

# VOLUNTEER MANUAL 2024



Elmhurst Park District

EPD 375 W First Street, Elmhurst, IL 60126



Dear Elmhurst Park District Volunteer:

**Welcome to the Elmhurst Park District team!** Thank you for joining the thousands of other community members who give their time and talents to our organization. Thanks to dedicated volunteers like you, the Elmhurst Park District has been locally and nationally recognized in the field of parks and recreation.

Volunteers support the Elmhurst Park District in a variety of ways—at special events, through office work, with education programs and with environmental-related projects. Volunteers add new dimension, personality and depth to our programs. Many activities would not take place without your help.

Thank you for giving the Elmhurst Park District your most important commodity—your time!

On behalf of the Elmhurst Park District, we look forward to working with you and we appreciate your contributions to the Elmhurst Park District.

Sincerely,

*Jim Rogers*

James Rogers  
Executive Director



Dear Elmhurst Park District Volunteer:

Thank you for contributing your time, talents and energy to the Elmhurst Park District. This manual will help familiarize you with our volunteer program. It is designed to supplement the Volunteer Orientation and any other basic volunteer-related training.

Volunteering at the Elmhurst Park District is part of a long tradition of community involvement and our volunteer program has reached several milestones since its inception. Our volunteers have been recognized by the City of Elmhurst and DuPage County with various awards. Volunteers have always been an integral part of a team that provides quality educational and interpretive programs and important conservation and restoration.

Your enjoyment and personal enrichment are important to us, so please let us know if there is anything we can do to make your volunteer experience more fulfilling. We, along with the rest of the Elmhurst Park District staff, are looking forward to getting to know you and working alongside you.

Sincerely,

*Kari Felkamp*

Kari Felkamp  
Director of Marketing and Communications

*Ashley Pratscher*

Ashley Pratscher  
Community Event & Development Supervisor

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# Welcome to the Elmhurst Park District Volunteer Program

**Mission: We enrich lives while having fun!**

The Elmhurst Park District exists to provide opportunities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, particularly those opportunities that people cannot supply for themselves.

## **Benefits:**

The Elmhurst Park District uses volunteers for several different reasons:

- The Park District provides services and resources to its clients and the community at large.
- Volunteers are part of the best way to get important work done. By using volunteers, the Park District is able maximize its labor resources and save money. The Park District is also able to connect with the community through working with these dedicated individuals.
- Managing volunteers well ensures the important tasks are also done well.

Community volunteers will provide both program and administrative support recognizing that today's volunteers expect to be included in meaningful work that is clearly focused on the organization's mission. The Board and staff will endeavor to include volunteers in program work wherever possible. However, volunteer assistance will enhance and not replace paid staff work. Volunteers will be expected to perform in cooperation with the organization's staff and comply with organization guidelines at all times.

The volunteer program was established in 1986 to encourage Elmhurst residents to offer their time and services for the betterment of the Park District and the community. Over the years, the program has flourished and has become an important part of many of the services the Park District offers. The program is managed by the marketing specialist, who works closely with volunteers and staff throughout the year to match volunteer services with Park District needs.

On behalf of the Park District Board and staff, we thank you for volunteering your time and services and hope that your experience will be enjoyable. Please feel free to contact the Community Event & Development Supervisor at (630) 993-8182 if you have questions or comments about the program.

## **The EPD Volunteer....**

Volunteers (ages 13 to 70+) come from all walks of life and have a wide variety of interests and reasons for volunteering. Some have only a few hours a year to donate while others help on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. Some volunteer weekdays and others are only available after 5 p.m. or on weekends. No matter what your background, time availability, or interests, the Park District can use your help!

## **Volunteer Status**

### Regular Service Volunteers

Regular service volunteers are those persons who are officially enrolled as volunteers with the Park District, serve in an assigned volunteer position, and donate at least 10 hours each year.

