



CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

PUBLIC WORKS

POLICY

NAME: POL 100 - Public Works Volunteer Program Policy

NUMBER: POL 100

SPONSOR: Office of Public Works Director, Community Engagement and Inclusion

APPROVED BY: Public Works Director

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 9, 2022

CANCELS: This replaces any previous department policy or guidance specifically referencing the volunteer program.

NEXT REVIEW: February 9, 2023

I. Purpose

- a. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff and volunteers follow a consistent set of guidelines promoting safety and creating positive volunteer experiences for volunteers and the department.

II. Scope

- a. Volunteers participating in activities via:
 - i. Adopt-A-Road program
 - ii. Adopt-A-Park program
 - iii. Volunteer park host program
 - iv. Nonprofits and/or community groups supporting parks maintenance
 - v. Special volunteer projects such as trail counts, photography
 - vi. One-time volunteer activities and projects, whether facilitated by Public Works or a group or individual with the permission and supervision of Public Works

III. References

- a. Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Road, and park host policy and procedure documents? (name and link TBD)
- b. [RCW 35.61.130: Eminent domain – Park commissioners’ authority, generally – prospective staff screening](#)
- c. [RCW 51.12.035: Volunteers \(Industrial insurance – employments and occupations covered\)](#)

Reviewed By: <i>Eva Haney</i>	Approved by: <i>Kathleen Otto</i>	Approved on Date: 02/15/22
----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------------------------

- d. Clark County Equal Opportunity Employment and Harassment Policy and Employment Standards Policy (sections 3 and 13 of this document)

IV. Definitions

- a. "Activity": A project, duty, or task assigned to and performed by volunteers.
- b. "Assignment": A volunteer role or activity for a specific volunteer program e.g., Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Road, volunteer park host, etc.
- c. "Event": A specific occurrence of an organized volunteer activity.
- d. "Group": Any collective of volunteers who belong to the same organization or program, or who have self-identified as a group.
- e. "Leader": A designated person within a group responsible for ensuring that volunteer activity participants from their group follow all volunteer program policies, guidelines, and staff instructions. Leaders are usually also required to complete training and orientation with the volunteer program coordinator.
- f. "Minor": Any person under the age of 18.
- g. "Tools" (also "equipment," "materials," or "supplies"): Any item used for the purpose of completing a volunteer activity or for use during a volunteer event.
- h. "Volunteer": As defined in [RCW 51.12.035](#), "a 'volunteer' shall mean a person who performs any assigned or authorized duties for any such unit of local government, or any such organization... brought about by one's own free choice, receives no wages, and is registered and accepted as a volunteer by any such unit of local government... for the purpose of engaging in authorized volunteer services..."
- i. "Volunteer program": A program within the Community Engagement and Inclusion section of Public Works, dedicated to and assigned the responsibility for recruiting, training, assigning, supervising, recognizing, and retaining volunteers to support the work of the department.
- j. "Volunteer program coordinator" (or "coordinator"): The Public Works employee in the Office of Public Works Director, Public Information and Outreach section, assigned the role of coordinating and managing the volunteer program.

V. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Volunteers serving at properties or facilities managed by Public Works or via Public Works volunteer program activities.

VI. Policy

- a. Service at Discretion of the Agency: Clark County Public Works welcomes the service of all approved volunteers, with the understanding that any such service is at the sole discretion of the county (i.e., "at will"). Volunteers agree that the county may, at any time with or without cause, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the county. Volunteers may also terminate their relationship with the county at any time.
- b. Unauthorized Volunteer Service: If Public Works has not specifically, in writing, authorized a volunteer(s) to perform a specific task, project or activity on a county-owned property or roadway/right of way, the volunteer(s) absolutely cannot perform that work, even if they provide their own tools and materials. Residents who perform unauthorized work are personally liable for legal, financial, and medical claims arising

