

# City of Boulder Volunteer Handbook



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# Welcome

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Dear Volunteers,

On behalf of the City of Boulder, I would like to thank you for becoming a volunteer with the city. You are joining a special group of people dedicated to serving fellow community members and we thank you in advance for the contributions that you will make. We hope to do all we can to make your volunteer participation fun and meaningful for both you and the city.



This *City of Boulder Volunteer Handbook* contains general policies and procedures that set standards and expectations for volunteers in all city programs. It is designed to answer questions, provide required information, and give guidance and direction to all volunteers. Additional information may be made available to you as part of your training and orientation to your particular program. If you have questions about the policies and procedures outlined in this manual, please contact the staff member in the area in which you are volunteering.

The success of our volunteer program is due to the dedication of volunteers like you who unselfishly give your time, energy and expertise. We recognize that your time is valuable, and are grateful that you are choosing to spend it by helping to make a positive difference for your community and neighbors. I hope you have an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Welcome and thank you!

With sincere appreciation,  
Jane S. Brautigam  
City Manager

## You are Part of History

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The Boulder Valley was first the home of Native Americans, primarily the Southern Arapaho tribe, who maintained a village near Haystack Mountain. Utes, Cheyennes, Comanches and Sioux were occasional visitors to the area. Boulder City was part of the Nebraska Territory until February 28, 1861 when the Territory of Colorado was created by the U.S. Congress. It developed as a supply base for miners going into the mountains in search of gold and silver. Boulder residents provided them with equipment, agricultural products, housing and transport services, and gambling and drinking establishments. The city government was formalized on November 4, 1871 when the town of Boulder was incorporated.



You are joining the long history of the City of Boulder. Since the beginning of Boulder's establishment, people have contributed their time and effort to make it a special place to live and spend time. Today the City of Boulder is fortunate to have more than 6,000 volunteers per year who contribute over 88,000 hours per year. Thank you, volunteers!

Volunteers are involved in every area of the city including:

- Boards and Commissions
- Boulder Police Department
- Boulder Public Library
- Community Vitality
- Energy Future
- Housing and Human Services – Senior Services
- Open Space and Mountain Parks
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Works

In 2016, the city's staff who work with volunteers came together into what is called the Volunteer Cooperative. The Volunteer Cooperative members work together to help ensure the highest quality volunteer experience possible. Through the Volunteer Cooperative, the city strives to promote a community of service and have an integrated network of resources and opportunities to strengthen community stewardship. We encourage you to learn more about the Volunteer Cooperative and volunteer opportunities at <https://bouldercolorado.gov/volunteer> and read about the Volunteer Cooperative's Strategic Plan and Annual Report at this same website.

## City of Boulder Volunteer Culture

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You are becoming part of a large community of volunteers. The City of Boulder staff and volunteers have a shared vision of offering service excellence for an inspired future. As a volunteer, you will share the set of values and principles from which our staff and team operate:



**Customer Service:** We are dedicated to exceeding the expectations of our community and coworkers by demonstrating consistent and professional service with a solution-oriented approach.

**Respect:** We champion diversity and welcome individual perspectives, backgrounds and opinions. We are open-minded and treat all individuals with respect and dignity.

**Integrity:** We are stewards of the public's trust and are committed to service that is transparent and consistent with city regulations and policies. We are honorable, follow through on our commitments and accept responsibility.

**Collaboration:** We are committed to organizational success and celebrate our shared dedication to public service. We believe community collaboration and the sum of our individual contributions lead to great results.

**Innovation:** We promote a forward-thinking environment that supports creativity, calculated risks and continuous improvement. We embrace change and learn from others in order to deliver leading-edge service.

## LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

We believe that each of us is a leader. We are motivated by the opportunity to make a positive difference for our community. Our greatest results are achieved when we:

- Create a respectful, trusting and supportive environment.
- Rely on, invest in and celebrate each other's perspectives, skills, talents and accomplishments.
- Consult and collaborate with each other to make timely and quality decisions.
- Share responsibility and learn from the processes and outcomes of a creative culture.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PRINCIPLES

### Responsive

We listen carefully to customers, confirm that we understand the customers' needs and do our best to assist. Customers receive timely, fair and attentive service. For interactions requiring multiple steps or a follow-up, customers receive understandable directions and a clear timeline for subsequent interactions.

### Knowledgeable

We strive to learn what customers are trying to achieve and proactively guide them through city processes. Customers receive clear and accurate information or are connected to the proper resources or city staff contact when necessary. We will do our best to inform our customers of any upcoming process needs, expectations or potential challenges.

### Accessible

Our services are easy to find and use when needed. Customers can access the city resources they need whether by phone, web, email or in person. Information is presented clearly and help is available for those who need it. Staff contact information is readily available and customer inquiries will be responded to in a prompt friendly manner.

### Welcoming

We provide a professional and empathetic experience for all customers. Customers receive prompt attention and are greeted warmly, whether in person, on the phone or online. All customers are treated with kindness and respect. City facilities and public spaces are welcoming and comfortable.

### Outcome-Focused

We help our customers meet their needs, comply with requirements, and understand alternative options. Customer issues are resolved quickly and to the most satisfactory degree possible. When a customer's expectations or goals cannot be met, we clearly and professionally explain the situation and offer alternatives whenever possible.

## Volunteer Orientation and Training

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Once you get started as a volunteer, you will learn about your department/program and your specific duties. Volunteers will attend an orientation and training with the department(s) with which you are providing volunteer services. Your volunteer supervisor will coordinate the date and location of this training with you.



Program-specific information will also be provided by your volunteer supervisor, and may include:

- Information on your role and responsibilities as a volunteer and any testing and certification requirements;
- Expense reimbursement information;
- Restricted areas, safety rules and security;
- Handling and reporting emergencies; and/or
- Technology policies.

## Volunteer Benefits

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Volunteers like you are one of the keys to helping provide great services and programs. We value your contribution of time and service to the city. In appreciation, a number of benefits are available to you, including:

- Ongoing education: taking part in workshops, trainings and presentations.
- Network opportunities, gaining on-the-job experience and enhancing your resume.
- Meeting people with similar interests.
- Opportunities to work with and learn from talented and experienced city staff.
- Participating in city government.
- Intrinsic rewards such as helping others, giving back to the community, and being a part of a larger community.
- Feeling good about your contribution of time and expertise.
- Being invited to citywide Volunteer Appreciation events.





The City of Boulder is always looking for excellent staff members. If you enjoy your volunteer work with the city and would like to be considered for paid employment, please check out the webpage where all jobs are posted: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/human-resources/city-jobs>

The rest of this Handbook provides details about city policies and other information that you will need to know. Additional information is also available on the City of Boulder website under Volunteer Cooperative. Feel free to ask your supervisor if you have questions.

Thank you again for your willingness to volunteer with the City of Boulder. All of the city staff wish you a long, happy and rewarding relationship with the city!

## Safety Policy and Procedures

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While volunteering, we hope you feel a sense of giving to others and thoroughly enjoy the impact you are making on someone else's life. We understand that the joy you feel can turn to remorse if you are injured or harmed while volunteering. Therefore, the city is committed to taking the appropriate safety precautions, and has policies to ensure your safety and to prevent accidents. We also work to safeguard volunteers through training, provision of appropriate work surroundings and procedures that foster protection of health and safety. Nothing, no matter what the perceived result, will be deemed more important than ensuring a volunteer's health and safety. Therefore, we ask that you do not put yourself at risk or compromise yourself to accomplish your volunteer tasks. Additionally, you are asked to sign a **Risk and Release form** to acknowledge that you are taking on a certain degree of risk when volunteering.



