



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2024



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Guiding Principles



City Vision, Mission, Values

Vision

To provide world-class municipal services through operational excellence and a culture of innovation.

Mission

Exceptional service for an exceptional community.

Values

- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Outstanding Service
- Safety & Well-being
- Stewardship

Volunteer Services Vision and Mission

Vision

Strengthen the Fort Collins community by activating volunteerism guided by stewardship, inclusion, and impact.

Mission

Promote volunteer involvement to improve services and create community

Values

The City is guided by six values, which also apply directly to volunteer engagement.

- **Collaboration:** Partnership between volunteers and employees drives value and impact.
- **Excellence:** We strive for quality in supporting volunteers with resources for success.
- **Integrity:** We honor volunteers and their contributions through honesty and respect.
- **Outstanding Service:** We provide volunteers exceptional support so they can have exceptional impact.
- **Safety and Wellbeing:** We prioritize the mental, physical, and emotional safety and wellness of our volunteer partners.
- **Stewardship:** We cultivate partnerships with volunteers and nurture that relationship ongoingly.

Safety



Body Mechanics

Take special care to how you lift, stand, sit, and move during your volunteer duties to prevent injury.

Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

Wear the appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment as outlined by your supervisor.

Emergency Response

Staff will provide instruction in the event of an emergency. If an evacuation is necessary, move as quickly and orderly as possible and proceed to your designated meeting area.

Staff will also teach you the location of first aid kits and AED in case of a medical emergency. Call 911 if necessary.

Incident Reporting

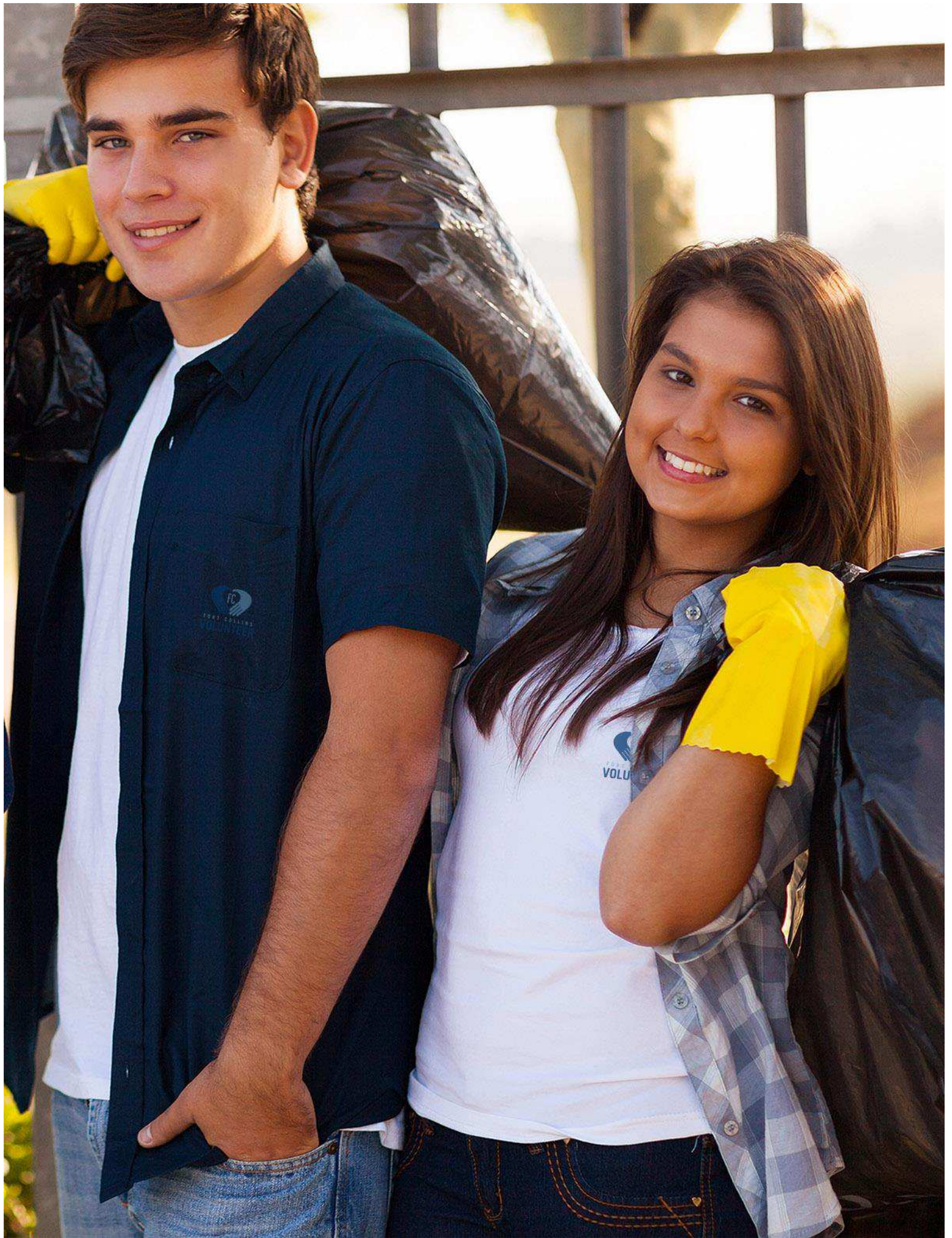
Any volunteer involved in an incident during the course of their volunteer duties or a near miss must report the incident to their department Volunteer Manager or supervisor as soon as possible. Each volunteer must also report any unsafe working conditions, equipment or practices to their department Volunteer Manager or supervisor as soon as possible. An incident may be defined as something noteworthy or out of the ordinary that resulted in injury, property damage or could have potentially resulted in one of these.

