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**SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY  
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



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## **WELCOME FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

On behalf of the Sacramento Public Library, I want to welcome you and thank you for becoming a Library volunteer.

As a valued volunteer you will assist the Library in carrying out its mission to provide access to materials, information, and programs.

Because our public libraries serve a unique function in our community, volunteering offers many personal rewards. For instance, as a volunteer you can:

- Make a meaningful contribution to the community
- Meet new people
- Learn first-hand about the Library's services, programs and operations
- Gain a deeper understanding of the important role the Library plays in the community.

Without question, one of the Library's most valuable resources is our dedicated and talented staff. Our staff and our volunteers work to ensure that our patrons have access to the resources, tools and programs that enrich and empower them.

An active and successful volunteer program benefits the Library by stretching public and private dollars to supplement, enhance and support the Library staff in meeting the demands for quality public service. Library volunteers contribute more than 100,000 hours of service each year.

## **WELCOME FROM THE BRANCH SUPERVISOR**

I am delighted to welcome you to our branch of the Sacramento Public Library. Your willingness to contribute your time and talent is appreciated by the entire staff. Volunteering ensures that we can continue to provide exceptional services and programming to the public. We sincerely hope that volunteering here is as rewarding for you as working here is for us.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Sacramento Public Library inspires our communities to discover, learn and grow.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Sacramento Public Library is the essential resource for our communities.

## **HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

- Fourth-largest library system in California, serving a population of more than 1.5 million
- 28 library branches, including three bookmobiles
- Annual budget of \$50 million
- More than 900 public computers and laptops
- Collection of 1.5 million volumes
- 735,000 library card holders
- More than 7,000 programs a year for kids, teens, adults and families.

## **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

The system-wide Friends of the Sacramento Public Library is a member-supported, volunteer, community-based organization that advocates, fundraises and provides critical support for the Sacramento Public Library, including its branch libraries, bookmobiles, literacy and educational programs.

The organization operates the Book Den which sells gently-used quality books and media. Proceeds benefit all 28 branches by funding the purchase of new materials and system-wide programming like the Summer Reading Challenge.

In addition, each library has a branch Friends group that offers many volunteer opportunities, including:

- Coordinating book sales
- Supporting Library programs
- Attending public meetings to advocate for Library funding.

Check out the Friends' website at [www.saclibfriends.org](http://www.saclibfriends.org) for more information about becoming a member of the Friends of the Library.

## **PURPOSE OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

The Sacramento Public Library Volunteer Program enables individuals to strengthen the community by supporting a public library.

Volunteering may enable you to fulfill personal goals, achieve a sense of personal satisfaction and learn more about library operations. Volunteers help the Library expand and enrich its services, inspire passion for the Library and create a vital connection to the community.

Volunteers also play an important role as partners in the Library's mission of connecting people to the world of ideas and information. We offer a number of rewarding opportunities for volunteers, including:

- Assisting with children and teen programming
- Maintaining our collections (books, magazines, media)
- Assisting with clerical work
- Helping patrons with technology
- Coordinating our annual Meals at the Library and Summer Reading programs
- Providing homework help and job-search support.

We recognize that volunteers are willing and eager to take on additional responsibilities. However, there are certain activities that are not within the purview of volunteers. These include accessing and using the Library's integrated library system (SIERRA), working at the branch service desk, advising patrons or other members of the public about Library policies or procedures and facilitating programs for children or teens.

The Library will make every effort to match your skills, interests and schedule with available volunteer assignments. Opportunities may vary at each branch. Some adult volunteer opportunities may require a background check via Live Scan. Volunteers under the age of 18 are required to have parental or legal guardian's permission. The Library endeavors to provide volunteers with opportunities to learn new skills, contribute to your community, meet new people and have fun!

## **WHY WE VALUE OUR VOLUNTEERS**

We welcome you and thank you for volunteering with the Library. Our volunteers:

- Bring skills, knowledge and abilities that directly contribute to the success of the Library
- Assist Library staff in conducting routine activities as well as specialized tasks
- Commit their time and talent on an unpaid basis
- Are self-motivated and dedicated to their community and the mission and values of the Library
- Contribute diverse points of view.

