

# TRINITY COUNTY LIBRARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

(April, 2000)

## Library Purpose and Goals:

### Trinity County Library Mission Statement

The Trinity County Library provides the environment, materials (in a variety of available and affordable formats) and staffed services, conducive to the enjoyment of reading and the pursuit of life-long learning, to all Trinity County residents, at minimal or low cost.

### Volunteer Program Mission Statement

In a rural area such as Trinity County, volunteers are essential to maintain library services and relieve staff to allow them to use their time for professional librarian tasks. With on-going training, volunteers help expand and enhance library services and provide an educational and cultural link to the community.

A strong network of volunteers also represents various segments of the community and generates their involvement with the library. Volunteers create public awareness of the many diverse opportunities the library offers, and stimulate public response and support for improvements that might be needed in services and technology. Volunteers are rewarded by learning new skills to keep current with new technologies and information sharing processes and by working closely with all segments of their community.

## Library Values:

**Confidentiality** -- All transactions between library users and staff or volunteers are strictly confidential and volunteers are required to uphold this policy. This includes any information about what materials a patron looked at, asked for, requested or checked out, as well as reference questions asked by library users. California State Law (Section 6267 of the Government Code) stipulates that circulation and registration records are confidential in any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds. Even law enforcement representatives must secure a court order before patron information is released.

**Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities** -- Volunteers are a valuable resource to the Library, and thus have the following rights: to be given a meaningful assignment, to be treated as co-workers, to received effective supervision, and to be recognized for work done. In return, volunteers agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, and to remain loyal to the mission, values, goals and policies of the Library.

**Young Volunteers** -- The library encourages the participation of youth in their community and in their library. Young people aged 15 and over may apply to volunteer for the library in positions for which they are qualified if they have written parental permission. Young volunteers are expected to abide by all volunteer program policies and procedures.

**Library Bill of Rights** (Adopted June 18, 1948. Amended February 1, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980, by the ALA Council.)

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background or view of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

## **Role of Staff**

The County Librarian, who holds a Master's Degree in Library Science, is responsible for the development of library collections and technical resources, and the provision of good public service, including reference and inter-library loans.

The Library Technicians/ Assistants have extensive on-the-job training and experience in their respective functions: circulation procedures, cataloging, materials processing, bookkeeping, inter library loans, Internet searching, Children's Services, and other technical aspects of library service.

In relation to the volunteer program, staff will work as needed with the Volunteer Coordinator, or Team of Volunteers coordinating the volunteer program in each branch, will often assist in training and supervising volunteers, and will be responsible for volunteer recognition.

## **Role of Volunteers**

Working under the supervision of library staff, volunteers provide valuable support and assistance which enhances library services to patrons. Volunteer jobs within the library are many and varied. Some volunteers repair or shelve books, others read to children, assist in maintaining periodical collections, prepare book or bulletin board displays, or volunteer their computer or other professional skills. Through the efforts of volunteers, the library staff's ability to provide the best possible services is increased.

## **Role of the Volunteer Coordinator**

Each branch of the Trinity County Library has designated a Volunteer Coordinator or Team of Volunteers coordinating the volunteer program, whose responsibility is to work with staff to develop appropriate volunteer job descriptions, assist with recruitment and interviewing, ensure volunteer orientation, training, and assist with supervision and in maintaining a supportive climate for volunteers in the library.

## **Becoming a Trinity County Library Volunteer**

**Application** -- People interested in becoming a library volunteer should request a County Volunteer Application and Agreement form at the circulation desk. Branch libraries will accept completed applications. You will receive a call from the volunteer coordinator at that branch, to be scheduled for an interview.

**Interview** -- Potential Library volunteers are interviewed to ensure a match between their skills and interests and the positions currently open for volunteers.

**Job Description** -- Each volunteer position at the Library has a written job description which has been carefully developed to reflect the qualifications for and responsibilities of the job. Be sure to read it carefully, to ensure that it matches your skills, interests and time availability.

**Orientation** -- New Library volunteers are provided an orientation session to help them gain familiarity with Library goals and policies, as well as to welcome them as part of the team.

