personal convenience or private advantage. This includes City copiers, printers, computers, Internet, and phones.
  - c. Volunteers shall hold in confidence information learned in the course of their volunteer work for the City, and shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of members of the public, City staff, and other volunteers. Volunteers are not authorized to access any record, office, or non-public area without express permission or request.

- d. Volunteers may not accept a gift valued at \$50 or more from any person who is interested directly or indirectly in business dealings with the City. This rule does not apply to personal relationships separate from the volunteer's work with the City, or to gifts of de minimus value from the City as a token of gratitude or acknowledgement.
- e. Any writing containing information relating to the conduct or administration of City business that is prepared, owned, used or retained by the City is a public record, whether in paper or digital form. Public records are subject to disclosure upon request, and must be retained in accordance with the City's Records Retention Schedule. Volunteers may not provide, destroy, handle, or move records unless expressly directed to do so by the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

11. **Dress.** Volunteers are expected to dress professionally and appropriately. Business casual attire is generally appropriate indoors, but the attire worn should be appropriate for the work to be performed and the public contact that the work requires.

12. **Conditions.** In addition to the conditions set forth above, participation as a Volunteer with the City of Meridian is subject to each and all of the following conditions:

- a. Volunteering presents risks, some of which are unknown. Each Volunteer assumes all risks associated with his or her participation in volunteer activities.
- b. The City of Meridian will provide no insurance or benefit coverage of any kind for injury, death, property loss, theft, or property damage resulting from or related to a Volunteer's participation in volunteer activities.
- c. Participation in volunteer activities may include physical activity of varying degrees of rigorousness. By volunteering, each Volunteer attests that he or she is physically and mentally sound and suffers from no condition, impairment, disease, infirmity, or other illness that could increase the risk of injury or death to him/herself or to others due to participation in volunteer activities. It is each Volunteer's sole responsibility to verify his or her physical and mental condition with a physician prior to participation in volunteer activities. Volunteers must clearly communicate any concerns they have or develop about their ability to safely undertake volunteer work, and will discontinue their participation until such concerns are resolved.
- d. Volunteers release and forever discharge the City of Meridian, and its agents and employees, from any and all real or possible claims for damages or other harm to person or property not attributable to the tortious conduct of City's officials, agents, employees, invitees, guests, or volunteers, regardless of the manner by which such claim may be brought.
- e. Each Volunteer assumes sole responsibility for any and all injuries to or caused by the Volunteer that are incurred in the course of the Volunteer's use of equipment and facilities owned by City and that is not attributable to the tortious conduct of City. Volunteers must clearly communicate any concerns they have about their ability to safely use such equipment and facilities.

- f. As with any interpersonal contact, there is a risk of allergen exposure transmission of communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, COVID-19. Volunteers assume these risks and specifically agree to volunteer notwithstanding such risks.
- g. Volunteers shall wear all personal protective equipment and follow all safety precautions and protocols as directed by the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
- h. Volunteers consent to and authorize first aid, emergency medical care, and/or hospitalization for treatment of any injury or illness that they sustain while volunteering. Volunteers are solely responsible for any and all expenses resulting from any injury or illness incurred while or as a result of volunteering.
- i. Volunteers consent to the publication and/or use of any photographs or recordings featuring them by the City of Meridian for promotional purposes.
- j. Volunteers in the Park Ambassador Program must have a valid driver's license and must suffer from no physical or mental impairment, disease, infirmity, or other condition that could increase the risk of injury or death to him/herself or to others due to use of a motorized vehicle.

13. **Conclusion of services.** All volunteers serve at the invitation of the Volunteer Program Coordinator or his/her designee. Nothing in this policy or in any other communication shall be deemed to create a contract between the volunteer and the City. Both the volunteer and the City have the right to terminate the volunteer's association with the City at any time, for any reason or no reason, with or without cause.