Volunteers assigned to child-sensitive positions and expected to volunteer at least 20 hours per quarter are subject to a criminal background investigation. This procedure requires checks of potential volunteers for criminal convictions relating to inappropriate behavior. The background investigation will be conducted prior to the beginning of your volunteer service.

### Special Event Volunteers

Special event volunteers are those persons who assist on a limited basis throughout the year with Park District events and/or projects. This may include students volunteering for special credit, service learning hours, community service hours for religious or school organizations, or corporate or civic organizations that donate volunteer service hours. Groups, as well as individuals, may be included in this category. Examples of special events are the Egg Hunt, Park Palooza, and Family Fall Fest.

### Inactive and Archived Volunteers

Volunteers that have not volunteered within the last two years are considered inactive volunteers. After five years of inactivity, information is archived if information is needed to verify hours.

## **Attendance**

Volunteers are expected to attend when scheduled. If an emergency arises, necessitating the need to miss an assignment, volunteers are asked to contact the Community Event & Development Supervisor at (630) 993-8182. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment or term of service.

## **Leave of Absence**

Leaves of absence will be granted to volunteers when circumstances necessitate that they cannot fulfill their commitment. Volunteers should notify the Community Event & Development Supervisor and provide an approximate time frame as to how long they will not be available.

## **Dress Code**

As a general rule, volunteers should dress comfortably and suitably for their assignment. In many instances, a special event staff shirt will be provided.

## About this Handbook

The information that follows is designed to offer an overview of the Elmhurst Park District volunteer program. Brief descriptions of some specific volunteer assignments are included along with general information applicable to all volunteers. Suggestions and ideas for new ways to involve volunteers in the Elmhurst Park District's services are always welcome.

### Waivers

Volunteers are required to complete a waiver form if they are regularly involved with Park District activities. One-time volunteers must also sign in on a waiver sheet at various special events. Any other volunteer work involving a high-risk activity will require a signed waiver form.

## EPD Organizational Structure

### Board of Commissioners

The Park District is managed by an Executive Director who works under the direction of the Board of Park Commissioners. The seven-member Board of Park Commissioners is comprised of elected citizen volunteers who collectively donate hundreds of hours of service each year. Board meetings are held every second and fourth Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Park District Administrative Office, 375 W. First Street. The public is always welcome!

### Volunteer Chain of Command

The Community Event & Development Supervisor reports to the Director of Marketing and Communications. In the event the event supervisor is unavailable, the Director of Marketing or another staff member of the marketing department will preside over the volunteers.



During a volunteering event/program, the event supervisor must be present to supervise the actions of volunteers.

## **Our Promise to You.....**

The Elmhurst Park District staff realizes that, without our volunteers, many important tasks essential to the smooth running of the Park District would not be accomplished. In accordance with this we pledge:

- ***To provide a safe, pleasant environment.***
- ***To provide necessary supplies and equipment.***
- ***To provide necessary guidance and assistance.***
- ***To offer opportunities for socialization, learning, and enjoyment.***

### ***Volunteers have a right to:***

- Receive a description of each service or activity performed.
- Know the time commitment that is expected.
- Receive training in volunteer performance and safety precautions.
- Be treated as a valuable team member, equal to co-workers and paid staff.
- Receive fair and non-discriminatory treatment by staff and other volunteers.
- Have special abilities and skills considered during volunteer placement.
- Be given ongoing supervision, as well as clear and specific directions.
- Have their accomplishments recognized in both formal and informal ways.
- Offer and receive feedback and suggestions from supervisors on a one-to-one basis.
- Be told promptly and honestly the reason for suspension of duties, if necessary.

## **We Ask For Your Pledge...**

Each year, volunteers assist staff with scores of regularly-scheduled activities and individual special projects. Volunteers meet new friends, learn new skills, and provide important and much-needed service to the community but, most of all, our volunteers have fun!

