



# Volunteer Guidelines

## **VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

A volunteer is someone who performs tasks or services of his or her own free will, without expectation or receipt of wages, benefits, or compensation of any kind.

To promote a safe work environment for patrons, staff, and volunteers, criminal background checks are required on all potential volunteers aged eighteen and over. Because of the expense of training and conducting background checks, volunteers who desire only a short time commitment (i.e., less than six months) will not be accepted.

The library system maintains the right to deny a volunteer position to anyone it feels is unsuitable for any reason. The library system also reserves the right, at any time or for any reason, to make changes in the nature of a volunteer assignment, to reassign a volunteer to a different project or assignment, or to terminate the volunteer relationship.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

All volunteers must at least meet the following requirements:

- Volunteers must have the skills and the physical ability to perform the work involved in the assignment.
- Volunteers must be at least fourteen years old. Volunteers less than 18 years old must have the written permission of a parent or legal guardian.
- Volunteers eighteen and older must successfully pass a background check before beginning volunteer work.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The library system does not offer court-ordered community service hours.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Potential volunteers should complete a Volunteer Interest Form (available on the website or at any branch) and provide the form to the location where he or she wants to volunteer.

If a volunteer position is available at the location the volunteer chooses, then he or she may be contacted and asked to complete a Volunteer Application and Release of Liability Waiver (available on the website or at any branch). Applicants will be selected based on their qualifications in relation to our operational needs. Applicants can expect to undergo telephone screening, skills testing, interviews, and background checks. A limited number of volunteer positions are available at any given time. As a result, not everyone who applies will be selected for an assignment.

## **PLACEMENT**

The application process can take four to six weeks to complete. Once the background check is completed, you will be notified by the department head or branch manager of the location where you will volunteer.

## **TRAINING**

The branch manager or department head will provide you with the appropriate training for the volunteer position.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All transactions between library patrons and staff or volunteers are strictly confidential. Volunteers are required to uphold this policy. This includes information about patrons as well as what materials a patron looked at, asked for, requested, or checked out, as well as reference questions asked by library users.

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(850) 522-2100 • [www.nwrls.com](http://www.nwrls.com)**



## **PUBLIC IMAGE**

Volunteers are ambassadors for the library and need to present a positive image to the public. Public image plays an important role in developing and maintaining support for the library. In order to maintain a public image consistent with a professional organization, it is expected that each volunteer's dress and grooming will be appropriate for a business environment and in keeping with his or her work assignment. Remember, you represent the library, and in the eyes of patrons, you are considered staff. Obscenities and foul language are not permitted.

## **DRESS CODE**

Volunteers are expected to present a clean and neat appearance while on duty. Take your lead from staff and dress comfortably but appropriately for your assigned task. For volunteer positions that require shelving books, moving book carts, and lifting boxes, open-toed shoes are not recommended. Volunteers are required to wear a volunteer badge at all times while on duty.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Many volunteers come into contact with library patrons and may well be the first official contact a patron has with the library. It is important, therefore, that volunteers maintain a professional, friendly demeanor at all times.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

NWRLS counts on its volunteers to perform their voluntary service in a professional manner. Some examples of specific expectations of all volunteers include:

- Follow all library policies, rules, and guidelines.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all information related to patrons and their use of the library.
- Refrain from expressing any personal, social, political, or religious views to patrons in the course of the volunteer work.
- While on duty, give full attention to work activities, minimize socializing and personal business, and work safely.
- Learn library tasks, follow instructions, work cooperatively with library staff, and demonstrate dependability and reliability.

## **PROHIBITED TASKS**

- Volunteers are not permitted to perform circulation tasks, such as registering patrons for library cards; renewing cards; check-in, check-out, or renewal of materials; and retrieve holds, call holds, or cancel holds.
- Volunteers are not permitted to perform reference tasks. These tasks require specific and special training.
- Volunteers are not permitted to bring their children with them while volunteering.
- Volunteers are not permitted to perform any task that involves cash handling.

## **TIME AND ATTENDANCE**

All hours worked by volunteers must be recorded on a Volunteer Timesheet. In general, volunteers come in on their own schedule. However, if you are scheduled for a specific time or event (computer class, program, etc.) you must report on time. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other volunteers and staff.

Volunteers who do not volunteer at all within a six month period will be removed from the active roster. If the volunteer wishes to resume volunteering, the application process starts over from the beginning.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE**

Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while volunteering at NWRLS poses serious safety and health risks for the user and to all those who work with the user. The use, sale, purchase, transfer, or possession of an illegal drug or alcohol on library property or at an off-site library event is strictly prohibited.

## **LOSS OR THEFT OF PROPERTY**

County property, equipment, and materials will be utilized only for that which it is made and will not be destroyed, damaged, or used for personal purposes. NWRLS and the Bay County Board of County Commissioners will not be responsible for the loss, disappearance, or damage to volunteer's personal property or valuables.