- from their actions. Public Works coordinates with authorities to stop unauthorized work on county properties. Individuals who attempt to, or follow through with, unauthorized volunteer service may be banned from future volunteer group assignments and approvals at the discretion of the county.
- c. Termination of Volunteer Service: Individuals or groups who violate volunteer program policy or fail to comply with staff instructions will be issued one written or verbal warning. If the volunteer or group fails to take corrective action, their status as a volunteer or volunteer group will be revoked.
 - d. Volunteer Code of Conduct: By participating in Public Works volunteer activities, all volunteers agree to:
 - i. Participate in volunteer program activities only when they are not under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or controlled substances.
 - ii. Participate in volunteer program activities only when they are not ill or injured.
 - iii. Participate in creating a welcoming environment for all and abide by county non-discrimination and harassment policies.
 - iv. Communicate with staff honestly.
 - v. Follow all instructions from staff and designated volunteer leaders, promptly and with a positive attitude.
 - vi. Avoid using profanity or wearing clothing with inappropriate language or images (e.g., drugs, alcohol, nudity, slurs, etc.) during volunteer service.
 - vii. Failure to comply with this code of conduct may result in the volunteer being disallowed from future volunteer activities and service.
 - e. Non-Discrimination and Harassment: Clark County is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, HIV or Hepatitis C status, the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a disabled person, sexual orientation/gender identity, veteran status or any other status protected by law. This prohibition underscores the county's commitment to provide a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment for its employees, the public it serves and those with whom the county conducts business. This policy applies to all employees and individuals engaged in work/activities on behalf of the county including regular and project employees, temporaries, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public. Members of the public should file complaints about unlawful discrimination or harassment with the county Human Resources department. Residents needing information in a different format or access to a program should go to <https://clark.wa.gov/internal-services/americans-disabilities-act-ada>.
 - f. Groups: Groups, organizations, and businesses can participate in the Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Road programs as outlined in the policies for those programs. Groups may, at the discretion of the volunteer program coordinator, be authorized to perform volunteer service at a one-time event under the supervision of a designated group leader. The group leader is responsible for scheduling the service activity with the volunteer program coordinator, completing any required training or orientation, sharing safety guidelines and volunteer requirements with their entire group, ensuring all participants sign a release form, coordinating the use of supplies with the coordinator, and supervising volunteers at the service activity. The leader is also responsible for reporting the number of volunteers, volunteer hours, and work accomplished to the coordinator after the service activity.

- g. Court-Ordered Community Service: Individuals volunteering as part of court-ordered community service are welcome to participate in any available volunteer opportunities. They must meet all applicable requirements for specific volunteer assignments, e.g., background checks and fingerprinting for unsupervised volunteering in parks. The volunteer program does not have additional or separate volunteer opportunities for court-ordered service and cannot create additional opportunities to meet an individual's deadlines for required service. Residents may participate via an individual assignment position if one is currently available, and they meet the assignment's requirements.
- h. Scouts, Students and School Groups: Currently, the Public Works volunteer program does not participate as a host site for Eagle Scout projects. Scout projects may be authorized for scouts working under the supervision of a group with an active partner agreement on file with Public Works. Students seeking volunteer activities to meet school or club service requirements are welcome to participate in any available volunteer opportunities and must meet all applicable volunteer requirements, e.g., minimum age for participation and completion of parent/guardian consent forms. The volunteer program does not have additional or separate volunteer opportunities for student service and cannot create additional opportunities to meet a student's deadlines for their required service. Students may participate via an individual assignment position if one is currently available, and they meet the requirements of the position. School clubs, student groups, educational programs and trade schools can participate in existing opportunities so long as they meet all applicable requirements. Such groups can also schedule a one-time group activity with the volunteer program coordinator, subject to availability and approval at the discretion of the coordinator.
- i. Individual Assignment Positions: Individuals who wish to volunteer outside of an organized event or program, may be assigned to an independent volunteer assignment. Independent assignment positions will be filled at the discretion of the volunteer program coordinator and as positions are available. Any independent volunteer assignments will include tasks that are appropriate for the volunteer's skills and abilities. Independent assignment volunteers must complete a volunteer application, a training/orientation with the volunteer program coordinator, and submit to a federal background check and fingerprinting. The background check and fingerprinting process can take more than one month. Independent assignment volunteers cannot begin service until the results of the background check and fingerprinting are received, and they have been cleared to volunteer unsupervised. An independent assignment volunteer position may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, at the discretion of the volunteer program coordinator and Public Works.
- j. Partnerships: The volunteer program coordinator may, at their discretion, collaborate with other local jurisdictions and nonprofit organizations for volunteer service activities. Such partnerships must be mutually beneficial and approved by Public Works management, and may be ended at any time, with or without cause, at the discretion of the coordinator and the department.
- k. Conflict of Interest: Volunteers shall not serve in any position where there is a direct conflict of interest with a county activity or program, including financial or legal conflicts of interest. Volunteers are responsible for informing staff about potential conflicts of interest.
- l. Representation of the County: Volunteers are not authorized to make public statements to the press or attempt to enter into any agreements on behalf of the county.