In return we ask for your pledge to do your best to meet your commitment. We understand that illness and emergencies arise, but we also want our volunteers to appreciate that we rely on their offer to serve. In accordance with this, we ask that you notify the appropriate individuals as soon as possible whenever you are unable to meet your commitment as planned.

***“I pledge to meet my commitment to the Elmhurst Park District whenever possible. In the event that I am unable to fulfill my commitment, I will notify the appropriate person as soon as possible, as is within my power.”***



***As a volunteer, I agree to:***

- Commit to doing the best job possible.
- Consider volunteering with the Park District a serious responsibility.
- Represent the Park District in an appropriate and responsible way.
- Observe the same rules and policies of the Park District as paid staff. These rules and policies are summarized in this handbook; complete manuals may be viewed at the Park District Administrative Office.
- Take part in any training required or pertinent to my volunteer assignment.
- Be on time; follow through on any commitments made.
- Follow the position description and accept the supervision of staff members.
- Offer feedback and suggestions to the site supervisor; utilize constructive channels for criticism or suggestions.
- Inform the Community Events & Development Supervisor when unable to volunteer at a scheduled time.
- Dress appropriately for the environment in which I will be working.
- Give maximum care to all tools, supplies and equipment used in carrying out the volunteer assignment; return all equipment at the end of the scheduled volunteer shift.
- Remember – you are representing the Elmhurst Park District when you are volunteering – in your appearance, as well as in what you say and do. Be proud to be a Park District volunteer – we’re proud to have you volunteering with us!

**Description of Volunteer Assignments**

Volunteer assignment descriptions must be employed at all times. They are the basis for:

- *developing appropriate messaging and distribution of recruitment materials*
- *setting criteria for selection and placement of volunteers*
- *formulating necessary content and type to training*
- *establishing standards for performance in supervising and evaluating volunteers, including grounds for possible suspension of duties*
- *understanding the scope of assignment to be considered in recognizing and rewarding volunteer effort.*

### **Adopt-A-Park**

The Adopt-A-Park Program is designed to encourage the community to work hands-on to help keep Elmhurst's parks clean, attractive and safe for everyone. Groups "adopt" a specific park from April through December, and set up monthly work dates to maintain the appearance and safety of the park. The program is open to individuals, neighborhood associations, civic groups, religious organizations, service organizations, schools (school groups and teams), businesses and other community organizations throughout the City of Elmhurst.

### **Senior Club activities**

Monthly lunches, bingo and other activities geared toward our senior population are held throughout the year and sometimes require volunteer assistance.

### **Courts Plus**

Volunteers are occasionally needed for special events and Kids Plus programs.

### **Elmhurst Great Western Prairie**

The Elmhurst Great Western Prairie is a six-acre, natural prairie area located between Spring Road and Salt Creek adjacent to the Illinois Prairie Path. Specific work dates are scheduled around the calendar for such activities as planting prairie plants, cutting woody growth, seed gathering and scattering, and an annual cleanup. Volunteers are always needed to help plan and work these dates.

### **Greenhouse Garden Volunteer**

Greenhouse Garden Volunteers assist the Elmhurst Park District's Horticultural Program by providing plant care and maintenance both in the greenhouses and surrounding gardens. Duties may include: filling containers with soil, moving plants from one greenhouse to another, spacing plants on the bench, planting, propagation, deadheading, staking, pruning, watering, show set ups and take downs, greenhouse sanitation (pot washing, plant grooming, debris removal – benches, plants and floor, weeding, deadheading), gardens in Wilder Park (Mansion, Veterans Memorial, Formal, Elizabeth's, Butterfly and containers), planting, weeding, deadheading, staking, and pruning. No chemical or power equipment usage is involved. Ability to be on your feet 100% of the time, walking, lifting and carrying (10 lbs.), kneeling, stooping, use of hand tools is required. Working conditions inside 50 degrees to 90 degrees humid, outside 50 degrees to 80 degrees humid. Exposure to dust and water; moderate noise level.

