

Auburn Parks & Recreation



Volunteer in Parks

Volunteer Manual

Updated: September 2026

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to become a Rec. VIP! There is nothing more rewarding than giving back to your community by donating your time and expertise.

The Rec. VIP program strives to improve the quality of life for all citizens by involving volunteers who offer their time, effort and skills to enhance the City of Auburn. The program incorporates volunteers into all facets of the organization in meaningful ways and will provide you with opportunities to network, learn, teach and grow.

Auburn Parks and Recreation wants to express our sincere gratitude for your efforts and contribution to our success. Without your assistance, our achievements would be limited and we could not meet our full potential. We look forward to providing you with challenging opportunities and a fulfilling volunteer experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Filgo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gabby Filgo
Community and Special Programs Administrator
Auburn Parks and Recreation

City of Auburn Values and Vision

Core Values

Public Service is the mission and calling of the employees of the City of Auburn. As representatives of the City, we work more closely with our customers than in any other level of government. With that close interaction comes expectations that are inherently different than those associated with federal government, state government or private business. What we do and how we do it are critical to the well-being of the Auburn community, which includes family members, friends, neighbors, educators, physicians, clergy and Auburn citizens from every walk of life. The public's trust is essential to Auburn's continued success, and our daily actions impact that trust.

We strive, therefore, to serve the public with the highest standards of excellence and accountability. We seek daily to earn and maintain the trust of the Auburn community and never to take it for granted. We recognize that the calling of public service is honorable and important, and so it is proudly that we serve those who call Auburn home. With dedication to public service we affirm the following Core Values:

1. **Respect.** We show respect in all our interactions.
 - o Respect for People – We treat all individuals with respect, courtesy and genuine concern. We also respect the work of our co-workers and strive to show sincere appreciation for what they do.
 - o Diversity – We embrace the broad diversity of City employees and the Auburn residents they serve. We value the new perspectives and ideas this diversity brings.
 - o Ownership of Property – We respect property, both public and personal.
2. **Integrity.** Unquestionable integrity must be at the heart of our efforts to provide citizens with the best public services possible.
 - o Honesty – We believe in transparent, open government, recognizing that nothing short of honesty and moral integrity will build community trust, the spirit of teamwork and a well-functioning work environment. We value truthfulness in our work endeavors and in relationships with others.
 - o Accountability – We take responsibility for errors and adhere to the highest standards of ethics, conduct and the law.
 - o No Conflict of Interest – Every judgment we make as employees must be free of even the appearance of conflicts. Our goal is to strictly observe an invisible wall separating city government operations from personal or political interests, avoiding any possibility that one will inappropriately influence the other.
 - o Conscientious Action – What we do and say impacts the image of the City of Auburn and its employees. Therefore, our personal conduct, as it reflects on the City of Auburn, must be beyond reproach.

3. **Fairness.** We provide services and administer municipal ordinances equally, fairly and without regard for personal beliefs or opinions.
 - o Favoritism – We do not favor or discriminate against any business, citizen or group of citizens – for any reason.
 - o Objectivity – We make decisions and recommendations based on accurate information, gathered honestly, presented objectively and with the best interests of the City as our overriding goal.
4. **Reliability.** The services we provide must be dependable and consistent in both day-to-day operations and in times of special need or emergency.
5. **Professional Excellence.** We consistently strive to reach our full potential as an organization and as individuals by knowing our jobs and our City, so that we can excel in providing competent, dependable and efficient service. We understand that doing the right things is not good enough. We must do the right things in the right way.
 - o Exceed expectations – We focus on our assigned tasks, perform our jobs to the best of our abilities, and seek to complete our work in a manner that exceeds expectations.
 - o Innovation – We value feedback about our work and seek to improve as a result. Never bound by habit or tradition, we strive to stay vigilant in the search for new and innovative ways to better perform public services.
 - o Communication – We value professional, useful, informative, and honest communication among ourselves and with our community. We understand that active listening is a critical part of our communication process.
 - o Continual learning – We seek to upgrade our professional competence by staying up to date on emerging issues, new technology, and job-related knowledge.
 - o Teamwork – We work together and acknowledge that working cooperatively contributes to healthy work relationships, a more effective organization, and the greater good of the Auburn citizens.

