Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association (KSRA)
Program Assistant – Position Description
Updated 09-11-2026

Position Title
Program Assistant

Status
Part-Time / Hourly / Non-Exempt

Pay Range
$15.00 – $17.00 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience.

Hours
Flexible and varied based on participant inclusion needs; up to 20 hours per week and not to exceed 999 hours annually

Reports To
Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator & Program leader

Organization Overview

The Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association (KSRA) provides inclusive recreation programs and services for individuals with disabilities throughout DeKalb County and surrounding communities. KSRA collaborates with member park districts, schools, families, community organizations, and the Kishwaukee Special Recreation Foundation (KSRF) to create meaningful recreation, social, educational, and community inclusion opportunities for participants of all ages and abilities.

KSRA is committed to fostering independence, social connection, wellness, and accessibility through therapeutic recreation programming and inclusion services

.**Position Summary**

The Program Assistant provides direct support for KSRA recreation programs serving individuals with disabilities. Working under the direction of the Program Leader and Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator, the Program Assistant assists with program preparation, implementation, participant supervision, and other activities necessary to provide safe, organized, engaging, and meaningful recreation experiences.

The Program Assistant actively participates in assigned programs, supports participants based on their individual abilities and needs, and works collaboratively with staff, interns, volunteers, participants, and families to promote independence, social interaction, inclusion, safety, and enjoyment.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

Participant Support & Program Implementation

- Assist with the implementation of assigned recreation programs and activities under the direction of the Program Leader or Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator.
- Provide appropriate supervision and support to participants throughout program activities.
- Actively participate in programs and encourage participants to engage in activities to the greatest extent possible.
- Promote participant independence, meaningful participation, social interaction, choice, and enjoyment.

- Provide individualized participant assistance and behavior support as needed and within the scope of training.
- Assist with adaptations to activities, instructions, equipment, and program environments to support participants with varying abilities and support needs.
- Assist participants with personal care, mobility, and other individualized support needs when necessary and appropriate.
- Promote a welcoming, respectful, safe, and inclusive environment for all participants.

Program Support & Operations

- Assist with the on-site organization and implementation of assigned programs and activities.
- Assist with gathering, transporting, organizing, setting up, and cleaning up program equipment, supplies, and materials.
- Take initiative to assist the Program Leader with program preparation and welcoming participants and parents/guardians.
- Arrive at the program site at least 15 minutes before the scheduled activity and remain after the program as necessary for clean-up and participant pick-up.
- Assist with attendance, participant documentation, incident/accident reports, evaluations, and other assigned program records as directed.
- Attend required staff meetings, orientations, and training sessions.
- Demonstrate dependable and reliable attendance, punctuality, professionalism, and preparedness for all assigned programs.

Communication & Participant Safety

- Maintain professional communication and provide quality customer service to participants, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, community partners, and the general public.
- Communicate regularly with the Program Leader or Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator regarding participant needs, behavioral concerns, incidents, staffing concerns, or other program-related matters.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding participant and family information.
- Follow KSRA policies, procedures, safety guidelines, emergency procedures, and participant care protocols.
- Respond appropriately to participant needs, behavioral concerns, incidents, medical needs, and emergencies within the scope of training.
- Report participant incidents, accidents, injuries, unsafe conditions, or other significant concerns promptly to the Program Leader or Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator.
- Use appropriate equipment, staff assistance, and approved participant support techniques as required to promote participant and staff safety.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Education & Experience

- High school diploma or GED equivalent preferred.
- Experience working with children and/or adults with disabilities in recreation, therapeutic recreation, education, community-based programs, human services, or a similar setting preferred.
- Experience participating in or assisting with recreation programs, camps, athletics, Special Olympics, or community activities preferred.
- Demonstrated enthusiasm, empathy, dependability, and willingness to work with individuals of varying abilities and support needs.
- Ability to work effectively with participants, families, KSRA staff, volunteers, and community partners.

Certifications

- CPR/First Aid/AED certification required or ability to obtain within agency-required timelines.
- Handle With Care or other agency-approved safe physical management training required or ability to obtain.
- Successful completion of required background screening.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Basic understanding of recreation programming, inclusion, and participant support.
- Ability to follow program plans, participant accommodations, behavior support strategies, safety procedures, and staff instructions.
- Ability to assist with recreation activities for individuals with varying physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral needs.
- Ability to provide appropriate participant supervision, personal care, mobility assistance, and behavior support while maintaining participant dignity and privacy.
- Strong communication, interpersonal, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to demonstrate patience, empathy, enthusiasm, and professionalism when working with participants.
- Ability to remain calm and respond appropriately during stressful or unexpected situations.
- Ability to take direction while also demonstrating initiative when appropriate.
- Ability to work collaboratively with participants, families, staff, interns, volunteers, and community partners.

Core Competencies

- Reliability
- Empathy
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Communication
- Initiative
- Problem Solving
- Professionalism
- Advocacy & Inclusion

Physical Requirements

The program leader must be able to assist participants with mobility, transfers, and personal care; lift and transport equipment, supplies, wheelchairs, and program materials; and participate actively in recreation programs and activities. The employee may be required to assist with lifting or moving participants with appropriate staff assistance and equipment and respond appropriately during emergency, behavioral, or high-stress situations. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Work Environment

Work is performed in recreation facilities, community locations, office settings, vehicles, and public environments. The employee may work indoors and outdoors in varying weather conditions and will regularly interact with participants, families, staff, interns, volunteers, member agencies, and community partners.

Work schedules may include daytime, evening, weekend, and seasonal assignments based on program needs.

Equal Opportunity Statement

KSRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees, participants, volunteers, and community members.