

# **CITY OF RIO VISTA VOLUNTEER POLICY**

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Rio Vista believes that volunteers can make a positive difference to the community and to themselves. Volunteering is an activity where individuals decide, freely and by choice, to help achieve the organization's goals without expectations of financial or other rewards in kind. Volunteers benefit by gaining a greater understanding and appreciation for their local government and simultaneously strengthening the community's bond. We understand that people volunteer for many reasons and we value their contribution, commitment and participation. Their involvement compliments the work the City undertakes, but does not replace the work of paid staff members.

The Volunteer Policy does not apply to City approved programs such as the Police and Firefighter Reserves/Volunteer and Explorer programs.

## **MISSION**

To utilize motivated citizens to enhance and supplement the productive efforts of the City and to improve the quality of life of the citizens and the City of Rio Vista through the medium of volunteering.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement. The City of Rio Vista recognizes and supports the use of volunteers to assist the City of Rio Vista government in providing services and programs. The City of Rio Vista Volunteer Program Policies will establish standards of volunteer service for a formal volunteer program. This policy contains responsibilities of both the City and volunteers. Written policies and procedures will assure volunteers are suitably oriented and trained and job duties are developed. Supervision of volunteers is appropriate to assigned duties and discussion regarding safety, liability to the City and accident and property damage coverage is conducted.

For volunteering to be successful, the needs of the organization, service users and volunteers must harmonize. In an effort to match the City with qualified pre-screened volunteers and persons with specific strengths, volunteer organizations may be utilized in conjunction with the City for opportunities to enhance and more rapidly complete certain endeavors. Because of the composition of this diverse community, and the number of skilled persons desiring to participate in assisting the City, there needs to be a mechanism by which matches between organized volunteers and the City could be made. Volunteerism is valuable to meet the needs of both the City and utilizing the skills and desires of citizens willing to participate and help.

These policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The City of Rio Vista may periodically change these policies. When changes are made all volunteers are expect to adherence to the policies set forth by the City of Rio Vista. Advisory boards and commissions are not covered by this policy.

## **DEFINITION OF ‘VOLUNTEERS’**

An individual or group who provides their time, talent and abilities to perform assigned tasks at the direction of the City Manager and/or Department Directors, without expectation of any type of compensation.

For the purpose of utilizing volunteer services, the City will generally use the following categories of volunteers:

Non-professional: Those volunteers that have specific limited skills, knowledge, but have the abilities to perform tasks in a variety of areas. Also include volunteers with skills and knowledge in areas including but not limited to supervisory experience, graphic design, information technology, landscape design, public relations, etc

Professional - Those volunteers that have specific talents and that are licensed to perform duties such as architectural, law, appraisals, electrical, plumbing, or other professional experience in specific areas of municipal or private sector specialties. Utilization of volunteers in which the City will rely on the volunteers recommendation may require that the City and the volunteer enter into a separate contract.

## **SCOPE**

To maximize the effectiveness of volunteers, yet limit risk exposure to both volunteers and the City, this policy will apply to all City departments with volunteers.

## **PROCEDURES**

This policy and the Volunteer Handbook contains procedures which address specific methods to recruit, interview, selection, orient, train, supervise and recognize volunteers. The City Manager will oversee and/or designate an employee to be responsible for the Volunteer Program, who will serve as the contact person.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Recruitment**

Departments shall use the following recruiting procedures when seeking a volunteer for a Request Forms should be submitted to the City Manager for review and approval prior to the recruitment of any volunteer. Whenever possible, there shall be a response within 72 hours of the time request is received.

Once the Volunteer Request Form has been approved, the Department or his/her designee may openly recruit via the local paper for that volunteer and/or utilize a volunteer organization for applicants.

Applicants will be required to fill out a Volunteer Application Form (Exhibit B). Application information will include: name, address, telephone number, driver's license, work or volunteer experience, education or training, interests, availability, preferred assignments, references, etc. specific project or program. Procedures shall be consistently followed for every department requesting the use of volunteers. To assist in this initial process, department managers are required to complete a Volunteer Request Form (Exhibit A).

### **Volunteer Selection**

Once the Volunteer Application Form is completed, the respective department director and/or designee will interview the applicant(s). Once a volunteer is selected, the Department Manager will recommend said volunteer to the City Manager for approval. The Human Resource Department will send a letter to the volunteer notifying them of their acceptance pending any necessary background, live-scan and/or medical examination.

The Volunteer must complete and sign a Volunteer partial Liability Release Form in order to proceed with the selection process. Volunteers working with minors, the elderly and/or disabled persons will require a background check in accordance with Public Resource Code 5164.

