

Staff Guide to SFPL's Volunteer Program

Thank you for deciding to host a volunteer!

The mission of The San Francisco Public Library system's volunteer program is to offer patrons the opportunity to provide support to their local public library and to help ensure the sustainability and increased awareness of our public programming and public services.

Dear Staff:

Thank you for deciding to host a volunteer at your site! Allowing people to volunteer at our library is a great way to stay connected to our local community.

This handbook will introduce you to the library volunteer program, and will outline its procedures, policies, expectations and benefits.

It will provide you with a comprehensive guide to handling volunteers.

The Office of Public Affairs is the department that manages SFPL's volunteer program. As the Volunteer Program Coordinator, I manage and develop various aspects of the library volunteer program. I am responsible for recruiting volunteers, coordinating volunteer opportunities, tracking volunteer contributions and appreciating our amazing volunteers, among other things. I act as the central point of contact for all prospective and established volunteers.

The information throughout this handbook will give you an in depth, working knowledge of how SFPL's volunteer program is administered as well as the duties of, and support available for SFPL sites that host volunteers.

Best,



Kai Wilson
Volunteer Program Coordinator

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This handbook is a working document. The programs and the needs of the library change, so may this handbook. This guide is to help Onsite Volunteer Managers and their staffs provide the best and most comprehensive management onsite for their volunteers.

Ultimately, the Volunteer Program Coordinator and the Volunteer Program itself is responsible for the administration of volunteerism at SFPL. However, due to the nature of the library system's layout, it is necessary that volunteers have onsite supervision. It is also necessary that supervisors and their staff remain

aware of how volunteerism within the San Francisco Public Library is administered. Please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator for further information.

A Quick Psychology of Volunteerism

Why do people volunteer?

There are many reasons individuals will choose to volunteer. Among them are:

- Hands on opportunities to work with a diverse public
- Opportunities to share their skills and experience
- Gaining valuable experiences that can benefit their job searches and other endeavors
- Public acknowledgement of volunteer service hours and contributions
- Letters of reference or letters of confirmation
- Appreciation for the mission of an organization

The San Francisco Public Library is a great place to experience any number of the above listed perks, and then some!

Remember! For volunteers, volunteerism can be just as much about what they *give*, as it is about what they are getting out of the situation.

Great Volunteerism: A Two-Way Street!

A working volunteer program is just as much about what we do for the volunteers, as what the volunteers does for us!

That being said, there are a number of cornerstones to a great volunteer program. A few are:

1. *Ensure the volunteer has an adequate work assignment each time they volunteer.* Nothing is worse than showing up for a volunteer position and someone telling you there is nothing to do.
Remedy: Always have a pre-planned work assignment for your volunteer. If you are unable to do this, try calling your volunteer in advance and letting them know work may be sparse. Give them the option of waiting until their next scheduled volunteer date.
2. *Ensure that the work assignments match the job description the volunteer signed up for.* Volunteer needs may change with the ebb and flow of the library's needs; we cannot do anything about this. However, avoid suddenly changing a volunteer's job duties.
Remedy: Keeping everyone informed is key. Check in with your volunteer to speak about the changes and how it will affect their volunteer assignment; also contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator. The Volunteer Program Coordinator can also speak with the volunteer to ensure the volunteer wishes to continue volunteering in that capacity. Informing the Volunteer Program Coordinator will also ensure that the written job description is updated for future outreach purposes.
3. *Ensure the volunteer feels that they are a part of the team.* Although a volunteer is not considered staff, it is important that volunteers feel a sense of belonging to something greater.
Remedy: Offer meaningful updates to the volunteer. Keep them abreast of library happenings and other important information. The Volunteer Program Coordinator will be working to ensure volunteers are updated and informed through volunteer newsletters, volunteer gatherings and other means.

4. *Keep the Volunteer Program Coordinator updated about stellar volunteers as well as situations that may not be working out.* It is important to the overall volunteer program that the Volunteer Program Coordinator and Onsite Volunteer Managers stay in constant contact.

