



Volunteer Manual

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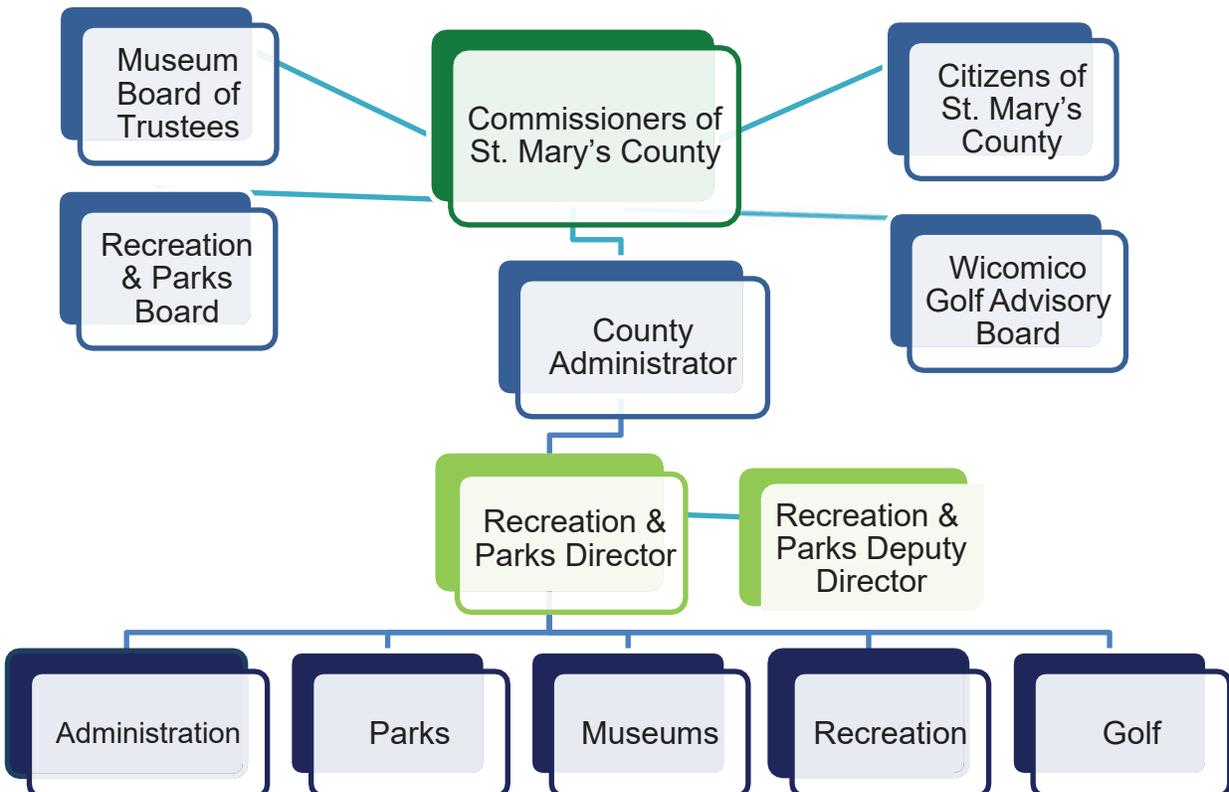
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OVERVIEW

St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks Volunteer Program

St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks (the Department) appreciates our dedicated and skilled volunteers. Volunteers provide direct services and expertise that contribute to the overall customer satisfaction of programs and activities. In turn, volunteers benefit from having meaningful work, personal satisfaction, community involvement and leadership opportunities provided by the Department's Volunteer Program. No matter where volunteer service is conducted—in our parks, museums, recreational programs or at the golf course—we recognize the value of your time and talents and greatly appreciate your assistance!

The Department has an established Volunteer Program that mutually benefits the Department, the community, and our valued volunteers. This Volunteer Manual outlines the Volunteer Program and manages our volunteer efforts that support the Department's mission and vision. We strive to provide interesting and rewarding volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of all involved.