## **WHAT THE LIBRARY EXPECTS OF YOU**

As a valued member of the Library team, we expect that you will:

- Understand the role of Library staff, maintain a collaborative working relationship with staff and stay within the bounds of the volunteer role
- Maintain Library standards of confidentiality
- Treat patrons, Library staff and other volunteers in an ethical and respectful manner
- Follow instructions, ask questions, seek clarification and complete assignments in a timely fashion
- Be punctual and consistent in your attendance
- Be reliable and responsible
- Communicate any issues or concerns that may affect your volunteer duties
- Engage in your duties as assigned and directed
- Accept guidance and feedback from the volunteer coordinator or designated staff member
- Be willing to learn and participate in orientation, training programs and meetings □
- Comply with the policies and procedures of the organization.

## **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE LIBRARY**

As a valued member of the Library team, you can expect:

- To be treated with respect as a valued member of the Library team
- To be given clear expectations for assignments
- To be provided with feedback regarding your performance
- To be provided with orientation and training for assignments
- To have your skills, interests, and abilities reasonably matched with available assignments
- To receive expressions of appreciation and recognition.



## **PURPOSE OF THE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

We want your volunteer experience to be a good one. To that end, we ask that you become familiar with the information contained in this Volunteer Handbook.

This handbook includes information about policies and guidelines specific to volunteering for the Library. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to anticipate or address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. For that reason, if you have any questions please, contact your library branch volunteer coordinator.

In situations not explicitly covered by the handbook the fundamental principles of fairness, consistency and common sense will be employed. Conditions may require the Library to supplement, modify or eliminate any of the described policies or guidelines without prior notice. This handbook does not constitute a guarantee that your volunteer service will continue for any specific period of time, or end only under certain conditions. Your service at the Library is a voluntary relationship and nothing in this handbook constitutes an expressed or implied contract of employment.

## **LIBRARY COMMITMENTS**

### **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION**

The Library endeavors to ensure that all persons are treated with fairness, civility, respect and dignity. To that end, the Library is committed to promoting an equal- opportunity environment and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. The Library expects that all relationships will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment.

Whenever possible, the Library makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law.

The Library is committed to providing a work environment that is free from harassment because of race, skin color, political affiliation, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance or regulation.

Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to keep the work environment free of harassment. If you are subject to or witness an incident of harassment, please contact your volunteer coordinator or Library staff member immediately.

### **ALCOHOL, DRUG, AND SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Volunteers are prohibited from consuming, distributing, possessing, selling, or using controlled substances while volunteering. In addition, volunteers may not be under the influence of any controlled substance, such as drugs or alcohol, while at the Library.

The Library and all its properties and program sites are smoke-free environments. Designated smoking areas are located at each site.

## **SOLICITATION**

Solicitation by non-staff members for any reason on Library property is not allowed. Staff and volunteers may not solicit or distribute literature for groups, or organizations, including charitable organizations.

## **SAFETY**

The Library takes every reasonable precaution to ensure a safe working environment. Safety measures and rules are in place for the protection of patrons, staff and volunteers. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of every person to help prevent accidents. It is essential that volunteers follow all safety policies and procedures implemented by the Library and the library branch supervisor or department supervisor. Additionally, all volunteers will be instructed in the emergency evacuation procedures for specific locations.

In order for the Library to provide an environment that is safe and free from hazards, we ask that you use good judgment and common sense in all matters of safety. Be aware of your surroundings and report any unsafe conditions or unsafe behavior to the branch volunteer coordinator or a Library staff member immediately. Use only the equipment prescribed for each activity and utilize it properly. Operate only machinery or equipment that you have been trained to use and authorized to operate by the volunteer coordinator.

Volunteers may not be in Library facilities during hours that are not approved by the branch volunteer coordinator or other appropriate staff member or when the Library is not open and staff are not present.

Some locations may not be entered without a security card key. If you are assigned a card key please complete the Sacramento Public Library CardKey Acceptance Form and agree that you will report a lost or stolen cardkey immediately to the volunteer coordinator. Never give or loan the cardkey to any person, use the cardkey for volunteer business only, and return the cardkey to the volunteer coordinator or designated library staff member after every shift.