Vision Statement

Auburn, Alabama is committed to being an attractive, environmentally conscious community that is progressive, responsive and hospitable. This community desires for all citizens:

- safe and attractive neighborhoods with adequate housing
- quality educational opportunities
- diverse cultural and recreational opportunities
- vibrant economic opportunities
- active involvement of all citizens

Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

Rights

1. The right to be carefully and appropriately assigned, with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education, employment history and background checks.
2. The right to be treated as a respected member of the team with valuable input on planning and evaluating the program.
3. The right to know as much about the organization as possible – its policies, its people, its programs.
4. The right to training and supervision for the job, before and after beginning the assignment, and an area conducive to performing the job at hand.
5. The right to continuing education on the job as a follow-up to initial training, information about new developments, and training for greater responsibility.
6. The right to receive recognition in a way that is meaningful.

Responsibilities

1. The responsibility to understand the requirement of time, goals, objectives and assignments and to take the commitment seriously.
2. The responsibility to be honest and open when communicating with staff.
3. The responsibility to serve as goodwill ambassadors and interpreters for the organization and its services in the community-at-large.
4. The responsibility to apply the skills and knowledge learned and perform assignments effectively while seeking and accepting honest feedback on performance.
5. The responsibility to read information distributed, attend volunteer meetings and trainings, and share ideas with staff.
6. The responsibility to take on special assignments and respect the confidentiality of the organization and our citizens.
7. The responsibility to recognize and thank other staff and volunteers for doing a good job.

Volunteer Areas

Athletics

Volunteers may assist with athletics in a variety of ways. Volunteer coaches for youth baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, and football (among others) are vital to the success of those programs. We may also utilize volunteers on a one-time basis for tournaments where they are asked to distribute lunches, collect trash, or assist with registration.

Special Olympics/Therapeutics

Special Olympics is a program that would not be possible without volunteer coaches in areas such as swimming, basketball, bocce, bowling, tennis, track and field, volleyball and golf. If you have a passion for working with individuals with disabilities, but cannot commit to being a Special Olympics coach, we also use volunteers for other therapeutic programs such as bingo, game night, summer camp and Polar Plunge.

50+ Programs

Auburn Parks and Recreation is happy to offer a variety of programs for individuals aged 50 or older. Volunteers can help in many ways by calling bingo, teaching a craft, making phone call reminders, program set-up and clean-up, etc.

Special Events

Volunteering for a special event is a great way to serve the community without being tied to a set schedule. Some of our largest and most popular events include City Fest, Bark in the Park, Jingle Jog, Holiday Art Sale, Daddy Daughter Date Night and the Easter Egg Hunt (just to name a few). Volunteers who assist at special events might be asked to decorate, set-up and break-down tables and chairs, monitor inflatables, assist with registration, hand out prizes or serve as a course marshal among other things.

Cultural Arts

Auburn Parks and Recreation offers a variety of cultural arts programming to enhance the lives of our citizens. Volunteers who wish to specifically assist with cultural arts may be asked to paint faces at events, help prep art supplies, assist with projects and help decorate for cultural events.

Park Cleanup

We pride ourselves on having beautiful parks and outdoor spaces for the community to enjoy and we appreciate our volunteers that make it possible. Volunteers can help with the beautification of our parks by picking up trash, painting fences, laying mulch, pulling weeds, etc.

Other

If you have a special skill and would like to assist in an area that has not been listed, please feel free to let us know!

Volunteer Program Guidelines

The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department participates in ongoing volunteer recruitment. Potential volunteers may learn about opportunities through the city's website, social media, flyers, various newsletters and brochures as well as contacting the Community and Special Programs Administrator. A Rec. VIP Newsletter will be distributed every quarter to inform volunteers about upcoming service opportunities and recognition events.

