

Somerset County Library System

Volunteer/Intern Policy

Definitions

A *volunteer* shall be considered as any individual, 16 years or older, who assists with work done at Somerset County Library, without remuneration. Exceptions to the age requirement may be made by the Library Director.

A *student intern* shall be considered as any middle school, high school or college student who performs volunteer work, without remuneration, as part of an authorized school program to earn academic credit. Individual students in youth organizations, such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, are also classified as student interns.

Statement of Purpose

Somerset County Library and the Somerset County Library Foundation shall use the services of volunteers to:

1. Supplement the efforts of paid library staff in meeting demands for quality public service.
2. Serve as a method for encouraging citizens to become familiar with their library and the services being offered.
3. Staff or support fundraising activities sponsored by the Library.

Somerset County Library shall make use of the services of interested volunteers to supplement and not replace the work done by library staff.

Recognition

Recognition is an important component of a volunteer program and is often the only way in which the Library can say "thank you" to a volunteer. Although individual, informal recognition of volunteers should be ongoing, it is important that volunteers be recognized formally as a group on a regular basis, at least annually. The Library staff and Library Board shall find ways of recognizing volunteers throughout the year.

General Provisions

Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to create a contract between the volunteer or intern and the Somerset County Library, Library Board, Library Foundation, or Somerset County. Both the volunteer and Somerset County Library have the right to terminate the volunteer's association with the Library at any time, for any reason, with or without cause.

Neither the Somerset County Library nor Somerset County will provide any medical, health, accident or worker's compensation benefits for any volunteer. Volunteers will not be eligible to receive any worker's compensation benefits for any injuries sustained while functioning as a volunteer.

Prior to engaging in any volunteer activity, each volunteer will be required to submit a Library Volunteer Application form for volunteer work, and visit with a supervisory staff member.

Volunteers may be asked to work on projects that are supportive of staff efforts. Examples include: shelving books, returning books, processing new materials, storytelling, helping to prepare for or present programs, assisting with maintenance of the vertical files, discarding materials, maintenance of periodicals, or public relations activities.

Hours of volunteer service will be determined by the supervisory staff member in discussion with the volunteer. Volunteers are expected to arrive at the library in time to begin work as scheduled or call the library if they will be absent. All volunteer work must be completed within normal library hours. Exceptions may be made by the Library Director.

Recruitment and Supervision of Library Volunteers

Volunteers will be sought through a variety of methods, to meet specific as well as general project needs. Recruitment shall be the responsibility of the Library Director, the Branch Managers, and/or the Library Foundation.

Volunteers will work directly with library staff members to receive training and complete projects. All volunteers will be assigned one primary staff member to guide them in their work; however, any staff member may offer guidance to any of the volunteers.

When appropriate and affordable, the Library may fund the cost of training for volunteers who have made a long-term commitment to the Library. Background checks will be performed on all volunteers before the commencement of their services.

Recruitment and Supervision of Student Interns

Student interns will be sought by the Library through educational contacts in area schools and colleges. A job description will be tailored for each school program that may offer student interns. The job description must stress the value of the project for both student and Library.

The professional staff member who shapes an individual project will be responsible for the training and supervision of the student intern. Each project must be carefully planned and approved by the Library Director before the intern is accepted. Participation in student internship programs may be terminated at any time by Somerset County Library or the student intern. All schedules will be worked out between the student intern and the supervising librarian.

A method and schedule for evaluation will be agreed upon between the supervising librarian and the organization's representative before the student intern is accepted. The supervising librarian will follow this schedule and report student progress to the representative.

Volunteer/Intern Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established to provide consistent information to volunteers and to assure that volunteers fully understand the commitment they are making:

1. A volunteer represents the Library to the community while actively serving as a volunteer.
2. A volunteer is expected to follow approved policies and procedures of the Library during the time of volunteering within library buildings and at library events elsewhere.
3. A volunteer is oriented, trained, and supervised on a continual basis concerning those policies and procedures necessary for the activities carried out.
4. Of special importance in carrying out volunteer activities is the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the Somerset County Library Board of Trustees. Under the Library Bill of Rights, the Library must protect the confidentiality of each library user, and assure equal access and the freedom to read and inquire of each user regardless of age, religion, race national origin, background, and views. In carrying out the requirements of the Library Bill of Rights, volunteers actively working in the Library may not express their religious, political, social or other personal views to members of the public. They must protect the confidentiality of each library user. Violation of these special trusts, policies, or procedures is reason to discontinue volunteer services.
5. The Library may decide to discontinue or change a volunteer's service assignment.
6. Volunteers fill out an information form, which is used by the Library to assure that the volunteers are involved in activities appropriate to their skills, experience, and interests.