411 S. Wells St.
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60607

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Program Assistant, Forest Preserve Experience Program

Reports to Youth and Engagement Corps Program Manager

Open until filled | Start Date: May 11, 2026

Hourly Rate: $24 per hour

- 30 hours per week from May 11 to July 30, 2026
  Monday through Thursday

Organization

Mission: We unite people to protect, promote, and care for the forest preserves in Cook County.

Our community advocates for the responsible management of the nearly 70,000 acres of forest preserves in Cook County through advocacy, engagement, and stewardship of the land. Some of the best natural areas in Illinois are right here in Cook County, right outside your urban backdoor. Join our team and help us ensure they are here for the next 100 years.

Friends is an organization that gets things done with our members, volunteers, staff, board, and partners. We believe in work-life balance and are here for the marathon, not the sprint (not that we don't sprint on a regular basis).

Operating Budget: $3,750,000

Summary: The Program Assistant will assist in the preparation, management, implementation, and reporting of the Forest Preserve Experience Program under the supervision of the Youth and Engagement Corps Manager. FPE is a five-week summer program for teens, focused on job skill development, restoration training and work, environmental education, and exposure to the forest preserves and jobs in conservation. Successful candidates will have strong communication and organizational skills, be able to work in a fast-paced environment, and engage with high school students and adult crew leaders.

Duties:

- Support administrative tasks related to participant recruitment, hiring, and management.
- Support crew leaders with daily needs of the program, including transportation coordination, equipment, conflict management, and administrative tasks.

board of directors

Thomas Greenhaw, Jr., Chair | Corryn Antonizio, Vice Chair | Cory Chaplin, Treasurer | Michelle Thom, Secretary
Pilar Audain | Carmen Scott Boria | Kathleen Bruch | Walter Burlack | Dr. Charles D. Dillon | Barbara C. Hill
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Benjamin Cox, Executive Director

- In coordination with partners, ensure smooth execution of environmental education and experience days.
- Fill in for crew leaders as needed during the course of the five-week program.
- Lead a variety of hands-on conservation and restoration projects as well as environmental enrichment activities on-site. Engage teens and crew leaders, promote team-building, and conduct appropriate games and activities.
- Assist with procurement of supplies and equipment.

Qualifications:

- 21 years or older
- Valid driver's license for more than three years and clean driving record; access to a vehicle
- Working knowledge of Google suite, especially email, calendar, docs, and sheets
- Ability to meet at forest preserves and community colleges in south suburbs
- Experience working with and mentoring youth from a diversity of backgrounds
- Ability to maintain an inclusive, safe, productive, and enjoyable work environment
- Outdoor skills, plant identification skills, and knowledge of Midwestern ecology preferred but not required
- Ability to effectively communicate to large audiences
- Experience coaching and supervising other adults preferred but not required
- Current Illinois Alternative Herbicide license, First Aid and CPR certifications or willingness to obtain (Training provided)
- Ability to lift and move heavy objects (50 pounds) and to work outside in inclement weather and extreme temperatures
- Flexibility in work hours required

To apply: Submit cover letter, resume, and two references via the Friends' website at https://fotfp.org/who-we-are/jobs/. Incomplete applications may not be considered. Please NO calls, faxes, office visits, or emails.

Friends of the Forest Preserves strongly encourages people of all identities to apply. We strive to include people of every race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, and/or sexual orientation. Friends is an equal opportunity employer, in addition to observing all legal protections of special status, promoting diversity in the conservation community.