- m. Confidentiality: Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information they learn while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a county employee, another volunteer, or an agency matter.
- n. Insurance and Liability: Volunteers are covered by a \$2,500 (per incident) liability policy. If a volunteer is injured during a county-authorized volunteer activity, they will need to immediately report the injury to the volunteer program coordinator. The coordinator will collect details about the incident and injury, and report it to Risk Management via the appropriate form in Workday – the county’s financial and human resources program. The volunteer will receive a form to complete and submit to the insurance company providing coverage. The volunteer will work directly with this company for reimbursement and coverage of related medical expenses. Volunteers are covered under the county’s general liability insurance policy, if property is damaged during performance of their assigned duties. Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance company regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include injuries sustained during community volunteer service. Volunteers are not covered under the county workers’ compensation program.
- o. Volunteer Clothing Requirements: Volunteers should wear attire appropriate for the activities and tasks assigned, the weather conditions, and always include closed-toed shoes and long pants. Volunteers should wear long shirt sleeves when working off-trail or directly with vegetation. Clothing should allow flexible movement but fit securely. Volunteers should not wear long necklaces or long/loose earrings while volunteering. Hair should be tied away from the face.
- p. Personal Protective Equipment: Volunteers are required to comply with requirements for personal protective equipment during service, which may include (depending on the activity), gloves, eye protection, and high-visibility vests. Required personal protective equipment will be provided to volunteers by the volunteer program.
- q. Headphones: Volunteers should never wear headphones/earbuds or play music over a speaker or mobile device during volunteer service.
- r. Illness and Injuries: Volunteers may not participate in activities if they are ill or injured. Volunteers should contact the volunteer program coordinator for disability accommodations. Volunteers are required to follow all program requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at volunteer activities. Volunteers should never attend a volunteer activity or event if they are showing symptoms of infectious illness. Volunteers should also avoid participating in volunteer activities for at least two weeks after recovering from an infectious illness. Any additional requirements implemented in response to disease outbreaks, for example COVID-19, must be followed by volunteers. Refusal to follow requirements and program guidelines may result in exclusion from future volunteer program activities and events.
- s. Participation of Minor Children: Minor children are welcome and encouraged to participate in most volunteer activities. However, for the safety of minors and other volunteers, certain volunteer activities may have minimum age requirements for participation. For activities open to minors, a parent or legal guardian must sign a parent/guardian consent form. The minor cannot sign a liability release or sign-in sheet themselves. Each minor participant must have a signed parent/guardian consent form prior to the start of the volunteer activity, even if they are participating as part of a club, church, school group or other organization. Leaders of such groups can only sign a parent/guardian consent form for a minor if they are the legal parent/guardian for that

minor, i.e., group leaders cannot sign the consent form for children other than their own. Volunteers under age 13 must always have a parent/guardian supervising them during volunteer service. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring the minor(s) under their supervision follow all safety guidelines, program policies, and do not impede the work of other volunteers. For minors age 13-17, there must be at least one supervising adult for every five minor participants. Minors participating in volunteer service as part of a club, church, school, or other organization are not exempt from the requirements of this policy.