Administration, Recreation, Parks, Golf & Museums

Through the Department's Director, the Administration Division provides direction, management and supervision of the Department of Recreation and Parks' five Divisions. The Director serves as the staff liaison to three (3) advisory boards - the Recreation and Parks Board, the Wicomico Shores Golf Advisory Board, and the Board of Trustees for the Museum Division.

The Director's responsibilities include:

- Establishing goals and objectives,
- Developing the St. Mary's County (County) comprehensive recreation planning document/parks and recreation master plan (Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan or LPPRP);
- Developing and administering departmental budgets (operating, capital improvement projects (CIP) and two (2) enterprise funds);
- Managing personnel and programs; and
- Implementing various operational policies and procedures.

The following summary provides a snapshot of the work conducted by the Department's other four divisions:

- The Recreation Division is responsible for planning, implementing, supervising and evaluating a broad range of recreational programs, services, activities, events and facilities for County residents of all ages and abilities. Programs are self-supported via an enterprise fund.
- The Parks Division provides the grounds, turf and facility maintenance using established standards at 95 parks, public landings and county buildings. The Division is also responsible for maintaining and overseeing approximately 2,700 acres of county government property. This includes nearly 1,400 acres of parkland and 630 acres of grass cutting by a contractor at county parks, public landings and areas surrounding county buildings.
- The Wicomico Shores Golf Course is a 145-acre recreational facility providing golf, food service and banquet facilities. The operation is primarily self-supporting and is also administered through an enterprise fund. Wicomico Shores includes an 18-hole golf course, practice facility, golf shop, and Riverview Restaurant and banquet room.
- The Museum Division collects, preserves, researches and interprets the historic sites and artifacts that illustrate the natural, cultural and social histories of: St. Clement's Island and the Potomac River; Piney Point Lighthouse, Chesapeake Bay and U-1105 Underwater Shipwreck Preserve; and Drayden African American and Charlotte Hall schoolhouses.

Vision - *“A leader in cultivating exceptional leisure experiences in our community.”*

Mission - *“To provide an enriched quality of life for the community through the preservation of natural, cultural and historical resources, enhancement of parks and outdoor spaces, and promotion of a variety of leisure experiences.”*

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment

During certain times of the year, various volunteer positions may be available within the Department. Positions will be advertised via one or more of the following: Department’s website www.stmaryscountymd.gov/recreate, on social media, e-newsletters, at various departmental facilities, and through word of mouth. Division managers or designees are responsible for recruiting volunteers for their facilities, programs, and events. The Department maintains recruitment procedures to ensure that engaged and qualified and volunteers are selected for the department. All appropriate and reasonable efforts will be made to match volunteers possessing certain interests and skills to available volunteer positions. Ultimately, the focus is to ensure volunteer efforts are harnessed to benefit everyone involved.

Application Process

All volunteer candidates must complete the applicable volunteer application, release and waiver of liability, and background screening forms. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering.

Volunteer Organizations

The Department accepts as volunteers those who are part of other organizations (e.g., private and non-profits, corporate volunteers). In these cases, an Agreement for Volunteer Services and Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement must be in place with the organization which specifies the terms and conditions of the volunteer service (Appendix G).

Non-Discrimination

St. Mary’s County government and the Department do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic group, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, gender, or any other classification protected under applicable law.

Selection

Interviews will be scheduled with candidates with Division Managers, Coordinators, Supervisors, or other staff as deemed appropriate. Successful candidates will be notified as soon as possible of interview results. This is the time to let us know of any special skills or training you may have to share (example: sign language, foreign language, music, theatre, etc.).

Background Screening

Per policy, background screening is performed through NCIS, CJIS and/or by the State of Maryland (summer camp and school age centers) as appropriate depending upon the volunteer assignment at no cost to the volunteer.

