



Policy Type:	Volunteers	Policy Number:	VOL-01
Policy Title:	Volunteer Program	Initial Policy Approval Date:	April 23, 2005
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BACKGROUND

The Volunteer Program of the Mississippi Mills Public Library creates opportunities for community members to actively contribute to the Library's vision of excellence in library service. The Library welcomes volunteers to participate in the operation of the Library while performing a valuable service to the community, becoming more familiar with the Library and supplementing the efforts of paid staff. The volunteer policies provide guidance and direction to management, staff, and volunteers.

Section 1: Scope

1. Volunteers are used by the Library to enrich and enhance library programs and services, or to free skilled paid library staff for other duties. Volunteers do not substitute for or replace paid employees.
2. The policies apply to all volunteers in all programs, including activities that take place outside the Library.
3. The Library will ensure that liability insurance covers volunteers.

Section 2: Responsibility

1. The CEO/Chief Librarian oversees and coordinates the volunteer program by:
 - a) planning for effective volunteer utilization
 - b) assisting staff in identifying productive and meaningful volunteer assignments
 - c) recruiting suitable volunteers
 - d) training staff to supervise volunteers effectively
 - e) managing corrective action of volunteers
 - f) tracking and evaluating the statistical data reflecting the contribution of volunteers to the Library
 - g) officially recognizing volunteers for their contributions
 - h) maintaining liaisons with other volunteer-utilizing programs and organizations in the community

2. A system of records is maintained on each volunteer. Volunteer records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as paid staff personnel records.

Section 3: Eligibility for Volunteering

1. The term 'volunteer' refers to a person who performs services for the Library without compensation or expectation of compensation (beyond reimbursement for pre-approved specified expenses) and, who performs a task at the direction of, and on behalf of, the Library.
2. The Library also accepts community members as volunteers who are participating in student projects, corporate volunteer programs, and other volunteer referral programs.
3. The service of paid staff members as volunteers is accepted provided that the volunteer service is:
 - a) initiated by the staff member
 - b) provided voluntarily
 - c) involves work that is outside the normal scope of duties and working hours for that staff member
4. Family members of paid staff are allowed to volunteer with the Library but will not be placed under the direct supervision of their family members who are employees.
5. The minimum age requirement for volunteers is 14. For positions that require handling of money or supervision of children, volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.
6. Opportunities for volunteer placements are identified by staff or Board. The Library accepts the service of any volunteer with the understanding that such service does not constitute an obstruction to or conflict with the provision of library services to users. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Library prior to performance of the task. Volunteers agree that the Library may at any time decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the Library, or to make changes in the nature of the volunteer assignment.

RECRUITMENT AND ASSIGNMENT

Volunteer assignments at the Mississippi Mills Public Library balance the needs of the Library with the interests and abilities of our volunteers.

Section 1: Requests for Volunteers

1. Opportunities for volunteers are proposed by staff to the CEO/Chief Librarian.

2. Written requests include a description of the volunteer assignment, duration of assignment and a proposed start date. All staff should understand that successful recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting jobs.

Section 2: Volunteer Position Descriptions

1. Position descriptions are developed in consultation with staff before proceeding with recruitment.
2. Volunteers are given clear, complete, and current descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of their assignment.
3. Position descriptions include a title, a summary of the assignment, a list of responsibilities, qualifications and benefits, any training requirement, the time commitment needed for the assignment, and the name of the supervisor to whom the volunteer reports.
4. The volunteer position descriptions are reviewed with the volunteer prior to beginning the assignment.
5. The Library's volunteer position descriptions are reviewed and updated at least every three years or whenever a position substantially changes.

Section 3: Tasks that may be performed by Volunteers

1. Volunteers will not perform any task or duty for which a license or certification is required if the volunteer doesn't possess such license or certification.
2. Volunteer tasks may include but are not limited to:
 - a) shelf reading and shelving
 - b) delivery of materials to shut-ins
 - c) customer service
 - d) special projects
 - e) care of library plants and gardens
 - f) reading buddies
 - g) teen advisory committee
 - h) preparation for children's programs (crafts)

Section 4: Recruitment & Assignment

1. Volunteers are recruited on a proactive basis with the intent of broadening and expanding the involvement of the community in their Library.
2. Applications to volunteer are also given appropriate consideration.