- t. **Use of Equipment:** During volunteer activities, volunteers may need to use various tools and equipment. These tools can include sharp points and blades. Even tools without sharp surfaces can cause injuries when used improperly. To reduce the risk of injuring themselves or others, volunteers are required to follow the volunteer tool use procedures outlined in [PRO 100 – Public Works Volunteer Program Procedure](#). Any tools and supplies provided by Public Works may not be used for personal use. Tools and supplies checked out to a volunteer must be returned in a timely manner, generally within five business days. Volunteers are required to report any broken or missing tools and supplies to the volunteer program coordinator as soon as possible. Consistent loss or damage to Public Works tools and supplies may result in restrictions on the volunteer or group's unsupervised use of tools or their participation in future volunteer service.
- u. **Severe Weather:** Volunteer service and activities will be cancelled when: 1) The National Weather Service has issued a watch, advisory or warning for severe weather including wind, flooding, snow/ice, or heat. 2) The National Weather Service HeatRisk forecast shows elevated risk (level 3 or 4) for Clark County. 3) The air quality index is forecasted to be 151 or higher ("unhealthy," "very unhealthy," or "hazardous"). 4) The presence of snow or ice on the ground and/or roads presents increased risk of injury or impacts the ability for volunteer tasks to be completed as assigned. 5) Severe weather has impacted the site of a planned volunteer activity, and the area must be kept clear for repairs, response, or due to increased risk to users. 6) Forecasted weather conditions combined with the specific volunteer activity increases risks to volunteers, staff, or users. The decision to cancel, reschedule, postpone, or modify a volunteer activity is the sole discretion of the volunteer program coordinator and Public Works management.
- v. **Background Checks and Fingerprinting:** Volunteers who will regularly work alone in county parks, or in a group of fewer than three people, are required to submit to a criminal background check and fingerprinting. Volunteers are required to disclose if they meet these criteria. Volunteers who are required to submit to a background check and fingerprinting will have criminal history checks performed by the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If a criminal history check is required for a volunteer position, the volunteer cannot start service before the volunteer program coordinator has received and reviewed the results of the background/fingerprint check, unless arrangements are made for the volunteer to be supervised by staff or at least two other volunteers. Crimes that may disqualify a volunteer from unsupervised service include but are not limited to crimes against vulnerable populations including children, the elderly and disabled persons, financial crimes, or crimes of violence. Volunteers with criminal histories that disqualify them for unsupervised service are encouraged to participate in group or supervised activities.
- w. **Volunteer Release Forms:** All volunteers age 18 or older must sign a volunteer release form before beginning volunteer service. Volunteers only need to sign a release form once per calendar year for each assignment or role, but must sign a new release form if

they participate in another type of activity or role. Unless otherwise noted in a partner agreement, participants in activities facilitated by a group or organization must also sign the proper release forms. Partner organizations may be added to the Public Works volunteer program release form as appropriate when partnering for events and activities. Volunteers or groups who repeatedly fail to sign the current release forms or sign the release forms after service (instead of before) may be excluded from any future volunteer service.

- x. Internal Relations: It is the responsibility of the volunteer program coordinator to work with the applicable department or division manager to review and approve volunteer activities and projects. It is the responsibility of the department/division manager to not approve volunteer activities or projects that would conflict with collective bargaining agreements. Volunteers may operate power tools or heavy equipment if: use of power tools by volunteers can be done safely and with any required certifications or licenses; use of power tools is functionally necessary for completion of the project with reasonable time and effort; and the work being done by volunteers supplements the work of represented staff and will not result in layoffs or reductions in the number of employees or positions.
- y. Training and Orientation: Volunteers will receive training and orientation before beginning their volunteer activity or task. Any volunteer who feels that they have not received adequate training or instructions to feel comfortable participating in their assigned task should and is responsible for requesting additional training from the volunteer program coordinator.
- z. Parking Fees and Event Permits: Parking fees at parks where fees are collected may be waived, with approval by the fee collection program coordinator. If fees are to be waived, the volunteer program coordinator will supply the volunteer or group leader with parking passes. Volunteers are not permitted to create their own parking passes. Any volunteer parking passes created before 2021 will be null and void. Passes are only valid for the dates listed on the pass.