

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY LIBRARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM - COMMUNITY SERVICES

THE POLICY ABOUT POLICIES

Policies form a written basis of operations which serve as guidelines for decision making. They prescribe limits and pinpoint responsibilities within an organization, and support the organization's overall mission, goals and objectives.

Policies apply to everybody in the organization, from volunteers to top management.

Ignoring or deliberately acting outside the boundaries established by policy make one liable for consequences.

Policies come in a variety of forms:

Policy can be in the form of a principle, which implies that a position is being taken, and/or a value or belief is being stated.

Policy in the form of a plan or prescribed course of action, includes specific steps, procedures, or methodology.

Policy in the form of risk management defines boundaries for safety, security, and risk exposure for volunteers, staff, and patrons, particularly for children, those with special needs, or others who are most vulnerable.

Policy in the form of rules define specificity for required adherence to legal regulations, procedural steps for complex processes, and detailed guides for accomplishing specified tasks.

Policies in the form of aids to program effectiveness provide structure and discipline for quantitative and qualitative data accumulation, which is used to justify, maintain, evaluate and improve a program.

One of the responsibilities of top management personnel, within their delegated authority, is to make reasonable and appropriate exceptions to policy as necessary, on a case-by-case basis. This is an infrequent but important activity.

Policies that are widely supported within the organization are those developed with appropriate participation and review by staff, and those that permit and encourage appropriate discretion and interpretation by those managers tasked with implementing policy. Policy tells you what is important, and what the boundaries are. The manager

then decide the “how” that best fits the local situation, and that conforms to the spirit and intent of the policy.

Issued Nov. 25, 1997

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

COUNTY LIBRARY POLICIES

SBCL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES

Mission

The San Bernardino County Library Volunteer Program is committed to supporting the overall mission of the Library.

The mission of the Volunteer Program is to develop, promote and manage an active and innovative volunteer program, which consists of the timely recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and recognition of a sufficient number of high quality, demographically diverse and broadly skilled volunteers.

Volunteer Value

Volunteers are vital to the organization because:

- a) They provide extra hands and skills to ease workload and/or increase capacity of paid staff, which would otherwise be impossible, unavailable or unaffordable in the face of budget reductions and increased demands for services.
- b) They are usually active and involved members of the library’s community and can provide creative suggestions for improvement in their assigned work areas, as well as serve in many important citizen participation roles to advocate for library improvements, needs, priorities, programs, fundraising, resources, etc.
- c) They have made a commitment to serve, unpaid, in response to a perceived community need, and for the common betterment of their community and society in general. They are self-motivated and dedicated to the support of our mission and work.

Volunteers are considered extensions of the regular professional and support staff of the library and are treated as staff members with all the organizational support, benefit and responsibilities that such status entails (see “Our Commitment to Our Volunteers”).

PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION CONCERNING VOLUNTEER RECORDS

All personal information requested by the library and provided by volunteers is considered necessary for the normal conduct of business and is confidential in nature. It will not be disclosed to anyone, outside the course of normal business, without the volunteer's permission, except in cases of subpoena, court order, or other appropriate law enforcement request.

Data on volunteers may be combined and reported as composite data for various purposes, but does not include individual identities and/or information.

Volunteers have the right to see their volunteer data base file and correct any error in factual information that the library has in its record system by scheduling an appointment with the Volunteer Coordinator in Library Administration during normal business hours.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Volunteers will be given a copy of the Volunteer Staff Assistant Job Description (and Addendum if necessary) that applies to them specifically. Reasonably accurate documentation of duties performed is important to the organization and the volunteer, and establishes the boundaries of responsibility for the volunteer. Supervisors may add or delete duties from time to time, (which are to be documented on the Addendum). Over time, as the volunteer's interests, training, experience, performance and the library's needs indicate, volunteers may change or add other more difficult responsibilities, thereby increasing their value to the library.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LIBRARY STAFF

Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in the implementation and accomplishment of programs and services, and both contribute to the overall mission of the library. Each volunteer and staff member who works with volunteers is expected to understand and respect the needs, abilities and responsibilities of each other.

TRIAL PERIOD FOR VOLUNTEERS

A 30-day trial period allows the library and the volunteer sufficient time to work out orientation, training and tentative work assignments, and allow preliminary performance assessment and feedback. Changes or adjustments can then be instituted, and a decision can be made to retain, reassign, or terminate the volunteer's service.

COMPLETION OR TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Either the library or the volunteer may elect to terminate volunteer service at any time. Volunteers are expected to complete their commitment hours unless circumstances require an earlier termination. Occasionally, the library may suspend or terminate a volunteer assignment due to work load changes, lack of skills needed, attendance problems, personality conflicts, or other performance or conduct issues.

