

# Volunteer Program Policy

<b>Policy Type:</b> Volunteers	<b>Policy Number:</b> VOL-01
<b>Policy Title:</b> Volunteer Program	<b>Policy Approval Date:</b> January 2024
	<b>Policy Review Date:</b> February 2027

**Purpose:**

The volunteer program of the Norfolk County Public Library creates opportunities for community members to actively contribute to the library’s vision of excellence in library service. The library welcomes volunteers.

**Section 1: Scope**

1. Volunteers are used by the library to enrich and enhance library programs and services. Volunteers do not substitute for or replace paid employees. Volunteers perform tasks or services without expectation of compensation.
2. Library policies apply to all volunteers in all programs, including activities that take place outside the library.

**Section 2: Responsibility for the program**

1. The CEO or designate 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 that will benefit the library
  - d) training staff to supervise volunteers effectively
  - e) ensuring all volunteers abide by the NCPL Code of Conduct policy
  - f) managing corrective action of volunteers
  - g) tracking and evaluating the statistical data reflecting the contribution of volunteers to the library
  - h) officially recognizing volunteers for their contributions
  - i) maintaining liaisons with other volunteer-utilizing programs and organizations in the community
2. A system of records is maintained for each volunteer. Volunteer records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as paid staff personnel records.

### **Section 3: Insurance Coverage for Volunteers (as required by Norfolk County)**

In order for Volunteers to be covered under the Library's insurance, they must meet the following standards:

- Volunteers must be working under the direction and control of the NCPL
- Volunteer activities must be carried out under NCPL's guidelines and standards
- A *master/servant* relationship must exist.

If all of these statements are true, then the individuals deemed to be volunteering are covered under the Library insurance.

### **Section 4: Volunteer Position Descriptions**

1. Opportunities for volunteers are proposed by staff to the Norfolk County Public Library management team.
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.
3. Position descriptions are developed in consultation with management team before proceeding with recruitment.
4. 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.
5. The library's volunteer position descriptions are reviewed and updated at least every three years or whenever a position substantially changes.

### **Section 5: 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 does not 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) directing patrons to staff for assistance
  - d) assisting staff at special events
  - e) care of library plants and gardens
  - f) reading buddies
  - g) fundraising activities
  - h) preparation for children's programs (crafts)
  - i) assisting with library tidiness and cleanliness

## **Section 6: 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 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
3. Family members of paid staff can volunteer with the library but will not be placed under the direct supervision of their family members who are employees.
4. The minimum age requirement for volunteers is 14.

## **Section 7: 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. 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 their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the assignment.
3. A reference check may be made if appropriate for the volunteer assignment.
4. Volunteers may be required to submit a police records check. If there is a fee, the cost will be paid by the library. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check will be refused a placement.
5. Volunteer candidates must have submitted a volunteer application for consideration. If accepted, volunteers may be asked to submit a completed police check. Before assuming their duties, the candidate will complete any necessary health and safety training as well as training conducive to their position.
6. Volunteers perform their duties in the presence of at least one paid staff member. Volunteers will be guided by a staff member who will be responsible for day-to-day support and direction.

7. All volunteer placements begin with a 30-day probation period. During this time, the CEO or designate will support the volunteer with periodic informal check-ins. As well, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the CEO or designate or their designate of any issues of concern. At the end of the probationary period, a formal interview between the CEO or designate and the volunteer will take place to evaluate the extent to which the objectives of both the library and the volunteer are being satisfied.
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, or placement termination.

### **Section 8: Orientation and Ongoing Training**

1. All volunteers are required to attend a general orientation session of the library and on the volunteer program; and, may be given a tour of the library.
2. Volunteers receive training to provide them with information on:
  - a) library nature, purpose and mission
  - b) knowledge and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment
  - c) the operation of the program or service to which they are assigned
  - d) the purpose and requirements of the assignment
  - e) 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 9: Responsibilities of Volunteers**

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 their 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 their 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. Volunteers must wear their volunteer identification badge while performing their assignments.
6. Volunteers are expected to submit all hours worked to the circulation desk staff on duty for tabulation. 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.

#### **Section 10: 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 Norfolk County 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 or designate or staff supervisor 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
  - j) breach of library policies

## **Section 11: Special Placements**

Norfolk County Public Library accepts the involvement of individuals who work for non-financial remuneration and are placed by a third party. Examples include: high school students completing community volunteer hours; co-ops and field placements at all education levels; social assistance and employment assistance programs and exchange students.

## **Section 12: Volunteers and Potential Employment**

Norfolk County Public Library volunteers are recognized as valuable partners in implementing the mission and programs of the library. They will not be given preferential treatment when responding to internal job postings. If and when suitable positions arise, their application will be fully considered on the basis of skills, education and qualifications.

## **Section 13: Determining if a Volunteer Relationship Exists: (as required by Norfolk County)**

If one or more of the following factors exist, the position would not be considered a volunteer relationship. This list is not exhaustive.

- When a person subjectively believes that they will be paid at some point and/or believes that they are engaging in a task in furthering their livelihood, it is more likely that they are not a true volunteer
- Similarly, the person may not be a volunteer if the NCPL is deriving a substantial benefit from the person's services, particularly where the work being performed would otherwise have to be performed by an employee if the volunteer was not available.
- The circumstances of how the arrangement was initiated or formed:
  - Was the person promised compensation at some point before or after coming to the NCPL?
  - Did the person find the "volunteer" opportunity while they were looking for employment with the NCPL?
  - Did the person leave secure employment for the so-called "volunteer" opportunity?
  - Has the volunteer alleged that they were coerced or pressured into taking an unpaid position by the NCPL?