If the volunteer position requires driving, a copy of the volunteer's drivers license shall be placed on file, a copy of the volunteer's personal vehicle insurance, and an Abstract of Driving Record obtained from the Department of Licensing at the volunteer's expense.

If the selection process discloses information that indicates the tentative volunteer would not fulfill department expectations, the City is under no obligation to assign or retain that volunteer.

### **Recruitment of Minors**

Generally speaking, the City of Rio Vista will not accept as an *individual* volunteer, anyone less than 16 years of age, but encourages participation of all ages in event-related and other group appropriate projects.

The City encourages individual minors (16-18) participation as volunteers so that these volunteers can accomplish their community service hours required for school. Individual minor volunteers are assigned to an appropriate supervisor who may be staff or an adult volunteer.

Groups and organizations whose members consist of children under age 16 are to volunteer with appropriate projects, provided their independent sponsoring group or organization adequately provides all of the adult supervision necessary for all minors to perform the activity safely. The City shall not be responsible for providing adequate adult supervision for groups including minor volunteers.

Each volunteer who has not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering.

### **COURT AND DIVERSION BOARD ORDERED COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The City will facilitate, whenever possible, volunteer opportunities for persons who are directed by legal authority to complete community service hours. All referrals for court-ordered community service for minors come through the Solano County Courts.

The Rio Vista Chief of Police or designee will review court orders for volunteer community service. The Rio Vista Chief of Police will determine if volunteer service in Rio Vista is appropriate. The Rio Vista Chief of Police will work with the individual responsible for the volunteer program to place the volunteer.

There must be adequate City resources to provide appropriate supervision of volunteers convicted of a crime. Supervisor(s) of such a volunteer shall be informed of the volunteer's legal requirement, but shall not be provided the details of the conviction. Court-ordered community service volunteers must read and sign the Volunteer Application Form before commencing volunteer service.

## **CITY EMPLOYEES AS VOLUNTEERS**

The City accepts and encourages the services of its staff as volunteers. This service is accepted, provided the volunteer service is:

1. Provided totally without a coercive nature.
2. Involves tasks which are outside the scope of normal staff duties.
3. Time is provided outside of usual working hours.

Additionally, the City supports its employees in volunteering with other community organizations, outside work hours.

## **ORIENTATION**

Orientation will be conducted on the first day of volunteerism. In order for both the City and volunteers to have a complete understanding of the conditions of volunteering, the following topics will be discussed during new volunteer orientation:

1. Policy and Procedures: Policy and procedures regulating volunteer duties should be discussed. Specific emphasis should be given to working safely, conditions of driving while as a volunteer and risk exposure to the City. This policy should be furnished to and discussed with volunteers.
2. Training: Volunteers will receive an overview of their volunteer assignment and, as appropriate, a written list of duties and expectations, hours of service, supervision, necessary forms, approved financial expenditures and reimbursement procedures, accident reporting procedures, confidentiality, call in, dress code, performance reviews, medical coverage, etc. Volunteers shall receive instructions in areas within their assigned duty assignment.
3. Supervision: Volunteers will be supervised as to assignments, work performance, activity, use of equipment, etc. Performance problems will be corrected or the volunteer will be released from service.

## **RISKS OF INJURY TO VOLUNTEERS**

City Volunteers are covered for work related injuries by the City's Worker's Compensation Insurance administered through Bragg and Associates (800) 422-7244. Volunteers are asked to sign an acknowledgement that this will be the sole remedy for injuries resulting from participation in the volunteer activities or services.

City Volunteers are covered under the City's Liability Policy but are requested to sign a partial waiver of liability for activities outside the course and scope of their volunteer duties (see attached).

## **DAMAGE TO VOLUNTEER PROPERTY**

If a volunteer's personal property is damaged while the volunteer is serving in authorized volunteer status, the Department shall investigate the incident and report on whether the damage occurred while in connection with the performed duties. Reimbursement of damaged personal property shall be limited to \$25 per incident.

## **DRIVING**

Volunteers are not allowed to operate City vehicles and may need to drive their own vehicle or ride with another volunteer to reach the project site. Volunteers should operate their vehicle on City property appropriately by complying with all laws. As passengers, volunteers should not distract drivers, throw anything from vehicle, damage interior or exterior condition of driver's vehicle, or cause a disruption.

Volunteers operating their private vehicles must be insured as required by California State Law. Volunteer's auto insurance will be considered primary coverage. Liability insurance coverage must be maintained uninterrupted. This does not include a volunteer's commute time from home to a City location.

However, exceptions may be made by the department head in consultation with the City Manager on a case by case basis.

## **RECOGNITION**

The City conducts an annual recognition event to recognize employees and volunteers for their years of service to the City.