Volunteer Selection and Placement

Potential volunteers must submit a completed Volunteer Application to the Community and Special Programs Administrator. **Applicants must be at least 19 years old.** Once a possible assignment is identified and the volunteer paperwork, including background checks if applicable, have been completed, the Community and Special Programs Administrator will put the volunteer in contact with the volunteer area supervisor.

If there are no open volunteer opportunities available for which the volunteer applied, the applicant will be contacted and informed that their application will be kept on file for future volunteer opportunities.

Even with careful placement, some volunteer assignments simply do not work out. If you feel the assignment is not what you expected, talk to your volunteer area supervisor. This will allow for possible adjustments in your assignment. If an adjustment is not feasible, please call the Community and Special Programs Administrator for a more suitable placement.

Volunteer applicants are required to comply with the following:

- Complete the application, with no omissions or misrepresentations.
- By signing the application, the volunteer certifies that all information is true and complete to the best of their knowledge.
- Keep the Community and Special Programs Administrator aware of any changes to contact or application information.
- Complete the Background Check process, if applicable, to placement.
- Understand that the time with the City of Auburn is unpaid.
- Assume all risks and/or hazards associated with volunteering/participating in tasks and volunteer jobs, and agree to hold harmless the City of Auburn and/or its employees.

Performance of Duties

Check-in with staff at your assigned placement. Please arrive on time and check with staff on projects or tasks for the day.

Stay visible. If you need to leave your work area for any reason or need a break, please let another volunteer or staff member know.

Be sure to clean and put away any equipment or materials you may have used during your shift.

Notify staff that you are leaving for the day.

Supervision

At the beginning of your assignment, your volunteer area supervisor will orient you to your responsibilities. As you proceed in your placement, do not hesitate to approach your supervisor for assistance, especially if a situation arises about which you are unsure.

Your supervisor has the responsibility of coordinating your on-the-job training, preparing your work assignments, and evaluating your performance. Do not hesitate to ask questions or approach your supervisor for assistance during and even after your training.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you are responsible for maintaining the privacy of any information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, clients or other persons in the overall agency business. Information regarding customers should not be the subject of casual conversation either inside or outside the department.

Departure from the Volunteer Program

Please do not just drop out when you can no longer volunteer with us. Inform your supervisor and the Community and Special Programs Administrator. We need your assistance to evaluate volunteer assignments on a continuing basis.

If an ongoing volunteer chooses to resign, they should inform the Community and Special Programs Administrator so that she can remove you from the volunteer database.

Termination of a volunteer's services may sometimes be necessary. In all cases, the Community and Special Programs Administrator will discuss the reasons for dismissal from the program with the volunteer. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Habitual lateness or poor attendance.
- Frequent absence with no prior notification.
- Behavior not consistent with the goals of the program.
- Frequent on-the-job accidents.
- Dress code violation.
- Misrepresentation of the city.
- Use of drugs or alcohol.
- Putting anyone at risk.

Holidays

The City of Auburn observes the following Holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Juneteenth
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day

Media/Press

Volunteers are required to direct any media personnel or media inquiries to their volunteer area supervisor. Volunteers are not authorized to speak with the media while volunteering.

Dress Code

While volunteering at your assigned location, you are representing Auburn Parks and Recreation and you may be the first impression of our department for a new citizen. Auburn Parks and Recreation prefers that your Rec. VIP T-shirt be worn while volunteering, however, there may be some instances where you are volunteering multiple days in a row and wearing your t-shirt more than once is not possible. If that is the case, please follow the dress code for your location, i.e., business-casual, outdoor attire, t-shirt and jeans, khakis or shorts, closed-toe shoes.