If you are injured while volunteering, please notify the branch volunteer coordinator or any Library staff member immediately.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **PATRON SERVICE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Meeting the needs of our patrons is one of the most important aspects of working in the Library. Because our patrons see volunteers as a part of the Library staff, it is very important that you behave in a manner that represents the Library and its commitment to providing excellent patron service.

Volunteers are often the first point of contact for Library patrons. Therefore, it is important that volunteers maintain a professional, friendly demeanor at all times. Volunteers are encouraged to answer Library patrons' directional questions such as, "Where is the

restroom?” or “Where is the copier?” All other types of questions must be referred to Library staff. What may seem like an easy question is often the beginning of a more complex question. Always offer to find staff, or, better yet, escort the patron to the service desk. Our Library staff is trained to respond to questions about the Library’s collection, reference materials, services, programs, policies and procedures.

It is important to remember that our patrons’ requests, reading materials, information needs and program participation are considered confidential and should not be discussed outside the context of the Library. Please ask your volunteer coordinator if you have any questions.

The Library is open to the public and welcomes a diversity of individuals. Everyone deserves our respect and assistance.

## **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Volunteers receive an orientation and training by the volunteer coordinator or an assigned Library staff member. This, along with the volunteer handbook, is intended to provide basic information before you begin your volunteer assignment. Additional training will be provided as needed for specific projects, tasks, and programs. Attendance at the orientation and trainings is required before you start an assignment. Please let the volunteer coordinator know if you have questions or would like additional training.

## **INTRODUCTORY PERIOD AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

New volunteers have an introductory period of 30 days to determine if there is a good fit between the volunteer activity, their skills and interests, and the Library’s expectations. During the introductory period, Library staff will provide feedback about your performance. This is also the time for you to ask questions and to evaluate your interest in volunteering.

When a volunteer’s performance does not meet expectations (for example, poor attitude, unreliable attendance, carelessness, etc.), Library staff will make reasonable attempts to help the volunteer improve. If improvement is not achieved, the Library may end the volunteer assignment.

All volunteers should feel free to ask for feedback on their performance and/or discuss the program with their volunteer coordinator.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT**

Everyone working in the Library should feel comfortable and dress in a manner that will not offend others and is suitable to the activity undertaken. Volunteers should maintain personal grooming and hygiene and present a clean and neat appearance.

- Volunteers working in positions that require shelving books, moving book carts, lifting boxes, or other physically demanding activities are encouraged to wear closed-toed shoes to prevent injuries. Open-toed shoes, flip-flops and sandals are discouraged for this reason.
- Bare midriffs, low-cut blouses, tank tops, garments made of see-through materials, short skirts or shorts, exposed undergarments, or other revealing garments are not appropriate.

- Clothing should be clean, tatter-free, and must not have logos, pictures or slogans that are illegal, obscene, profane, or offensive; contain slurs or statements related to a protected status (for example, race, sex, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, etc.). In order for you to be more fully engaged in your volunteer assignment, we ask that you refrain from using your cell phone (making/taking calls, texting, playing games, etc.). Additionally, please limit socializing with friends and family while volunteering.

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

Our volunteers directly contribute to the success of the Library. Schedules are planned to ensure that Library services and programs are adequately covered and available. The Library staff depends on you to arrive on time and work consistently through your volunteer shift.

Volunteers must sign in at the beginning of each shift and sign out at the end of the shift. We ask that you take breaks when you need them; just let a staff member know that you will be away from your assignment at that time.

We understand that certain situations may arise that prevent you from volunteering from time to time. Please alert the volunteer coordinator of any scheduled absences such as vacation as far in advance as possible. In the event of an unscheduled absence due to illness or emergency, please contact the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible, ideally 24 hours before the scheduled shift begins.

Volunteers who fail to report to their volunteer assignments 3 times without notification to the volunteer coordinator will be considered to have voluntarily terminated their volunteer position.

## **TIMEKEEPING, NAME BADGES, PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND INFORMATION**

The Library keeps records of volunteer hours in recognition of community support for the Library as well as in recognition of the volunteer. Accuracy in recording your volunteer time is important because the time is used to report statistics, to apply for grants and to determine if an individual volunteer meets the requirements for the annual President's Volunteer Service Award. Please familiarize yourself with the timekeeping procedure at your location.

