



## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**Policy:** Intern and Volunteer Policy

**Creation Date:** January 27, 2025

**Prepared By:** Human Resources Department

**Approved By:** City Manager

**Legal Review:** Karla Saenz

**Description:** Interns and Volunteers

- I. **POLICY:** Interns and Volunteers are a vital part of the City of El Paso, providing support for projects, events, and programs that contribute to the community's quality of life and place. The City of El Paso is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of citizens, students, and visitors who attend city events, activities, and facilities. This Policy establishes guidelines, procedures, and processes to promote internships and volunteerism.
  
- II. **DEFINITIONS:**
  - A. **Intern.** Student enrolled in a college or university degree program gaining practical experience in a professional field within the City of El Paso.
  
  - B. **Good Academic Standing.** Maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher or be in good academic standing as defined by the institution's academic policies.
  
  - C. **Volunteer.** An individual who gives freely of their time, talents and services without expectation of any financial compensation. Volunteers are not City employees, and no salary is provided for volunteer services, nor should any payment type be received. Volunteers make valuable contributions to the City and its mission to provide exceptional services.
  
- III. **INTERN PROCEDURES**
  - A. **Outreach/Recruitment:** To recruit, attract, select and retain interns through recruiting events and other recruitment efforts in collaboration with schools, universities, community organizations and workforce agencies. To develop and implement joint programming and events with partners, such as workshops, mentoring, and networking opportunities for interns.

- B. Application/Selection:** To schedule interviews with hiring supervisors and ensure proper selection policies and procedures are followed. To attract and select college students with ambition and talent for internships within the City of El Paso.
- C. Onboarding:** To process and coordinate intern onboarding processes including orientation and staff in-service training, developmental workshops and mentoring/coaching models which create an accessible and inclusive culture.
- D. Placement:** To coordinate with City departments to ensure interns are supported and given meaningful tasks that align with their interests and the Departments' operational needs. To place each intern in a position of some responsibility where the intern can contribute ideas, enthusiasm and ingenuity while completing a project. To educate and encourage interns with outstanding potential into permanent positions of employment within the City of El Paso.

#### IV. **INTERN ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION**

- A. Undergraduate Intern:** Must be currently enrolled as an undergraduate student in a college or university degree program related to the requesting department. Students must be currently enrolled at the time of application and taking classes in an accredited college or university in the United States. Individuals who have taken college courses but are currently taking time off from school are ineligible.
- B. Graduate Intern:** Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree and must be currently enrolled in a graduate program in a field closely related to the requesting department. Students must be currently enrolled at the time of application and taking classes in an accredited college or university in the United States. Individuals who have taken college courses but are currently taking time off from school are ineligible.
- C. Student Intern:** Candidate must have a High School Diploma/GED.
- D. Unpaid Intern:** Candidate must have a High School Diploma/GED. Must be enrolled in a college/university degree program. Students in need of meeting course credit hours must submit the necessary paperwork from their academic institution for credit validation.
- E. Business Education Student (BEST):** A BEST is a high school junior or senior that performs work-based training and conscientiously pursues the coordinated classroom course of study.
- F.** In order to be considered an intern for the City, individuals must fill out an online application through NeoGov. The elderly and persons with disabilities may fill out a paper application upon request.
- G. **City employees may not intern for any City department and work for the City at the same time. As permitted by law, exceptions may be considered by the Chief Human Resources Officer on a case-by-case basis.****

## V. EXPECTATIONS

### A. Department:

1. Interns can work for up to one year within a department. After one year, intern should reapply according to their current status.
  - a. Interns looking for permanent work after completing their internship should apply to the relevant position.
  - b. Undergraduate Interns that have completed their internship and are now enrolled in graduate school must reapply for a Graduate Intern position
  - c. Undergraduate Intern contracts may be renewed after one year if the student has not graduated and academic status remains the same.
2. Interns may be scheduled to work a maximum of 20 hours per week.
3. Supervisor will need to ensure that intern is granted the necessary access and equipment to successfully complete their duties (i.e., e-mail, badge, laptop, etc.).
4. The department supervisor will complete a training plan to determine the duties and timeline for which the student will be responsible for during employment.
5. Interns must be evaluated by their supervisor twice during their internship (at the mid-way point and at the end of the term). This is an internal process and should be in accordance with department policy. The evaluation factors will be determined by the specific department.
6. If any issues or concerns arise during employment, the supervisor should contact the Intern and Volunteer Coordinator to discuss. Intern and Volunteer Coordinator will provide guidance on how to resolve any issues or concerns.
7. At the end of the paid internship, supervisors should activate offboarding process with respective department payroll clerk.

### B. Intern:

1. The intern will abide by City and department rules and regulations.
2. At the beginning of each semester, interns will need to present proof of enrollment and letters of good standing from their university program.
3. At the end of the internship, intern must return all city-issued equipment (i.e., laptops, badge, cellphones, headphones, etc.) to the department supervisor.