Dress Code Dos and Don'ts

- Do not wear very short or tight shorts or any cut-off shorts.
- Do not wear sleeveless tops, such as spaghetti-strap or halter tops.
- Do not wear any article of clothing that is overly tight and/or revealing.
- Do not wear any article of clothing with violent, obscene or offensive images or insignia.
- Do not wear any article of clothing with text, artwork, logos or graphics which promote the use of controlled substances, drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
- Do not wear any article of clothing with rips, holes, tears, bleach spots or stains.
- Do not wear flip-flops. Please choose comfortable, closed-toe shoes.

If ever in doubt, don't wear it! Volunteers wearing restricted items will be given the option to go home and change and then return back to their volunteer location.

Harassment Policy

The City of Auburn is committed to a harassment-free workplace. Harassment based upon sex, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, color, or disability is not permitted. The City takes steps to prevent harassment from occurring and to remedy all reported instances of harassment. Harassment may be reported to the volunteer area supervisor, Human Resources Director or the City Manager. The City will not condone any harassment or retaliation against employees who bring harassment complaints or who participate in investigations of harassment complaints.

Violence, Threats of Violence, and Weapons

Violence or threats of violence by a volunteer against another person's life, health, well-being, family or property will not be tolerated. Such acts or threats are cause for disciplinary action, and possible criminal charges. It is the obligation of all volunteers to refrain from and to report actual or threatened violent behavior at their volunteer station. Volunteers who experience, witness or become aware of violent actions, threats, or behaviors should immediately report these to their volunteer area supervisor, The Community and Special Programs Administrator, the Human Resources Director, or the City Manager. The City will not condone any retaliation against volunteers who report violent acts or threats of violence, or who participate in investigations of violent acts or threats of violence.

Volunteers should not carry weapons into any municipal facility. Violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action and violators may be subject to arrest and prosecution pursuant to the provisions of the Code of Alabama. This section does not apply to law enforcement officers acting within the scope of their employment.

Safety

Safety is an integral part of each job in the City and every employee of the City is charged with the responsibility of preventing injuries and accidents. The full cooperation of each employee is essential to the maintenance of safe, sanitary, and healthful working conditions.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Every City employee is expected to adhere to the requirements in this handbook. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

The City Manager is responsible for overall safety of City personnel and property.

Department heads are responsible for surveying their work areas and facilities on a continuous basis for potential safety hazards and for taking corrective action as needed.

Department heads will hold departmental safety meetings as deemed necessary to keep employees informed of safety procedures, new standards, and hazards that need attention.

Department heads will ensure that hazardous areas are posted with appropriate signs.

Employees are responsible for performing their tasks in a safe manner at all times, including the use of seat belts, and wearing safety clothing, goggles, ear protectors, hats, or whatever else is designated by safety rules for a specific job or job site.

Employees must also keep their supervisors advised of unsafe conditions, vehicles, or equipment that they encounter in their daily work. Employees are reminded that violations of safety rules can be cause for disciplinary action.

Social Media

Volunteers are free to maintain social media sites or profiles and contribute posts to the sites or profiles of other people, businesses, or groups provided that doing so does not involve City time or resources. Volunteers should be aware that what they post can be re-sent around the world and that other people, including City employees, fellow volunteers, supervisors, citizens and their family members may be viewing their posts. Volunteers are solely responsible for what they post online. Volunteers may not disclose confidential or other inside information about the City of Auburn, its citizens, employees or its taxpayers that is learned in the course of volunteering with the City of Auburn. A volunteer's conduct that violates the Personnel Policies or adversely affects his or her performance, the performance of fellow volunteers, employees or associates who work on behalf of the City of Auburn may result in disciplinary action.

Recognition Program

The City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department will recognize Rec. VIP volunteers throughout the year with service awards, appreciation events and other tokens of gratitude. Look out for the Rec. VIP Newsletter each quarter to see when recognition events will be taking place. Your volunteer area supervisor may also choose to recognize you for your service.

Contact

If you have questions about the Rec. VIP program, this manual or the Rec. VIP application, please contact the Community and Special Programs Administrator:

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