

Gearing Up for the Summer Season

After 36 years in public service, Celeste Skipworth-Reid remains open to new challenges. Take, for example, the processing of 1,200 summer seasonal employees.

Following the retirement of [Lenora McNeely](#) this winter, Celeste added supervision of summer seasonal staff processing to her stable of responsibilities, including payroll clerks, benefits, staff safety incidents, new hires and interviews. Summer seasonal staff processing isn't new to Celeste—she handled day camp processing at M.L. King Rec Center years ago—but the amount of summer seasonals she's now responsible for processing (Seasonal Maintenance Attendants, summer food employees, Recreational Specialty Instructors, pool staff and day camp employees, to name a few) is much larger.

Luckily, Celeste is not alone. She credits her 7 reliable seasonal staff members, nearly all returning veterans to Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, for their attentive work. "With the volume of employees that we hire and range of terms (some 3 months, some 6 months, some 6-9 months), the seasonal staff and permanent payroll staff do a great job of processing them and paying them. They're very supportive, and they're right along with the other seasonals... just like you want to get paid, so does everyone else."

From early April through mid-July, Celeste and her team will spend Tuesday through Thursday mornings assisting seasonal staff, with four Saturdays in June mixed in for summer staff who are unable to come to 1515 Arch Street on weekdays. Monday and Friday are dedicated to data entry. The flow of seasonal staff is so heavy at times that Celeste and crew must branch out to the 18th floor so that permanent staff on the 10th floor aren't disrupted.

In addition to the making sure each seasonal employee provides proper documentation (completed background checks, physical form, FBI form), this summer brings a new challenge for the Processing team. For the first time, PPR must run an indebtedness check on each seasonal staff candidate and, if necessary, make sure he or she becomes compliant with his or her indebtedness to the city. If a candidate has a debt, he or she cannot begin work until it is cleared. The new process requires the coordination of several city departments—the Office of Human Resources (OHR), the department collecting its owed payment, PPR—and steady communication with the candidate himself, as well as the affected district manager or other PPR staff member. It can be a stressful process considering the short seasonal timeframe, but Celeste says OHR has taken steps to make the process smoother and PPR staff has been understanding about the new requirement.

It can't hurt to have Celeste at the helm either. "I'm going to be a busy beaver, but fortunately I'm organized and know about processing," says the calm and confident leader.