

City of Sacramento
Parks and Community Enrichment Commission Report
915 I Street Sacramento, CA 95814
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File ID: 2026-00478

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Updates: Volunteer in Parks (VIP) Program Update

File ID: 2026-00478

Location: Citywide

Recommendation: Review and discuss.

Contact: Shannon Brown, Assistant Director, (916) 808-6076, sdbrown@cityofsacramento.org,
Department of Youth, Parks, and Community Enrichment

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

Description/Analysis

Issue Detail: The Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program is the department's structured approach to engaging community members in the care, activation, and stewardship of Sacramento's parks. VIP was established to help us move beyond one-off volunteer events and toward a more intentionally sustainable volunteer model that supports staff capacity while strengthening community ownership of public spaces.

The program creates clear pathways for individuals, families, community groups, and partners to participate in park-based volunteer opportunities, including park cleanups, tree planting, beautification projects, and ongoing site stewardship. By formalizing these pathways, VIP improves its consistency, communication, and the overall volunteer experience.

VIP Program Goals (*Established December 2024*)

1. Increase accessibility to volunteer opportunities by simplifying the sign-up and registration process.
2. Create a roadmap and toolbox to support staff in providing volunteers with a consistent and positive experience.
3. Increase VIP outreach and visibility in the community to develop and foster long-term relationships.

Program Infrastructure Update

To support these goals, the department is transitioning volunteer registration and management from ActiveNet to Better Impact. This change is intended to improve volunteer communication, tracking, reporting, and overall ease of participation for both volunteers and staff.

Defining VIP Volunteer Opportunities

1. Parks-Based Volunteer Opportunities (*in partnership with YPCE, City Council offices, and community organizations*)
 - Tree plantings
 - Rose pruning
 - Native plant installations
 - Park cleanups and beautification projects
2. 916 Day Events
 - PCEC-led volunteer events
3. Community Engagement Opportunities (*NOTE: not all opportunities are listed*)
 - Community Centers
 - Access Leisure
 - Leisure Enrichment
 - Youth and Adult Sports
 - Adults and Older Adults programming

By creating clearer systems and tracking participation and outcomes, the department is better positioned to evaluate impact, respond to community interest, and continuously improve the VIP program. Moving forward, VIP will continue to evolve with a focus on accessibility, equity, and long-term engagement, ensuring that volunteer opportunities reflect both community interest and park system needs.

What's Next for VIP

1. Complete the transition to Better Impact: continued staff training, volunteer migration, and system testing
2. Standardize VIP event workflows: registration, communication, safety requirements, and post-event follow-up, etc.
3. **Pilot long-term stewardship opportunities** at select park sites to move beyond single-day events and support long-term volunteer engagement.

4. Continue to update tracking and reporting metrics to better measure volunteer participation, program impact, and alignment with departmental goals.

5. Expand outreach and partnerships, with a focus on increasing awareness of VIP opportunities among community-based organizations, schools, and neighborhood groups.

Policy Considerations: Not applicable.

Economic Impacts: Not applicable.

Environmental Considerations: Not applicable.

Sustainability: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: Not applicable.

Rationale for Recommendation: Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment provides annual updates to commission on Community Centers and Community Recreation.

Financial Considerations: Not applicable.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.