### **Teen Volunteers**

Teens are recruited via their junior high or high school. If your school does not participate in the volunteer program, you can still help by contacting the Community Event & Development Supervisor at (630) 993-8182 or registering as a volunteer at [www.epd.org/volunteer.asp](http://www.epd.org/volunteer.asp). We'll be happy to add you to our email list.

## **Special Events**

Volunteers help with many events during the year such as the Egg Hunt, Park Palooza and Family Fall Fest.

## **Special Projects**

If you have skills or training in any area that you feel might be beneficial to the Park District, we would be interested in discussing your services on a short or long-term basis. Some examples of special skills that volunteers have contributed in the past are:

- *Coordinating and organizing special events/fundraisers*
- *Teaching or assisting with specific programs*

## **Training and Other Benefits**

Volunteers receive assignment training whenever needed. Depending on the assignment and the wishes of the volunteer, training can range from a short briefing to long-term, ongoing learning in a special area of interest. Park District volunteers discover new interests and learn while giving back to the community.

Most importantly, Park District volunteers meet new friends, socialize and broaden their horizons!

## **Recognition**

In lieu of an annual recognition event to honor volunteers who have volunteered a specific number of service hours during the year, we have several ways to accommodate varying groups and schedules. For example, we will have a lunch for the Prairie Restoration volunteers and an evening pizza party for the middle school and high school students who volunteer. Regardless of the venue, volunteers are publicly acknowledged for the thousands of hours of service they have donated to the Park District.

We understand the importance of recognizing our volunteers since they are giving their time and talent to us unselfishly. They support programs that we would be unable to offer the community without their help, and they save the Park District thousands of dollars annually.

Many volunteer because they want to give back to their community, while others enjoy being affiliated with the organization, its philosophy, staff and programs. That affiliation is a form of recognition for them. Many enjoy the sense of accomplishment they feel when doing a necessary job well; it is a reward in itself. And yet, other volunteers have worked in high-powered careers and need an outlet for their managerial skills now that they are retired. Giving these volunteers leadership roles aids the Park District staff and meets the needs of the volunteer in a positive fashion. The influence and power these volunteers perceive themselves as having is beneficial to all. By understanding why an individual volunteers, we can recognize them individually as they donate their time to us. By recognizing and honoring them as individuals we help to retain their services.

## **Safety First!**

Your safety and well-being while serving the Park District is important to us. We ask volunteers to adhere to all safety policies and procedures of the Park District and within their volunteer environment, and to discuss with staff any special safety precautions that may be applicable to their assignment.

Specifically, volunteers:

- Are prohibited from operating Park District vehicles or any motorized equipment.
- Are prohibited from smoking and consuming alcoholic beverages at all Park District facilities and properties.
- Must report any serious illness or injury to your staff supervisor as soon as possible and cooperate with any investigation.
- Should familiarize themselves with fire exits and meeting places in the event of an emergency.
- Wear personal protective equipment appropriate to the task.

In addition, the Elmhurst Park District safety manual is available upon request.

## **Terminating Service**

Park District staff members value our volunteers and will do everything in our power to see that your volunteer experience is a rewarding and beneficial one. We understand that there are countless personal reasons that may necessitate a volunteer leaving.

Volunteers may suspend service at any time and are requested to advise the staff supervisor of their intent to leave.

Please advise the Community Event & Development Supervisor of any problems or concerns that may arise during your hours of service. We will make every effort to reach a mutually acceptable resolution as quickly as possible.

**ELMHURST PARK DISTRICT  
VOLUNTEER MANUAL CONFIRMATION**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Elmhurst Park District Volunteer Manual. I further certify that I have received a brief explanation of the content of the manual received, and that I will read and abide by these policies and procedures during the course of volunteering with the Park District.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Name *(please print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*\*If the Volunteer is under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian signature is required.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Name *(please print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date