Slips, Trips, and Falls

Look on the ground for changes in flooring height, spilled liquids, and tripping hazards. Report hazards to your supervisor.

Training

City supervising staff will provide safety training to volunteers specific to the task the volunteer will be performing. Training shall include the potential hazards the volunteer may encounter and how to protect themselves from those hazards including the issuance and use of personal protective equipment (PPE).



Policies



Age Requirements

It is the discretion of each volunteer program in the City whether to accept youth volunteers under the age of 18, including what ages of volunteers they will accept, and what ages volunteers can participate unsupervised by a parent or guardian.

Attendance and Commitment

Volunteers will give as much notice as reasonably possible to their supervisor if they will be late for or absent from a volunteer shift. By applying to a volunteer opportunity, volunteers agree to commit to the volunteer position for a period of time listed in the volunteer position description. If for any reason a volunteer becomes inactive, including for extended vacation or medical leave, volunteers must notify a supervisor. Volunteers who do not return after one year will be considered inactive.

Confidentiality

Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of materials, records, and information that you may come into contact with during the course of their volunteer experience. Confidential information may include personnel records, financial information, privileged communication, etc. Some assignments may require the completion of a confidentiality agreement.

Customer Service Standards

Volunteers are expected to provide a high-level of customer service to exhibit visitors in accordance with the City's mission, "Exceptional service for an exceptional community."

Difficult Visitors

Difficult visitors and customers should be directed to a paid staff member. Volunteers that find themselves in a situation where they feel uncomfortable, should involve their department's Volunteer Manager.

Dismissal

Either a volunteer or the City may terminate a volunteer opportunity at will at any time with or without cause or notice. Cause for termination of a volunteer opportunity includes but is not limited to violation of any of the requirements or Code of Conduct contained in the Volunteer Policies and Procedures or Volunteer Handbook.

Exit Survey

In the spirit of continuous improvement and data collection, the City of Fort Collins asks that all volunteers leaving their volunteer position fill out an exit survey. The survey can be found at fcgov.com/volunteer.

Grievances

Promoting positive relationships between volunteers and City employees is key to the operations of the City of Fort Collins. Volunteers are urged to discuss any grievances with their department Volunteer Manager, or the Volunteer Services Program Manager.

Hours

Volunteers must keep accurate records of the time spent volunteering, days and times, and report to the department's Volunteer Manager.

Identification Badges

Long-term volunteers and interns are required to wear their identification badge at all times during their volunteer duties for security purposes. All volunteers must return their identification badges to their department's Volunteer Manager or supervisor upon resignation, completion, or termination of their volunteer status with the City.

Intellectual Property Policy

Intellectual or physical property developed by volunteers during City of Fort Collins volunteer activities becomes and is the property of the City of Fort Collins.