Volunteer positions with summer camp may require a release form with the Maryland Department of Human Services. This one-time form will be made available by contacting the Youth Programs & Camp Coordinator at Hollywood Recreation Center by calling (301) 373-5410. The form must be notarized and returned to the Program Coordinator.

Volunteer positions with School Age Care centers may require several release forms required by the Maryland State Department of Education - Office of Child Care. These forms will be provided by the Program Coordinator.

By signing the appropriate Background Screening Consent form (sample Appendix D), the volunteer provides the Department with consent for an initial background check as well as any subsequent background checks deemed necessary throughout the length of the volunteer assignment with the Department.

Orientation

Selected volunteers are required to participate in an orientation meeting prior to beginning assignments. Supervisors will inform the volunteer of when and where the orientation will occur. The session may include departmental information on mission and vision, informational videos, site visits and on-the-job instruction. Volunteers will be provided a volunteer identification card by the Supervisor.

Supervision

All volunteers will be provided with appropriate procedures, guidance and clearly defined duties for the volunteer assignment. Volunteers will receive frequent interaction and assistance from their supervisors. Volunteers are held to the same performance and behavior standards as paid employees.

Work Schedules

Volunteer work schedules are varied and are assigned by the immediate Supervisor. Volunteers are expected to perform duties per the assigned schedule and are required to inform the Supervisor as soon as possible if they are to be absent. Volunteers will be notified as soon as possible in the event of program or event cancellation. All reasonable efforts will be made to balance program or activity needs and outcomes with the desired work schedules of volunteers.

Recording Volunteer Time

Managers will track volunteer hours worked and report hours in monthly and annual reports. If the volunteer is seeking credit for hours for other programs, internships, or certifications, it is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure hours are tracked appropriately. Certificates or letters confirming hours will be made available upon request.

Evaluation

Regular and/or continuous volunteers (Level 3) will be provided annual evaluations, as will merit employees except for group volunteer organizations. Supervisors will schedule the evaluation and conduct the meeting in a manner that provides feedback, constructive criticism and additional guidance on the position if needed. This time is also beneficial to collect feedback and ideas from the volunteer on the Volunteer Program or other improvements. The primary goal is to enhance the volunteer relationship and recognize volunteers for a job well done.

However, if the volunteer experience is not progressing as planned, the supervisor will inform the volunteer of options for reassignment in the event a position is not "a good fit" for one or both parties. One or both parties may also desire to be released from the assignment. Reasons for release from assignment could be, but not limited to: schedule conflicts or time constraints; excessive absences or tardiness; gross misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; theft or misuse of property; abuse or mistreatment of participants or staff; failure to follow policies and procedures; or failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Upon the conclusion of service, volunteers are required to return identification badges and any other County property to the assigned Supervisor. The exit interview form should also be completed at this time for Level 3 volunteers. Managers should report the removal of any Level 3 volunteer to the Recreation Division Manager for removal from the CJIC Active Alert List.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Groups

Non-Profits, organizations, and businesses may volunteer as a group. The group leader will complete and sign the Agreement for Volunteer Services and release and waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement. Organizations are responsible for ensuring volunteers under their supervision are aware of and follow all volunteer rules and expectations outlined in the Volunteer Manual. Organizations will provide the Department a list of volunteer's names and dates and times of service. Organizations are responsible for evaluating their volunteer's performance.

Liability Coverage

St. Mary's County Government provides liability coverage for volunteers for the negligent acts of volunteers serving in the scope of their volunteer job description through the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT).

Volunteers are required to sign a "Release and Waiver of Liability" form (Appendix E). The Release and Waiver of Liability does forever discharge and hold harmless St. Mary's County Government and its successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind and nature, either in law or equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from volunteer's activities with St. Mary's County Government.