DRIVER'S LICENSE AND AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE

Volunteers 18 years of age and older may be assigned duties that require the possession of a valid California Driver's License and evidence of automobile liability insurance for a personally owned vehicle, if used in the course of the volunteer assignment, as provided on their Volunteer Application and Agreement. Failure to provide any requested information may result in limitation of the volunteer assignment, or disapproval of the application/agreement.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Depending on the volunteer's assignment, the library may initiate a background check prior to, or anytime during a volunteer's service in order to protect vulnerable patrons, staff and other volunteers. A signed consent for release of such information is a requirement for volunteer service.

REFERENCE CHECKS

The library reserves the right to request personal and/or business references for volunteers 18 years of age or older. References will not be accepted from anyone unless those references are willing to be identified as the source of any reference information they provide. Reference information that is accepted for any volunteer will be accessible to that volunteer, unless the identified source requests otherwise.

MISDEMEANOR OR FELONY CONVICTIONS

Volunteers 18 years of age and over are required to disclose any adult conviction for a misdemeanor or felony, as indicated on the Volunteer Application and Agreement form. A conviction is not necessarily disqualifying for volunteer service; each case is reviewed and determined on its own merits.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the dress code established for all library staff members. This may vary depending on the community standards, branch preferences, the nature of your assignment, and whether or not you are interacting with the public or working in public view. If you are uncertain, or have questions about what is appropriate, talk with your supervisor.

IDENTIFICATION TAGS OR BUTTONS

Volunteers are requested to wear a volunteer tag or button while performing their assignment. This identifies you visually to library patrons as a volunteer. This is important for two reasons: 1) It conveys a warm invitation to patrons who may need some help or direction, and makes it easier for them to find and approach someone to ask for help; 2) It lets patrons know that you are a volunteer and not the manager or reference expert, so they will be less likely to ask you for information you may not know. An appropriate Volunteer ID tag will be provided at no charge by the library and is to be kept at the Volunteer Center when you are not on duty. Please remember to pick it up each time you sign in and return it when you sign out.

TAKING BREAKS

Paid employees are allowed a 15-minute break for every four hours worked. Since volunteers generally do not work more than four hours at a time, personal judgment should be used. Talk with your supervisor to determine what is appropriate. Taking a break is encouraged when performing physical or other forms of work that are considered stressful or require intense concentration or focus. Libraries have a staff room or designated area for breaks, and volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of these facilities.

THINK AND ACT “SAFETY FIRST”

Volunteers are expected to observe the same safety rules and procedures as paid staff, in order to prevent injury or accident to oneself, fellow workers, and the public, which often includes small children. In the event of a personal injury or accident incurred while working as a volunteer in the library, please report it to your supervisor or other appropriate staff person, so that proper procedures can be followed. Even if you feel it is a minor occurrence and requires no special attention, it is necessary for your own

protection to report it and to ensure it is covered under our Worker's Compensation coverage in the event of a delayed reaction or complication.

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WORKERS COMPENSATION COVERAGE

Volunteers age 14 or older who suffer an on-the-job accident or injury are included under the library's coverage while working at an assigned, supervised volunteer activity, provided a completed, signed and approved volunteer application and agreement is on file.

Volunteers under age 14 are not eligible for coverage under Worker's Compensation insurance because they are not legally able to work for pay, which is a requirement for coverage. Volunteers under age 18 are required to have parental consent to volunteer, and those under age 14 are required to have parental consent and instructions for medical treatment under the family's personal insurance coverage. Volunteers under age 14 must have parental signature for a "hold harmless" agreement or liability waiver before beginning a volunteer assignment.

These requirements apply to all individuals and group members, unless other liability provisions have been established which take precedence.

PERSONAL LIABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, subject to state tort laws to the contrary, protects volunteers from financial liability for their acts or omissions committed on behalf of the organization as long as they were acting in good faith, within the scope of official duties and functions, and did not cause damage or injury by willful and wanton misconduct. This protection does not remove the responsibility of a volunteer for acquiring and maintaining state required automobile insurance coverage that would pay damages or injury claims, regardless of the fact that the volunteer is using his or her private vehicle to accomplish a volunteer assignment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Each branch has an emergency plan in the event of fire, earthquake or other emergencies. Your branch orientation will include information on the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and what procedures to follow.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the course of your volunteer assignment, you may have access to personal patron information and information about an individual's reading preferences. You may also have personal contact with friends, neighbors, and other acquaintances. Members of the public have certain rights under the Privacy Act, so any personal information or library use information is considered confidential and is not to be discussed or transmitted to anyone except in the course of your official duties as a volunteer.