Media Contact

Volunteers are not authorized to speak to the media about their volunteer duties or during their volunteer activities unless City staff consents. Media contacts will likely be pre-arranged, and the volunteer will be notified.

Orientation

Volunteers must attend a Volunteer Orientation, either by attending a presentation with a Volunteer Services Program team member or through their own department training. Virtual orientations are also available.

Policy Changes

Updates to this Volunteer Handbook will be published at fcgov.com/volunteer.

Representing the City

As an affiliate of the City, residents and customers may not be aware of the unpaid status of a volunteer, but only perceive them as a representative of the City government. Volunteers are responsible for representing the City in a positive way while on duty or wearing a volunteer uniform or name badge.

Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol

Volunteers are not permitted to smoke, use alcohol, marijuana or illegal substances while volunteering for or representing the City, nor to bring them into any City facility. Smoking is prohibited on all City property including parks, natural areas and trails.

Talent Release

By registering as a volunteer, the City has the right to capture, reproduce, edit and distribute broadcast audio or visual media of the volunteer without payment of fees.

Uniforms

Uniforms are determined by the discretion of each volunteer program. All volunteers must wear some sort of volunteer identifier. When not provided by the department, FC Volunteer t-shirts are available through Volunteer Services.

Recommended volunteer dress for outdoor assignments:

- Pants – comfortable pants to prevent scrapes and sun damage
- Shirt – City-provided volunteer tee-shirt or polo shirt with “Volunteer” clearly marked
- Footwear – closed-toed shoes or boots
- Headwear – headwear is not required, acceptable headwear includes a cap or visor

Volunteer Records

The City will collect information about volunteers during the application process. Volunteer information collected by the City is confidential and will not be shared and/or sold. Volunteer records may be deleted after 5 years.

Volunteer Directory

Volunteers are encouraged to explore opportunities with any City departments. Current volunteer opportunities can be found at the [Get Involved Page](#)

Working for the Public

Volunteers for the City act in the public trust. Volunteers will disclose any potential for conflict of interest or appearance thereof to their supervisor. Volunteers cannot accept gifts or favors in excess of \$50 from residents or customers in the course of their work and are subject to the conflict of interest requirements described in the Fort Collins Charter at Article IV, §9 and the Fort Collins Municipal Code at §2-568.



Code of Conduct



Although it is impossible to predict every possible type of volunteer misconduct, the following are some of the types of conduct that could lead to termination of volunteer opportunity:

1. Theft or misuse of City money or property;
2. Commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude;
3. Violation of any departmental or City rule, regulation, policy or procedure;
4. Harassment of, or discrimination against, any individual based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by the law;
5. Falsification, unauthorized use or destruction of City records, reports or other data or information belonging to the City;
6. Abusive or threatening treatment of any person, including, but not limited to physical or verbal confrontation;
7. Insubordination or refusal to comply with directives or assignments;
8. Using, consuming, possessing, having in the body, or distributing alcohol or controlled substances during working time or while operating a vehicle to conduct City business;
9. Incompetence, inattention to duties or wastefulness while on the job;
10. Failure to meet performance expectations of job or not performing duties or functions assigned;
11. Repeated tardiness or absenteeism;
12. Failure to properly use safety equipment, clothing or equipment or failure to follow established safety procedures;
13. Destruction, loss or abuse of City property;
14. Unauthorized use of City vehicles, equipment or property for personal use;
15. Possessing or maintaining sexually explicit materials on City property or in a City vehicle without a valid, work-related purpose. Sexually explicit materials shall mean any pictures, drawings, electronic reproductions, or other visual reproductions depicting the genitals, depicting sexual acts, or depicting an image which could reasonably be construed as conveying a sexually erotic theme.
16. Non-volunteer conduct different from or in addition to the types of conduct discussed above.
17. Conduct that is in violation of the law or when the conduct is, or is likely to be, unduly disruptive to the interests of the City, which interests include but are not limited to, the efficient and effective operation of the City, the orderly work environment of the City, the working relationships within the City organization or the public trust.
18. Possessing a weapon of any kind including toy/fake weapons while conducting volunteer duties or representing the City.

Forms



REQUIRED

Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers contributing more than one day of service to the city of Fort Collins must sign the Volunteer Agreement acknowledging that they understand the terms laid out in this Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer Application/Certification and Release

All volunteers contributing more than one day of service to the city of Fort Collins must fill out a Volunteer Application through Engage. Volunteer applicants must also sign the certification and release form on the volunteer application.