Volunteer badges are available and should be worn while volunteering. We ask that you wear your badge so that Library patrons are able to identify individuals who can assist them with directional questions. Your volunteer badge also helps Library staff get to know you.

Secure on-site storage is very limited and in some instances, nonexistent. For that reason, we encourage you to leave valuables at home and only bring what you need while volunteering. Your volunteer coordinator will show you where you can store personal belongings.

The Library maintains records with volunteer and emergency contact information. These records are confidential. We ask that you notify the volunteer coordinator of any changes, including name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and emergency contact information.

## **USE OF LIBRARY PROPERTY**

Reasonable care should be taken in the use, maintenance and security of Library equipment. Treating Library facilities, furniture and equipment with respect ensures that our Library is a comfortable and attractive space for everyone.

Library property, equipment, copiers, telephones, computers, and software are not for private use. Library computers, internet and emails are a privileged resource and should be used only to complete essential volunteer-related functions.

Please limit personal calls while volunteering.

## **COMMUNICATION**

As valued members of the Library team, our volunteers work closely with staff members to accomplish important activities. Volunteers and staff are expected to work collaboratively and demonstrate mutual respect. We recognize, as in any work situation, problems may arise involving working conditions, relationships with other volunteers, staff or patrons. When a problem arises that affects you, please let your volunteer coordinator know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the volunteer services coordinator at (916) 264-2746.

The Library takes your concerns and problems seriously. We welcome your suggestions that will enable volunteers and staff to work together more effectively.

We value each volunteer and strive to provide a positive volunteer experience. You are encouraged to bring your suggestions, observations, concerns or problems to your volunteer coordinator, branch supervisor, or volunteer services coordinator. As a volunteer, you are not responsible for patron behavior. Please report any concerns or issues to Library staff.

## **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

We appreciate all that our volunteers do to create and deliver the best Library service possible. There are many ways we endeavor to celebrate and acknowledge our volunteers' contributions through both formal and informal recognition and rewards. Informal recognition may be written or verbal and generally occurs at the branch level. Informal recognition is personal, up-front, and timely. It conveys to our volunteers in specific ways how beneficial their contribution is to the organization.

Formal recognition may include system-wide as well as branch specific events. The Library also conveys a special award via the President's Volunteer Service Award. This award is given to volunteers who have achieved a pre-determined number of volunteer hours over the course of the previous calendar year.

## **ENDING THE VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT**

The volunteer assignment may be ended at any time by either the volunteer or the Library. If you decide to end your volunteer commitment, we ask that you notify the volunteer coordinator of your decision at least two weeks prior to the effective date.

When a volunteer ends her/his assignment, the Library would like to know the reasons. We encourage volunteers to participate in an exit survey regardless of the reasons for the departure. The exit survey is your opportunity to share your experience and any other important information.

Dismissal of a volunteer is a serious consideration and may take place if a volunteer is consistently late or absent, demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or fails to adhere to the Library's policies and/or guidelines. Before a volunteer is dismissed, attempts to reconcile the situation will be made, including a meeting between staff and the volunteer involved, and possibly the volunteer services coordinator.

## **CLOSING**

This handbook describes the policies and guidelines that affect your volunteer experience. It is intended as a useful resource throughout the time you volunteer with the Library. It is impossible, however, for any handbook to cover every situation that may arise. Please ask the volunteer coordinator if you need further information or if you are in doubt as to how any of these policies or guidelines apply to you. The volunteer coordinator will answer your question or get the answer for you.

The Library supports the policies and guidelines described in this handbook. The Library reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any or all policies or guidelines in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice.

Revisions of this handbook will be issued from time to time. Your suggestions as to how it can be more helpful are always welcome and should be directed to the volunteer services coordinator.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**BRANCH VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR:**

E-mail:

Phone:

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**BRANCH SUPERVISOR:**

E-mail:

Phone:

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**SPL VOLUNTEER SERVICES COORDINATOR:**

E-mail: [Volunteer@saclibrary.org](mailto:Volunteer@saclibrary.org)

Phone: 916-264-2746