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RECORDING OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteers are required to either sign in and out each time they volunteer at the library, or record their time on the provided time logs at their work site, so that accurate records can be kept, and their volunteer service properly credited and documented.

SICKNESS, VACATIONS, LEAVE OF ABSENCE, JURY DUTY, ETC.

As with any worker in any organization, we request that volunteers notify their supervisor sufficiently in advance of any planned absences such as vacations, jury duty, or leaves of absence. In case of illness, injury, loss of transportation, or other reason, we ask that you, a friend or other family member notify us as soon as possible.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR MILEAGE INCURRED BY VOLUNTEERS

Part of the volunteer commitment is traveling to and from the library from one's home at the volunteer's expense. While most volunteers will perform their volunteer assignments at only one work location, a few volunteers may occasionally be asked or required to use a personal vehicle to run errands or perform tasks at other locations more distant than the regular work place. These volunteers are encouraged to record their own mileage and take a tax credit on their income tax returns at the end of the year if the distances involved or total miles traveled are not great. In those rare exceptions where the distance or total miles registered by a volunteer is extensive, mileage reimbursement at prevailing rates may be authorized for payment, on a case-by-case basis.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Volunteers will receive periodic informal performance reviews from their supervisor to acknowledge accomplishments, make suggestions for improvements, and to solicit the volunteer's evaluation of training, work assignment, and supervision.

PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION

Volunteers will be recognized for their service through the library's Recognition Program. Volunteer recognition is based on quality of performance and length of service. Letters of reference may be requested and various awards are presented each year at special social events and recognition ceremonies sponsored by each branch.

Upon completion of 100 hours of volunteer service (not counting orientation & training), volunteers acquire "fine exempt" status.

Revised December 1, 1997

VISITORS

Visits from family or friends during your assigned volunteer hours are generally not appropriate. Please obtain prior consent from your supervisor, and keep such interruptions to a minimum.

SCHEDULING

The County library annually observes certain holidays, which may occur on a date you are normally scheduled to work. A schedule of when the library will be closed is available from your supervisor. If you observe a holiday that is not on our calendar, please advise your supervisor in advance. This also applies to vacations you may be planning. In the event of illness on a scheduled work day, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

TELEPHONE USAGE

Volunteers may be contacted by phone at the library for important matters that can not wait. Outgoing calls should be limited to library business or emergencies. Pay phones for personal calls are available in or near the library.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SMOKING

Possession, use, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol in the library are strictly prohibited, except for necessary prescribed or over-the-counter medications. There is no smoking permitted anywhere inside the library.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Volunteers and employees are expected to contribute positively to a work environment that is free from unwelcome overtures, advances, or coercion, by or to any volunteer, employee, or a member of the public using library facilities or attending a library program. Please bring any matter of this nature to the attention of your supervisor, so that immediate corrective action can be taken.

SOLICITATION

Volunteers are not to solicit the general public for support or contributions to any event or activity while working at a volunteer assignment. Notices in the staff room may be posted, and appropriate solicitation of staff is permitted during breaks or lunch periods.

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MULTI-CULTURALISM AND ANTI-RACISM

The library system serves a richly diverse group of communities. Our goal is to strive to build and maintain a library staff, including volunteers, that is reasonably representative of the local branch's community diversity. We are also committed to provide programs and resources to support diversity, promote positive race and cultural relations within the communities we serve, and eliminate systemic barriers to full participation by all community members. Discriminatory or racist comments, jokes, behavior or incidents will not be tolerated.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Volunteers, like all employees, are required to disclose any business, commercial or financial interest they may have, where such interest might be construed by a reasonable person as being in real, potential or apparent conflict with their official duties for the organization. A determination may be made by the organization to end or modify a volunteer assignment if a serious conflict of interest exists, if the volunteer cannot or chooses not to modify or end such conflict of their own accord.

USE OF ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION

A volunteer may not use his/her affiliation as a volunteer with the library in connection with partisan politics, religious matters, or community issues contrary to positions taken by the library.

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZATION

Volunteers may not represent themselves as anything other than a volunteer while on assignment for the library, unless specifically authorized and to the extent specified in writing for a specific purpose.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Each volunteer is given an exit interview survey to complete and mail to administrative headquarters. The volunteer's response can be helpful in making important changes in program policies, procedures and operations.

PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURES

Any volunteer who is experiencing difficulty with any aspect of a volunteer assignment is encouraged to discuss it candidly with his/her supervisor, branch manager, the Volunteer Coordinator in Admin and/or the Regional Manager so that timely resolution can be effected with minimal difficulty.

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