**Training** -- Each volunteer will receive specific training on how to do his/her job. Some positions will include on-the-job mentoring with an experienced volunteer or staff person, and some positions will also be required to attend periodic staff meetings to update skills or information. Be sure to ask any questions you have, don't assume anything! -- we want you to be successful!

In addition, the library needs you to keep up with changes in policies and procedures. Each time you come in to volunteer, check your personal folder in the "Mail Box" located at the front desk. It will contain announcements, as well as changes you need to be aware of.

**Supervision** -- Your job description identifies your supervisor, who is responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of your work, and will be available for consultation and assistance. Your supervisor will provide on-going feedback. Please feel free to ask any questions of this person, or report any problems or concerns you have about your assignment.

## **On the Job:**

**Absences** -- If you are ill, or have an emergency that prohibits you from meeting your volunteer commitment, please notify the appropriate person at your branch at least 48 hours in advance, or as soon as possible, so arrangements can be made to cover your assignment. (Weaverville -- call Sandy Morris, 623-5320; Hayfork -- call Jan Mountjoy, 628-4474.) If that person is not available, call your branch and leave a message for your supervisor. Also, please help us plan for your absence notifying us of your vacations, or other time away.

**Appearance** -- Our volunteer program has no formal dress code, but encourages volunteers to dress appropriately for the business environment and the work you will be doing.

**Breaks** -- Volunteers should be sure to take a 15 minute break during every 3 or 4 hour shift you work. You are welcome to take your break in the staff lounge. Just be sure to notify the staff person on duty, so they can relieve you if necessary.

**Conduct** -- You are a reflection of our Library, and therefore, we expect you to act in a courteous, professional manner while volunteering for us. Please familiarize yourself with library values and policies, and leave any personal prejudices at home.

**Emergency Plans** -- Your supervisor will identify emergency exits and plans for you. Also, please be sure your personal "Emergency Card" information is kept up to date at all times.

**Holidays** -- Check the bulletin board for a list of days the library will be closed.

**Name Tags** -- "Library Volunteer" name tags will be available for you to wear while volunteering.

**Patron Questions** -- Our goal is to answer patron questions while they are in the library whenever possible. When no one is at the Reference Desk, please get a staff person on duty to assist the patron. When no staff person is available, provide the patron with a Reference Request form, explaining it will be given to staff as soon as possible, and the patron will be contacted when the information they've requested is obtained.

**Personal Phone Calls** -- You may use the Library's telephone for local calls. However, because we need your full attention to your assignment, we ask that you keep personal phone calls to a minimum.

**Safety** -- Safety is everyone's job, so please be alert for and report any unsafe acts or conditions, rather than handling them by yourself. Volunteers are also encouraged to notify their supervisor of any assignment which causes them physical discomfort, so the situation can be rectified.

**Solicitation** -- Requests for petition-signing are not acceptable in the library.

**Time Log** -- We keep careful records of volunteer hours, in order to thank you, and to demonstrate community support for the library. Please mark your time at the end of each shift on the calendar identified for this purpose located at the front desk.

**Valuables** -- While the library has space available for storing your purse, or other materials, these spaces are not locked, and are therefore not secure. Please leave any valuables at home. The library is a public place, and items left unattended can not be guaranteed protection.

**What To Do If Your Volunteer Situation Isn't Working Out** -- If you find that the work is too much, not enough, boring, whatever! Please go to your supervisor for

assistance. If nothing is settled, go to the Branch Librarian. Please don't just "drop out!" We value your efforts, and don't want them to be wasted. Feedback is always welcome, and helps us to strengthen our volunteer program.

## County Policies Extended to Volunteers

The following Trinity County policies are extended not only to paid employees, but to volunteers with the Library. If you have any questions about them, or would like to read the complete text of these policies, please ask your supervisor, branch volunteer coordinator, or branch manager to show you the binder which contains all policies so that you can review them.

- Accident/Injury Reporting
- Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace
- Equal Opportunity
- Safety
- Sexual Harassment
- Smoke-Free Workplace
- Worker's Compensation -- A volunteer who is injured while on the job is covered by Trinity County's Worker's Compensation plan.
- Internet Access Policy
- Video Rental Policy

## Forms Attached

- County Volunteer Application and Agreement
- Volunteer Emergency Form
- Patron Card Application
- Library Flyer
- Reference Request Form (NSCLS Subject Request)