### REPORTING UNSAFE PRACTICES, HAZARDS, ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Volunteers should report any unsafe work practices or safety hazards encountered on the job (no matter how slight) immediately to your supervisor. If a volunteer is injured during the volunteer's service, it is important that the volunteer notify his or her supervisor immediately and together complete an **Incident & Accident Report form**.

### LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

The City of Boulder's general liability coverage, with some limitations and exclusions, protects volunteers from claims resulting from the performance of their duties as volunteers and the scope of their volunteer work for the city.

- City of Boulder volunteers are not employees and therefore are not eligible for Workers' Compensation.

- The City of Boulder carries a limited injury and accident policy to cover volunteers. This coverage is considered secondary accidental medical insurance to any coverage the volunteer may already have.
- This policy is only valid when a volunteer is performing City of Boulder duties.

Contact your volunteer supervisor with questions or for more information about insurance and liability.

## BOULDER OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Boulder Office of Emergency Management (OEM) plans, coordinates and supports a wide range of activities that help prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters and large-scale emergencies, while also reducing vulnerabilities to hazards. Stay updated on OEM Emergency status and obtain information on wildland fire, flood or other natural disasters at [boulderoem.com/emergency-status/](http://boulderoem.com/emergency-status/).

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If an office should close due to an emergency situation, the volunteer supervisor will notify scheduled volunteers via phone or email of the closing. If you are out in the field volunteering when an emergency, such as inclement weather arises, volunteers are required to inform their supervisor when they leave their post to ensure that the city knows that all volunteers are safe. Your supervisor will inform you of the procedure for this if one is required. The city's inclement weather phone number is 303-441-4300.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

The City of Boulder is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property. Follow these suggestions to protect your valuables:

- Do not leave your purse, wallet or other valuable items on or under your desk.
- Keep your wallet or purse with you or keep them in a secure drawer or cabinet.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money.
- Desks, lockers, and other storage devices may be provided for a volunteer's convenience, if available.
- Check with your supervisor if a safe place is needed.

# Policies for Conduct and Behavior

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## AGE REQUIREMENTS

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

## ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The City of Boulder provides a drug-free, smoke-free, healthy and safe environment. While volunteering in City of Boulder buildings or facilities and conducting City of Boulder volunteer activities away from city premises, a volunteer may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs.

The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted during volunteer service only if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform his/her duties. Volunteers must advise their supervisor if they are taking any prescription or over-the-counter drug that could adversely affect safety or performance.

## ATTENDANCE

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties as scheduled and agreed upon with their volunteer supervisor. The positions that volunteers fill and the tasks that they are assigned to accomplish are critical to the City of Boulder's success.

Volunteers are an integral part of our programs and their absence may significantly affect staff schedules and programs. If a scheduling conflict arises and you are unable to fulfill your commitment or are going to be late, please contact your supervisor at least 24 hours in advance so staffing can be adjusted.

## BACKGROUND CHECK

The city conducts background checks if a volunteer works with sensitive populations such as youth or seniors or drives a city vehicle. Additionally, the city will conduct a background check if a volunteer will have access to confidential information, money or valuable items while performing their volunteer duties.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Information, both verbal and written, regarding clients, volunteers and employees is to be kept confidential at all times and not to be discussed with anyone other than the appropriate City of Boulder staff

members. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in disciplinary action or termination of the volunteer's relationship with the city.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The City of Boulder is judged in large part by the individual and collective performance of its employees and volunteers. Each volunteer must act in a manner that will safeguard the reputation and integrity of the City of Boulder and will preserve and strengthen public trust, and confidence in the City of Boulder's work.

Conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain or benefit to oneself, other people, organizations, institutions or businesses as a result of City of Boulder business dealing. Participation in any activity prohibited by this Policy can result in disciplinary action or termination of volunteer service.