Confidentiality

The Department has systems in place to provide confidentiality and privacy to applicants, staff, volunteers and participants. Personal information is retained in a confidential manner in the Department's main office and is further governed by the County's Records Retention and Disposal policy which stipulates that time and attendance records are retained for five (5) years and personnel records are retained for seven (7) years or until end of service.

Staff and volunteers are expected to keep confidential all personal information regarding applicants, staff, volunteers, or participants. Personal information must not be shared with others unless there is a legal requirement to do so; if questions or concerns arise, volunteers should contact their assigned Supervisor.

Rules of Conduct

Volunteers, as representatives of St. Mary's County Government and the Department, are required to exhibit a positive image to the community. They are to always maintain a professional demeanor with coworkers and patrons. Volunteers should dress as

stipulated by the Supervisor for the anticipated work conditions and performance of the position or duties assigned. The Department will not be held liable for damage to the volunteer's clothing or accessories during volunteer assignments.

Harassment

The Department strives for a volunteer experience that is rewarding, pleasant and free from aggression, hostility, intimidation, or other offensive behaviors which would negatively impact the performance of volunteers. The Department will not tolerate any unwelcome advances and behaviors or verbal or physical contacts of sexual or discriminatory nature by staff, volunteers, or customers. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, inappropriate jokes, words (written or spoken), pranks, physical contact, threats, or violence. Any suspected examples of harassment should be reported to the immediate Supervisor as soon as possible.

Role, Duties and Responsibilities

The Department requires that all employees and volunteers demonstrate professional, moral and ethical behavior in their interactions with other employees, citizens, program participants and others.

The role of volunteers is to provide direct service support to staff as assigned in the delivery of programs, activities, and events for the citizens of St. Mary's County. Roles can be ones of advisement, assistance, development and even leadership, depending on the position and skills of the volunteer.

The duties of each assignment are outlined to the volunteer during orientation. Duties may include but are not limited to: help with landscaping or other work at parks or public landings; volunteer coaching; museum assistance; event planning and coordination; summer camp assistance; and program registration.

Volunteer responsibilities include: commitment to follow all Departmental policies and guidelines; being prepared for each work day or assignment; contacting supervisor when policy or action is unclear; and provide constructive criticism. Volunteers with the Department can expect fun, challenging and rewarding assignments; appropriate training and clear instructions; advice and support from supervisor; and can look forward to appropriate recognition.

The Department expects the relations between volunteers and paid staff members will be based on cooperation and mutual respect.

Accidents and Injuries

Volunteers must report every injury or accident immediately to their supervisor. Supervisors will complete necessary forms and follow the same County reporting

procedures for volunteers as they do with full-time and part-time/hourly staff. In the event that an injury is life threatening and or requires immediate medical attention, immediately CALL 9-1-1.

Volunteers are not covered for illness or injuries to themselves by County insurance.

Retention

Retaining our valued volunteers is vital to the success of programs, activities and events. Retention of experienced volunteers saves significant time and resources and has positive effects on programs and participants. Strong volunteer retention helps promote a positive image for the Department and staff. The Department provides the following in an effort to promote volunteer retention:

- Offers rewarding opportunities for volunteers;
- Places volunteers in positions where they can make the most impact;
- Matches volunteer experience and interest with appropriate positions;
- Provides clear and concise communication and information;
- Seeks ways to make volunteer positions fun and interesting;
- Provides opportunities for feedback;
- Promotes team atmosphere by including volunteers in staff meetings, activities and training as appropriate;
- Celebrates achievement through the Volunteer Recognition Program.

Recognition of Volunteers

The Department has established practices to recognize our valued volunteers. The Department generally confers certificates of appreciation during a volunteer and hourly employee recognition ceremony before a televised Recreation and Parks Citizen Advisory Board meeting in the fall of each year. Certificates are presented by the Recreation and Parks Board, Department Director and Division Manager. Individual Divisions hold volunteer recognition luncheons and provide certificates, pins, or other awards as necessary throughout the year.