**VI. BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENT (B.E.S.T)**

- A. The City of El Paso will assign the Business Education Student work-based training experiences that must be performed according to the same policies and regulations applicable to regular employees.
- B. The student will improve his or her efficiency, knowledge, and personal traits in order to pursue further education and enter the chosen occupation.
- C. The City of El Paso and the school are responsible for providing students with opportunities for training in the basic skills of an occupation and knowledge of related technical information.
- D. In order to provide a systematic plan for well-rounded training, a schedule of work-based training experiences and a parallel classroom course of study that the City of El Paso and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher have coordinated and agreed upon, will be created.

**VII. B.E.S.T EXPECTATIONS**

- A. Students may be scheduled to work a minimum of 15 hours per week.
- B. Hourly wage will be determined upon hire and will be no less than standard minimum wage.
- C. The student's supervisor and high school instructor will complete a training plan to determine the duties for which the student will be responsible during employment.
- D. Students must be evaluated by their supervisor once every 9 weeks (4 times during the school year). The instructor will schedule a meeting with the supervisor to complete the evaluation.
- E. The student will abide by the organization's/department's rules and regulations.
- F. If any issues or concerns arise during employment, the supervisor should contact the instructor to discuss/resolve them.
  - 1. Students have an opportunity to work full-time during the summer, depending on the individual student's availability. Some students may be taking summer courses for advancement, but if a student is needed during the summer, the instructor can look for candidates that are available.
  - 2. The maximum time commitment through this program is one school year. However, the City of El Paso may request a student classified as a junior to return the following school year.

VIII. **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- A. The B.E.S.T Training Plan is not a binding contract and student employment may be terminated if the need arises. Termination must first be communicated to the student's school prior to beginning the process.
- B. The City may reach out to instructors between April and May to interview and hire students to begin working during the summer months and continue through the school year.
- C. Students in office jobs will need to have enough space in their schedule to be able to work approximately 3-4 hours per day, either in the morning or the afternoon.

IX. **VOLUNTEERS**

- A. **Long-Term Volunteers.** Volunteers that plan to contribute a significant amount of time volunteering for the City of El Paso, over the course of one year or more.
- B. **Short-Term Volunteers.** Volunteers that contribute time with an end date in mind. This includes volunteers in summer programming or programming up to 12-months.
- C. **One-Day/Short Duration Volunteers.** Volunteers that contribute time at one-day or short duration events (one to three days) is in the continuous presence of other adults and has no isolated or unsupervised contact with any member of the public. Often, these volunteers participate with a group, such as: businesses, religious groups, clubs, and other organizations.
- D. **City employees and Interns may not volunteer for any City department and work for the City at the same time.**

X. **VOLUNTEER APPLICATION & DUTIES**

- A. In order to be considered as a volunteer for the City, long- and short-term volunteers must fill out an online application through NeoGov. The elderly and persons with disabilities may fill out a paper application upon request.
- B. Volunteer applicants who are applying to serve in volunteer positions of trust are required to provide additional forms, paperwork, or take certain actions in order to be authorized to volunteer for the City. This could include serving on programs such as the El Paso Police Department's Volunteers in Patrol (VIP).
- C. Duties are wide ranging and are determined by department need.
- D. **If, during the course of the volunteer assignment, the Volunteer obtains City employment, the volunteer assignment must end.**

## **XI. VOLUNTEER LIABILITY AGREEMENT**

In consideration of participant being permitted to participate and as a condition to being allowed to participate in the program, all volunteers must sign the consent and release from liability document and in addition read and understand the following:

I, the undersigned, for and on behalf of myself, my minor child (if applicable), my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, acquit and forever discharge City of El Paso with former and present elected and appointed officials, directors, legal representatives, agents, servants, employees (in both their public and private capacities), volunteers, successors, assigns, and all affiliated persons and entities (hereinafter collectively city), of, from and against any and all liabilities of every kind, claims, causes of action, whether at law or in equity, in contract or tort, under statutory or common law or pursuant to the Texas or United States constitution(s) (including all expenses of litigation, costs, and attorneys' fees), known and unknown, losses, judgments, fines, demands, damages, loss of use or services, or injuries to real and/or personal property and/or persons (including death) (collectively claims), caused by, arising out of, touching upon or in any way relating to the program and/or the presence, malfunction, maintenance, addition, substitution, use or condition of any tangible personal or real property owned, leased, operated, or utilized by the city in connection with the program even if the claim is the result of the actual or alleged sole negligence of the city and/or the result of the actual or alleged gross negligence of the city, and/or the actual or alleged joint or concurrent negligence of the city and any other person or entity, and/or the actual or alleged strict, statutory or constitutional liability of the city.