Acknowledgement and Release

All volunteers are required to sign our Volunteer Acknowledgement form. Volunteers under the age of 18 or volunteers using the power of attorney must have a parent or guardian sign for them. New volunteers will be prompted to sign the Volunteer Acknowledgement form when they log into their Engage account. Volunteers under 18 will need a parent or guardian to sign a release for them.

Dependent on Position Duties

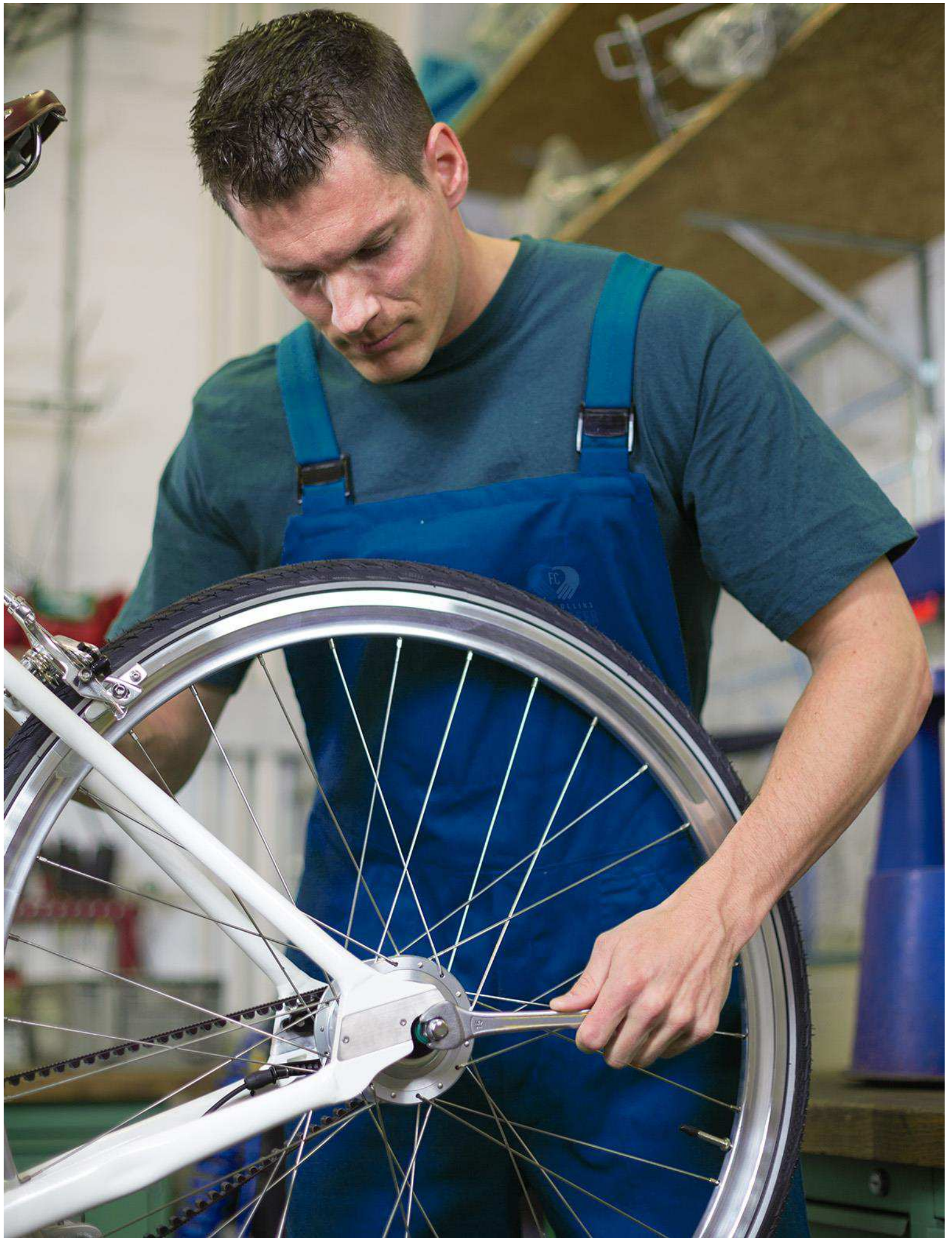
Background Check

Volunteers in a position of trust are required to complete a criminal background check. A position of trust includes volunteering youth or vulnerable populations. A position of trust also includes volunteering with access to confidential information, money, or valuable items. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian sign a release for a background check. Volunteers under the age of 14 do not require a background check. Volunteers conducting City business driving a vehicle are required to complete a motor vehicle record check.