Some of the more common situations pertaining to a volunteer's potential for conflict of interest are set out below. This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as all-inclusive:

- **No Acceptance of Payment or Gifts for Service:** No volunteer shall accept payment (including gifts over \$20, cash, concessions, services or other similar item or benefits) for services rendered as part of his or her volunteer service. This includes payment for speaking engagements or for participation in workshops or similar activities. This excludes city volunteer recognition awards or small tokens of appreciation at volunteer events.
- **Improper Influence:** Any individual, while serving in a volunteer capacity, should not attempt to influence the City of Boulder's position on any issue, matter or transaction nor participate in any discussions pertaining to a related organization. While volunteering, the volunteer should not act on his or her own behalf or on behalf of another person, business or organization, to influence an issue, matter or transaction. On personal time (while not volunteering), you are welcome to share your opinion and advocate for your interests as private citizens using the channels available to all community members.
- **Inside Information:** Information obtained while volunteering should not be used either for the purposes of gaining advantage for one's self, a close relative, a business, another organization or for any other purpose not specifically approved by the City of Boulder.
- **Political Activities:** Volunteers must not engage in political activities during their volunteer service on behalf of the City of Boulder. Volunteers participate as individuals and not as representatives of the City of Boulder. To avoid any inference of support or sponsorship by the City of Boulder, a volunteer must never represent that his or her political donation, endorsement or other political activity was made or engaged in with the approval, or on behalf, of the City of Boulder.
- **The Making of Statements:** No volunteer shall misidentify himself or herself as an employee of the City of Boulder in connection with any matter as to which he or she is

not authorized as a representative of the City of Boulder and to express an opinion on its behalf.

## DISCRIMINATION

The City of Boulder promotes an inclusive multi-culturally diverse workplace. The city recognizes, understands and respects the interests and concerns of its diverse staff, volunteers and participants. We are committed to providing a positive volunteer environment free of discrimination and harassment. Each volunteer is personally responsible for maintaining such a work environment. The City of Boulder prohibits any actions, words or comments based on an individual's race, sex, sexual preference, ethnic background, age, religion, physical condition or other legally protected characteristics.

Any volunteer who believes that he or she is a victim of sexual or discriminatory harassment is encouraged to let the harasser know that his or her behavior is unwelcome. In addition, volunteers who believe they have been harassed should immediately report the matter to the volunteer supervisor or a member of the city staff.

## DISMISSAL

The City of Boulder reserves the right to terminate or modify volunteer service for any or no reason. All volunteers are expected to respect and comply with local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations as a condition of continued service. Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the City of Boulder or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment may be subject to disciplinary action or dismissal. Possible grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Discourteous treatment or abuse of any other person (public, staff or other volunteer).
- Theft of property or misuse of agency materials.
- Violation of agency policies including, but not limited to, conflict of interest and confidentiality.
- Dishonesty or misrepresentation about the city or volunteer-related matters to supervisors, other volunteers, staff, other agencies, the public or social media.
- Possession, sale, use, or being under the influence of an illegal substance, intoxicant or being under the influence of alcohol or marijuana while volunteering.
- Neglectful or willful actions that endanger the public, staff or other volunteers.
- Failure to perform volunteer assignment or accept supervision.
- Insubordination, gross misconduct or violent behavior.

## DRESS CODE

You are a representative of the City of Boulder, and are responsible for presenting yourself in a professional manner to the community you serve. Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their volunteer assignment. Each program

may explicitly outline dress code requirements. Volunteer for all programs must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Tops and shirts cannot be "low-cut" and the midriff area must be covered.
- Shorts/skirts must be at least mid-thigh length.
- Clothing must be free from profanity, offensive language or graphic images.
- Shoes are required when volunteering with the city.

## GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS

If you have a grievance or complaint with a staff member, you should discuss it with your supervisor immediately. Volunteers who are not comfortable discussing a grievance with their volunteer supervisor should reach out to the City Manager's Office Volunteer Program and Project Manager at 303-441-4235 or [bouldercolorado.gov/volunteer](http://bouldercolorado.gov/volunteer).

