

2026 FOREST PRESERVE EXPERIENCE



Want to make \$1,860 in 5 weeks this summer?

WHO CAN APPLY?



Housing Authority of Cook County residents & voucher holders



14 - 19 years old



Currently in high school or 2026 graduate

Program Dates:

June 29 - July 30, 2026

Monday - Thursday

7:45AM - 1:45PM

OVER 18?

We are hiring Crew Leaders & Assistant Crew Leaders!

SPACE IS LIMITED!

APPLY BY April 10th

WHERE DO YOU WORK?

Forest preserve sites in your community

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

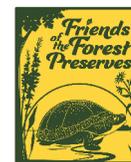
You will be picked up & dropped off at a central location near your home

HOW MUCH WILL YOU EARN?

\$15.50/hour, 24 hours/week
\$1,860 total pay for 5 week program

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Projects like invasive species & litter removal
Learn about environmental topics and careers
Gain hands-on experience in conservation



APPLY HERE:



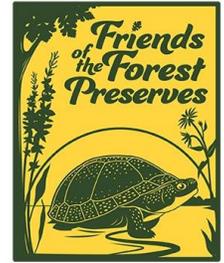
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Title: Crew Member, Forest Preserve Experience Program

Reports to: Crew Leader

Open until filled | Start Date: June 29, 2026

Hourly Rate: \$15.50 per hour



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

24 hours per week (part time) June 29 through July 30, 2026

7:45 am to 1:45 pm, Monday-Thursday

The application will open on March 5th and will close on April 10th.

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: Friends of the Forest Preserves seeks Crew Members of our Forest Preserve Experience (FPE) team. FPE is a five-week conservation service-learning experience. Selected individuals will participate on crews that will consist of 12 high school students, two adult Crew Leaders, and an adult Assistant Crew Leader.

As a team, the crew will perform ecological restoration projects and litter removal in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. A large focus of this program will also be dedicated to environmental enrichment, career readiness, and recreational activities.

..... 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
Tonyisha Harris | Jason Kaple | Dr. Ron Milnarik | Kelly O'Brien | Derk Osenberg | Ryan Wilson

Benjamin Cox, Executive Director

Responsibilities:

- Work with a crew to restore habitat in forest preserves in Cook County
- Arrive on time to your selected meet up location
- Properly use hand tools like loppers and bow saws (training provided)
- Participate in all work projects, professional development, and education activities
- Follow all program rules and regulations
- Support team members and program leaders as needed

Required Qualifications:

- Must be a Housing Authority of Cook County resident or voucher holder
- 14 - 19 years old at the start of the program and enrolled in high school or a 2025 high school graduate (14 and 15 year olds need a workers permit)
- Ability to meet at forest preserve locations in south suburbs of Cook County
- Must be able to attend the entire length of program
- Able to attend a program overview and interview
- Must be willing to spend most or all of the work day outdoors
- Sincere commitment to safety, learning, teamwork, and project completion
- Complete all hiring paperwork, including work permit if 14 or 15 years old, field trip waivers, and I-9 documentation.

For more information:

Visit <https://fotfp.org/get-involved/conservation-corps/forest-preserve-experience/>.

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.