



Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Host Recruitment Process

Host Recruitment *officially* begins in Sept each year, although parks are always looking for good, qualified applicants. OPRD accepts applications at any time of year, but parks can't typically start doing their heavy scheduling until fall for the following year.

Applications should first be sent directly to Salem headquarters at the address listed below:

Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept., 725 Summer Street NE, Suite C, Salem, OR 97301
Applications should NOT be sent directly to the parks!

TIMELINE

The actual amount of time it takes to be placed in a hosting position varies considerably, depending upon your willingness to be flexible with regards to park location and time of availability. In general, if you are new to hosting, it's advisable not to expect to be placed at a coastal park during the summer season. These parks are extremely busy and have many positions, but the competition for an assignment is typically high. It can and does happen, and you may be surprised when cancellations occur and positions open up. We do our best to accept and place those with a desire to volunteer!

APPLICATION PROCESSING

- begins as soon as we receive your application(s) in the mail. We request one completed application for each individual desiring to volunteer. Your contact information, skills and interests are entered into a statewide volunteer database.
- A list of applicant names, contact information, skills, park preferences and your time of availability are sent electronically to host coordinators at all parks every two weeks.
- Hard copies of your application(s) are sent to parks upon request from the field.

RECRUITMENT

- happens year-round. At the end of the busy season and after summer volunteer recognition, park host coordinators start thinking about scheduling for the following year. You may apply at any time to the state office, although not more than a year in advance.

BACKGROUND & DMV CHECKS

- As a host, you'll be required to stay overnight in a park campground or day-use area. In all cases, a thorough background check will be performed as part of our regular course of business. In our experience, there is rarely cause for concern, but we will NOT place individuals with questionable histories or criminal records into positions that may place our employees, other volunteers and visitors at risk.
- Some park hosts will be required to drive as part of their assignment. For Oregon residents, a DMV check will be conducted as part of the criminal history check. For out-of-state residents, the parks MAY ask you to submit a recent DMV report of your driving history covering the past 3-5 years.

INTERVIEWS

- ❑ take place within the park setting and over the phone. Although Salem volunteer coordinators can and do make recommendations, they do not hold interviews nor make placements. After all, park staff are in the best position to define your job responsibilities and to match volunteer skills and interests to specific assignments.
- ❑ Don't expect to be offered a job if you can't be reached by phone. Arrange for an in-person interview if you're local to the park or if you're going to be in the area.

PLACEMENT

- ❑ of appropriate individuals for the best job fit is always taken into consideration. Please understand that certain parks may be looking for certain types of people with specific skills. The intention is to satisfy the park needs first.
- ❑ of your camp site location is usually determined by many factors in park operations and according to the job description. Park staff determines and assigns camp sites based on park needs and specific hosting duties. In some cases, it may be possible to exchange a campsite with another. In others, it is not. Full hook-ups will be offered at every opportunity, as available.

ORIENTATION, TRAINING & SAFETY

- ❑ takes place at your assigned park locations.
- ❑ A large gathering called the "Host Rendezvous" is held in April every two years. Further orientation and special training (along with celebrations and recognition) will take place during this special event.
- ❑ **We take safety extremely seriously.** Please accept and practice all safety guidelines and rules and ask for appropriate safety module training if you should ever be placed in a position where you are operating new and unfamiliar equipment. We practice and encourage compliance with the *Tough Caring Contract*.

RECOGNITION

- ❑ for your time and efforts most frequently happens within the individual park setting through planned events. Awards are also offered statewide through earned pins and hour-bars along with other annual recognition items. We strive to provide ongoing recognition for your regular valuable volunteer contribution.
- ❑ Special awards for outstanding service are offered through a statewide nomination process on an annual basis.

QUICK TIPS (or how to land a job!)

- Please apply early in fall for the best consideration and choice of park location for the following year.
- Be open to hosting assignments in many different parks in all areas of the state.
- Consider volunteering as a host in the "shoulder" seasons... (i.e. Spring - Mar/April & Fall - Sept/Oct)
- Consider a longer term winter assignment (November - February)
- Do remember that first impressions happen all the time, from the time you request information and talk to someone on the phone to the time you are offered a position. Make sure you have a positive, can-do attitude.
- If you haven't heard anything about your application within a month or two, check in with the statewide volunteer host coordinator to ask about new positions or cancellations.
- Call the park and establish a relationship (at least by name recognition) with the Host Coordinators in those parks at which you *really* would like to work. Let them get to know a little about you. Tell them about your interest in volunteering and what work you would prefer to perform.
- Be sure park and state contacts know how to reach you with day and night phone numbers, e-mails, and message phones. Don't rely on old-fashioned snail mail or forwarding mail services only for your contact. If you have to leave a message, let them know a good time to return your call.