** Volunteers are prohibited from being alone with anyone considered a “vulnerable person”. This includes children, the elderly or people with disabilities.

Confidentiality Agreement

Volunteers may be privy to confidential information during the scope of their volunteer activities. Volunteers must agree to the terms in the Confidentiality Agreement in order to work in an area with confidential information, such as some areas of the Human Resources, Finance, or Utilities Departments.



Volunteer Benefits



- Active volunteers may ride MAX or Transfort for free by showing their City ID Badge
- Access to internal job postings
- Opportunities to work with and learn from talented and experienced City staff
- Volunteers will be invited to Citywide Volunteer Appreciation events
- Volunteer Performance Awards
- Volunteer gifts
- Continuing education and training opportunities
- Networking opportunities, letters of reference, and job-training
- Intrinsic rewards including helping others, giving back, being a part of a larger community
- Participating in City government
- Nomination for local, state, and national awards
- Volunteer Spotlights
- Submission of volunteer-related stories to the media with proper authorization
- Insurance coverage during volunteer duties secondary to your own personal insurance

Thank You



Thank you for contributing your unique talents to the City of Fort Collins. On behalf of all employees at the City, we hope your experience with us is positive, productive, safe, and fun.

If you have any questions about anything in this handbook please contact your supervisor or feel free to contact Sue Schafer, Volunteer Services Program Manager, at 970-416-4245 or sschafer@fcgov.com

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are required to sign the Volunteer Agreement for the Volunteer Handbook. The agreement states that the volunteer agrees to abide by the procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook. This document will be completed online through the Engage on-boarding process or by printing this document and returning it to a volunteer supervisor.

I, [Print Name] _____, agree to abide by the procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook while volunteering at the City of Fort Collins.

I further acknowledge and agree that while volunteering for the City of Fort Collins I will not be an agent, servant or employee of the city, will not be entitled to any wages or compensation of any sort, and will not be covered by the city's employee benefits, including worker's compensation. Further, nothing in the Volunteer Handbook shall be construed to create an employment relationship of any nature whatsoever.

Signature _____

Date _____

Natural Areas Handbook Addendum

Last Revised 7/12/2024

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Our Beliefs

Mission

The Natural Areas Department's mission is to conserve and enhance lands with natural resource, agricultural and scenic values, while providing meaningful education and appropriate recreation opportunities.

History of the Natural Areas Department

The residents of Fort Collins have created a legacy of natural resource conservation. In 1992, Fort Collins



community members overwhelmingly decided to tax themselves to establish the Natural Areas Program (changed to “Department” in 2012). The funds made possible land conservation, public amenities like trails and parking lots, educational opportunities, and other related projects. Additional sales taxes to fund natural areas were initiated and passed by voters in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2002, and 2014. These extend the revenues from the County Help Preserve Open Space sales tax to 2043 and the revenues from the City sales tax to 2030. The Fort Collins community makes natural areas possible--thank you!

Our Volunteer Philosophy

By becoming a volunteer with us, you are joining a long history of community commitment to conservation. Since its inception, the Natural Areas Department has engaged volunteers on every level, from education to stewardship to leadership. Volunteers help extend outreach and strengthen community involvement. We believe that volunteers are one of our most valuable resources.

Our Continuing Education Guidelines

The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department understands the value of continuous education for our volunteers and is committed to offering high quality programs at least once a month. We hope you can take advantage of some of the wonderful classes offered.

Volunteer Naturalists and Volunteer Naturalist Assistants are required to attend at least two qualified continuing education programs, field trips, or workshops each year. Qualified continuing education opportunities are usually sponsored or organized by the Natural Areas Department. We send you notices and information about these via email. You are welcome and encouraged to take classes offered by other City of Fort Collins programs, including the FC Volunteer Program, but they do not count towards your continuing education requirements. While there are a great variety and quantity of worthwhile and interesting programs and workshops in Fort Collins, we cannot endorse them or count your attendance at these as continuing education with us.

