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

Position Title
Program Leader

Status
Part-Time / Hourly / Non-Exempt

Pay Range
$17.00 – $18.00 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

Provides Program Leadership To

- Program Assistants
- Volunteers
- Interns
- Inclusion Aides/Companions

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 Supervisor provides leadership and direct support for assigned KSRA recreation programs serving individuals with disabilities. The position assists with the planning, preparation, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of programs while promoting participant safety, independence, meaningful participation, social interaction, and enjoyment.

The Program Supervisor serves as the on-site program leader and works collaboratively with the Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator, part-time staff, interns, volunteers, participants, and families to ensure programs are organized, welcoming, inclusive, and delivered in accordance with KSRA expectations, policies, and procedures.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

Program Leadership & Participant Support

- Supervise, implement, lead, and assist with the evaluation of assigned recreation programs and activities.
- Provide on-site leadership and direction to part-time staff, interns, volunteers, and other assigned program personnel.
- Actively lead programs, demonstrate initiative, and model appropriate interaction, professionalism, and participant support for staff and volunteers.
- Provide appropriate supervision of participants and instruction during program activities.
- 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.
- Adapt activities, instructions, equipment, and program environments as appropriate to support participants with varying abilities and support needs.
- Assist participants with personal care, mobility, and other individualized needs when necessary and appropriate.
- Promote a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants.

Program Planning & Operations

- Assist with the planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of assigned programs and activities.
- Coordinate program equipment, supplies, materials, food, and other resources necessary for successful program implementation.
- Gather, pick up, purchase, transport, organize, and return program equipment and supplies as assigned.
- Arrive at the program site at least 30 minutes before the scheduled activity to prepare the program environment and remain after the program as necessary for clean-up and participant pick-up.
- Complete program folders, attendance records, financial records, participant documentation, incident/accident reports, evaluations, and other assigned paperwork accurately and in a timely manner.
- Participate in staff meetings, orientations, trainings, and program planning activities as required.
- Assist with pre-program staff preparation, training, and communication to ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities and participant support needs.

Staff Leadership & Communication

- Provide clear direction, guidance, and support to assigned part-time staff, interns, and volunteers.
- Promote teamwork and consistent implementation of program expectations, participant accommodations, and support strategies.
- Maintain professional communication and provide quality customer service to participants, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, member agencies, community partners, and the general public.
- Communicate regularly with the Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator regarding program operations, participant needs, staffing concerns, incidents, or other program-related matters.
- Communicate relevant participant information to appropriate program staff while maintaining confidentiality.
- Demonstrate dependable and reliable attendance, punctuality, professionalism, and preparedness for all assigned programs.

Safety & Risk Management

- Maintain a safe, organized, welcoming, and accessible program environment.
- 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, staffing concerns, and other significant issues promptly to the Therapeutic Recreation Program Coordinator or appropriate KSRA representative.
- Complete required incident, accident, and other safety-related documentation accurately and promptly.
- 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 required.
- Associate or bachelor's degree, or current college enrollment, in Therapeutic Recreation, Parks & Recreation, Human Services, Special Education, or a closely related field preferred.
- Previous experience working with children and/or adults with disabilities in recreation, therapeutic recreation, education, human services, community-based programs, or a similar setting preferred.
- Experience or demonstrated ability to plan, implement, supervise, and evaluate recreation programs.
- Experience providing leadership or direction to part-time staff, interns, or volunteers preferred.

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.
- Valid Illinois Driver's License preferred and ability to meet KSRA requirements for operating agency vehicles when driving responsibilities are assigned.
- Successful completion of required background screening.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Knowledge of recreation programming, adaptive recreation, inclusion practices, and participant support strategies.
- Ability to plan, organize, implement, lead, and evaluate recreation programs and activities.
- Ability to adapt activities and environments 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.
- Ability to provide leadership, direction, and support to part-time staff, interns, and volunteers.
- Strong communication, interpersonal, organizational, leadership, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to make appropriate decisions and respond effectively to unexpected situations, participant concerns, and program needs.
- Ability to remain calm, professional, and solution-focused during stressful situations.
- Ability to work independently while collaborating effectively with participants, families, staff, 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.