## HOURS

Volunteers must keep accurate records of the time spent volunteering, including days and times. Volunteers must create and manage their online volunteer account and report their total hours via their online account unless their supervisor informs them of another process.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

Intellectual or physical property developed by volunteers during City of Boulder volunteer activities becomes the property of the City of Boulder.

## MEDIA

Interaction with the media requires specific skills and awareness and careful attention to the audience and any political and/or local sensitivities. The City of Boulder has a strict media management policy in place to maintain quality and consistency in our public voice and minimize risks of adverse publicity due to inaccurate or inappropriate sharing of information. All communications and interviews (face-to-face, telephone, written or email) with the media must be approved by the City of Boulder. Volunteers approached by a member of the media should be referred to their supervisor or, if not available, another city employee who will relay the information to the City of Boulder's communications team for follow-up.



## PERSONAL VEHICLE USE POLICY

You are encouraged to use alternative modes of transportation whenever possible when traveling to and from your volunteer locations. If you use your personal car to get to and from your volunteer experience, your personal car insurance is the sole coverage for any casualty or liability claims when traveling to or from your volunteer assignment.

If you use a personal vehicle to conduct your volunteer work, you must complete the city's background and motor vehicle report (MVR) check. Additionally, you must provide proof of insurance and a valid driver's license. A volunteers' personal insurance is the primary coverage in the event of an accident. Anything not covered by your insurance will be evaluated under the city's coverage. In most cases, volunteers are prohibited from transporting community members in their personal vehicle for city volunteering purposes. If a special situation arises, volunteers must seek prior approval from their supervisor.

Volunteers are also prohibited from using city vehicles. If a circumstance arises where the Volunteer Supervisor would like to request an exception to this restriction, they must seek guidance from the city's Risk Manager and final authorization from their respective city department director.

## RESIGNATION

Most volunteer positions are for a defined time period and volunteers are asked to honor that time commitment. However, volunteers may resign at any time for any reason. As a volunteer, you cannot be required to do work that you don't want to do. Please let us know if a position is not working for you. In some cases, we may be able to adjust a role to help ensure a better fit. In other cases, we may be able to find another volunteer position to better fit your needs. If you do need to resign from your role, we ask that you let us know with as much advance notice as possible and the reason for the decision.

Ideally, if you decide to resign from your volunteer position, the City of Boulder would greatly appreciate:

- Two-week advance notice in writing to your supervisor. If an emergency is prompting resignation, notice should be given as soon as possible.
- Completion of the City of Boulder and/or your program's evaluation/exit survey.
- The opportunity to have an exit interview with you. Feedback from volunteers helps the city better understand its volunteer base, its programming and how the volunteer experience may be improved.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

You may take photos and videos while volunteering for personal use or on behalf of the department, but are prohibited from distributing photos of youth or sensitive populations on personal social media pages without the permission from staff.



## SOLICITATION

Volunteers who solicit donations on behalf of the city must seek prior approval from their supervisor. You must inform the vendor that you are seeking the donation for XX program that is part of the City of Boulder.

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Volunteers who have access to city technology resources and volunteers who use technology on behalf of the city in the course of their service are expected to help protect the city from security incidents. Volunteers are required to follow all applicable laws, to comply with city procedures and to report security incidents to their volunteer coordinator.

## Thank You

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

If you have questions about anything in this Handbook, please contact your supervisor or feel free to contact Aimee Kane, City of Boulder Volunteer Program and Project Manager, at 303-441-4235 or [kanea@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:kanea@bouldercolorado.gov).

Also, a special thank you to the staff and volunteers who created this Handbook by editing, proof reading, commenting, and designing it. The staff team who led the development were Cassy Bohnet, Karen Bowen, Aimee Kane, Kate Kelsch, Cory Lasher, Mary Malley and Kristin Weinberger. The volunteers who helped bring this Handbook to life were Remi Crist, Dean Fogerty, Susan B. Jones, Candice Kasai, Stephanie Rudy and Marianne Weingroff. Thank you to everyone!

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