Likewise, we cannot promote other organizations’ workshops, events, or learning opportunities (with a few exceptions), and rarely do we send these on to you. We also are protective of your commitment to us, and we value your choice to volunteer with the Natural Areas Department. Our policy is to not give your information to other organizations, nor can we vouch for others’ values and missions, so we do not pass on their events to you.

Safety



Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment

Natural Areas-specific PPE may include hat, lots of water, sunscreen, closed-toed shoes, gloves, first aid kit (required), safety vest, sunglasses, snake gaiters, winter walkers, and more. Natural Areas will provide most of the PPE for you, so please check with staff if you need anything.

You may also bring PPE for program participants including sunscreen, insect repellent, and hand sanitizer, available for checkout at Nix. Do not give out first aid supplies beyond your level of training.

Emergency Response

Emergency response in natural areas relies on communication. Bring your cell phone. If you are at a regional site, you must take the Field Safety course which teaches you radio procedures and locations of call boxes. This course is included in all Volunteer Naturalist, Volunteer Naturalist Assistant, and Volunteer Ranger Assistant training.

Risks

Take special care to avoid and prepare for risks in natural areas including people, weather, water, wildlife, insects, and plants.

Safety Message

The Natural Areas Department Safety Team has crafted the following message for the public: The activities and events offered by the Natural Areas Department often take place in natural areas where you are responsible for your own safety. Outdoor activities include the potential for serious injury, death, and property loss. Please choose activities that match your abilities and be prepared for site and weather conditions.

Staff and volunteers leading programs should be delivering some variation of this message to the public prior to heading out for a program. Wording can be changed to be more personal or to fit the group. If you are a group leader, you must point out potential hazards to your participants at the beginning of your outing.

Safety Resources

For a complete and up-to-date list of safety resources please visit:

<http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/vol-safety.php>

Training

Natural Areas staff offers Field Safety and First Aid/CPR classes for volunteers, in addition to other safety programs. Staff will keep you notified of training and continuing education opportunities through volunteer email communication. All volunteers leading programs at regional sites must take the Field Safety course.

Responsibilities



You are an ambassador

Prior to any action or statement which might affect or obligate the city of Fort Collins, volunteers should consult with and get approval from appropriate staff. These actions may include public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the Natural Areas Department only as specifically indicated within their job descriptions and to the extent of such written specifications. Remember, you are an ambassador for the Natural Areas Department and are expected to represent the Natural Areas

Department positively. All volunteers are expected to effectively communicate the City's goals, management philosophy, and key messages.

You maintain confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the Natural Areas Department or other corrective action.

Your dress is appropriate

As representatives of the Natural Areas Department you are responsible for presenting a good image to visitors and to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. The Natural Areas Department will provide you with appropriate uniforms as outlined in their volunteer description. Uniforms should not be altered in any way. Please return or destroy your uniform if you decide to discontinue your volunteer service.

You help us keep accurate records

Individual volunteers are responsible for the accurate completion and timely submission of hours and reports to the Volunteer Coordinator through the online Engage system. Stay up to date on volunteer email communication and respond to requests about background checks and records.

You follow the rules

No person who has been cited for violation of Natural Areas Department regulations within the last year will be allowed to volunteer. Follow the rules in the Volunteer Handbook, Natural Areas addendum, volunteer agreement, volunteer waiver, in addition to the responsibilities outlined in your volunteer job description.

Volunteer Benefits



- Interact with people with similar interests.
- Participate in fun volunteer recognition and social events, including the Natural Areas Volunteer Celebration and other fun events.
- Be an integral part of a large, well-respected, and forward-thinking land conservation and stewardship program.
- Be truly valued by Natural Areas Department staff and managers.
- Assist visitors in understanding and appreciating natural areas.
- Milestone and merit-based awards.
- Volunteer spotlights in monthly Volunteer Newsletter.
- Participate in exclusive continuing education opportunities.

Thank You



Thank you, thank you, thank you for taking conservation action in your community and supporting natural areas! If you have any questions about anything in this handbook please contact AJ Chlebnik, Natural Areas Volunteer Specialist, at 970-224-6118 or achlebnik@fcgov.com