3. Volunteers are interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, an assignment prior to being assigned. The interview determines the qualifications of the volunteer and his/her commitment to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. The interview should also answer any questions that the volunteer has about the Library and the assignment.
4. A reference check may be made if appropriate for the volunteer assignment.
5. Volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit a police records check (CRC). This cost will be paid by the library. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check may be refused placement.
6. No volunteer will begin their assignment until they have been officially accepted for that position and have completed all necessary screening as determined by the CEO/Chief Librarian. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer must have submitted a volunteer application and received a copy of his/her volunteer position description.
7. Volunteers perform their duties under the direction of at least one paid staff member. Each volunteer will have a specific staff member to whom he or she reports and who will be responsible for day-to-day support and direction.
8. The Library strives to meet volunteer expectations and offer a satisfactory volunteer experience for both parties. However, it may be deemed necessary to explore options such as renegotiate terms of the assignment, reassignment, and referral to another organization or to the local volunteer centre, or placement termination.
9. Volunteers who are at any time reassigned to a new position will be interviewed for that assignment and receive all appropriate training for success before they begin.

Section 5: Orientation and Ongoing Training

1. Within the first 3 months of becoming a volunteer, all volunteers are required to attend a general orientation session on the nature, purpose, and mission of the Library and on the volunteer program; and, will be given a tour of the library.
2. Volunteers receive training to provide them with information on:
 - a) knowledge and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment
 - b) the operation of the program or service to which they are assigned
 - c) the purpose and requirements of the assignment
 - d) hazards that may be encountered
3. Volunteers are required to complete training mandated by legislation. Additional library training may be made available to volunteers such as attendance at conferences and workshops that are relevant to their volunteer assignment.

Section 6: Dismissal

1. Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the Library or who fail to satisfactorily perform their assignments may be dismissed.
2. While on Mississippi Mills Public Library property and/or while performing volunteer activities on behalf of the Library, volunteers are expected to maintain a professional level of behaviour. If the behaviour of the volunteer is deemed to drop below acceptable standards, the CEO/Chief Librarian will give a warning to the volunteer to improve performance. If the volunteer's performance has not improved during a given time period, the volunteer will be dismissed from the program.
3. Grounds for immediate dismissal include, but are not limited to:
 - a) insubordination
 - b) unwillingness or inability to support and further the mission of the Library
 - c) theft of library property
 - d) illegal, violent or unsafe acts
 - e) abuse or mistreatment of library users or co-workers
 - f) smoking in unauthorized areas
 - g) being under the influence of alcohol
 - h) being under the influence of, possessing, selling or otherwise being involved with illegal drugs
 - i) behaviour that would be construed as harassment

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

The Mississippi Mills Public Library accepts the service of volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the Library. Volunteers should actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, and remain loyal to the mission, policies and procedures of the Library.

1. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as volunteers, whether this information involves staff, volunteers, users or other persons, or involves overall library business. Failure to maintain confidentiality could result in immediate dismissal.
2. Volunteers should understand that the Library may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end the volunteer relationship. As well, the volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever his or her relationship with the Library. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor.
3. When expecting to be absent from scheduled duty, the volunteer should inform his or her staff supervisor in advance so that a replacement may be found. Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's placement.

4. Volunteers must obtain approval from appropriate staff prior to taking any action or making any statement which might affect or obligate the Library. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the media, lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.
5. Volunteers are responsible for presenting a good public image, and must dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.
6. Volunteers are expected to submit all timesheets and any other information to the CEO/Chief Librarian in a timely and accurate fashion. Capturing accurate statistics is important to maintaining the volunteer program.
7. Volunteers must be covered by their own vehicle insurance where their assignment involves the use of a vehicle. Volunteers are responsible for their own parking tickets and fines incurred during volunteer assignments.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS), Trillium Public Library: Sample Policies