## **XII. ONBOARDING & BACKGROUND CHECKS**

All Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers, must go through a criminal background check. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers assigned to the Police department or the Parks and Recreation department whose position regularly interacts with youths or potentially vulnerable persons, will be required to go through a more stringent background investigation. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers are prohibited from being alone with anyone considered a "vulnerable person." This includes children, the elderly or people with disabilities. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers are prohibited from driving City vehicles, using power tools, or operating heavy machinery.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring that a background investigation of applicants is conducted prior to the inception of the internship, or short-term and long-term volunteer opportunity. This shall occur once there has been a selection decision and before a final offer/placement is made. The investigation may include, but is not limited to checking arrest, criminal conviction records, and driving records.

A volunteer position at one-day and short duration events where the volunteer is in the continuous presence of other adults and has no isolated or unsupervised contact with youths or other potentially vulnerable persons does not need to go through a background check. These individuals will need to complete a signed waiver form in lieu of a background check titled "Consent and Release from Liability." Minors 16 years of age or younger are not required to undergo a background check.

**XIII. TRAINING & ORIENTATION**

A. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers must attend New Employee Orientation (NEO) or complete the required virtual trainings on elearners.com. The required trainings are:

1. On-Demand ADA Sensitivity
2. On-Demand Ethics
3. On-Demand Customer Service Training
4. On-Demand Violence in the Workplace
5. On-Demand Social Media Policy Training
6. Teams/In-Person Harassment Prevention Training
7. Any other training(s) required of all CoEP employees
8. Orientation offered by individual departments, if necessary.

**XIV. ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY**

Interns, and short-term and long-term volunteers are expected to always be prompt and on time in reporting for their assignment. Being late is discourteous to others. When unforeseen circumstances arise, it is up to the intern, short-term and long-term volunteers to notify their supervisor about being late or to give advance notice of the need to be excused. Failure to appear or to notify a supervisor about missing a shift may result in dismissal.

**XV. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Private, sensitive or confidential information discussed or handled within the course of an intern, short-term and long-term volunteer assignment must be kept strictly confidential. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers are required to uphold this policy. Private, sensitive or confidential information is not to be shared. Any questions about what information is appropriate to release or discuss should be communicated between the intern, short-term and long-term volunteers and their supervisor.

**XVI. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers are ambassadors for the City of El Paso and should conduct city business with staff and the public in a friendly and courteous manner. If the intern, short-term and long-term volunteer is unsure how to answer a question from a member of the public, they should consult with their supervisor before answering.

**XVII. DRESS POLICY**

Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers must dress in accordance with the City's Professional Appearance Standards Policy.

**XVIII. RECORD RETENTION & CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information submitted to the City of El Paso will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with state and federal laws. Documents containing the intern, short-term and long-term volunteer applicant's personal information, as well as completed background check files, will be retained pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Code, Chapter 204 or Chapter

205, as applicable, and rules of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission retention schedule. Notwithstanding the above, the City as a governmental entity will abide and follow the Texas Public Information Act under the Texas Government Code Chapter 552.

**XIX. SAFETY**

Safety is everyone's job. Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers should be alert at all times, follow safety precautions, and aware of hazards. Unsafe conditions should be reported to a supervisor immediately.

**XX. ALCOHOL & DRUG FREE WORKPLACE**

Interns, short-term and long-term volunteers must comply with the City's Drug Free Workplace Policy. Any intern, short-term and long-term volunteer who uses, brings, possesses or is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or any form of narcotic, drug, or hallucinogen, except prescribed drugs and under the direction of a physician, is subject to immediate dismissal. In addition, any intern, short-term and long-term volunteer who transfers, sells or attempts to sell drugs on city property or while on city business, at any time, is subject to immediate dismissal and possible criminal charges under applicable laws.

**XXI. HARASSMENT**

All city employees, interns, short-term and long-term volunteers have a right to work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive or disruptive. Consistent with the city's respect for the rights and dignity of each employee and intern, harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any characteristic protected by law, will not be sanctioned or tolerated. Furthermore, any intern, short-term and long-term volunteer witnessing acts of harassment or discrimination, should immediately report it to their supervisor.

**XXII. PERSONAL USE OF CITY PROPERTY**

Personal use of city property by interns, short-term and long-term volunteers is not allowed and may result in dismissal. Personal use includes, but is not limited to, borrowing power tools, hand tools, equipment, supplies, city vehicles, trailers, generators and unauthorized duplication of city keys.

**XXIII. THEFT/PROPERTY LOSS**

Theft of any kind will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal. Removal of city property for personal use is considered to be unauthorized use or the taking of city property. The crime of theft is subject to prosecution.



APPROVED BY:



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Dionne Mack, City Manager

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January 28, 2025

Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



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Karla Saenz

Assistant City Attorney I