Volunteer Program Policies & Procedures

Onsite Volunteer Manager

As a host site for volunteers, the Onsite Volunteer Manager will be responsible for on-site management of volunteers. The department or branch manager may choose to entrust this supervision to a fellow staff person. More than one person may supervise volunteers at a site due to scheduling and/or other factors; however the *Onsite Volunteer Manager* is the person that serves as the liaison to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. In general, for branches it will be Branch Manager and for Centers within the Main Library it will be the Program or Department Manager. Please note: Some sites may have separate Onsite Volunteer Managers: one for adult-aged volunteers, one for youth-aged volunteers and/or one for volunteers that work with youth patrons.

Duties of an Onsite Volunteer Manager:

- Ensure that volunteers have working knowledge of site location layout, including emergency exits.
- Ensure volunteers feels welcomed and takes on the responsibility of introducing the volunteer to staff members, especially supervisors and security/ building grounds staff.
- Inform the Volunteer Program Coordinator when a volunteer is not carrying out their duties or keeping time commitments.
- Inform the Volunteer Program Coordinator when a volunteer needs a review of library volunteer procedures, such as dress code information, level of professionalism, etc.
- Evaluate the work of volunteers and effectively relaying this information to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
- Ensure that volunteers are aware of library closures and holidays.

Duties Worksite Supervisors will *not* be responsible for:

- Receiving adult volunteer applications.
- Placing volunteers.
- Dismissing volunteers, unless this action must be done immediately due to imminent danger to patrons, other volunteers and staff members.
- Tracking volunteer hours.

Volunteer Standards

Dress Code

All volunteers are expected to dress appropriate for their specific volunteer task. Neat and professional casual attire is fine. If you experience an issue with a volunteer's dress, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Conduct and Library Guidelines

All volunteers will be required to sign the 'Volunteer Guidelines' form, which outlines proper volunteer actions while on duty as a volunteer. This pledge will further reiterate that the volunteer is accountable to staff and should treat all staff with respect and courtesy as well as cooperate with them at all times.

Library Confidentiality

All transactions between library users and staff or volunteers are strictly confidential and volunteers are required to uphold this policy.

If a volunteer is uncertain whether information is confidential, the volunteer has been directed to check in with the Onsite Volunteer Manager immediately.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

SFPL is dedicated to protecting all of our patrons and staff. Volunteers over the age of 18 that work with youth under the age of 18 must successfully undergo a background check and fingerprint screening prior to admission to the volunteer program. Volunteers that disclose criminal convictions, and others as needed, will also be required to go through the fingerprint/ background check process.

Working With Children

All volunteers must agree to San Francisco Public Library's 'Guidelines For Working With Youth', which they must sign before they are placed.

If any staff member feels that a child, teen or other vulnerable population is being treated in an inappropriate manner, contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator as well as the Onsite Volunteer Manager immediately.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities will vary with the ever-changing needs of the San Francisco Public Library system. In order to keep our prospective volunteers excited and updated about potential volunteer opportunities, it is important that Onsite Volunteer Managers be in contact with the Volunteer Program Coordinator when new opportunities arise. Please note the following forms and when to use them.

1. *'Long-Term Volunteer Request'* – This form is to be used when new programming needs are assessed within the library that will need *long-term* volunteers. This form will capture the type of programming envisioned, the job description, job title and other information that will record the initial volunteer needs of an ongoing volunteer site. Please submit this form as soon as possible, as there are various steps the volunteer job descriptions must go through in order to receive approval. Processing time approximately 1 month.
2. *'Short-term Volunteer Request'* – This form is to be used for *short-term* or *one time* volunteer projects.

Equal Access to Volunteerism at SFPL

In assessing volunteer needs and the placement of volunteers, it is important to remember that like the workplace, the 'volunteer place' must be equal access. Because some of our volunteer opportunities are language specific, this may already cause a setback for certain volunteers looking for opportunities. To ensure that we combat these types of issues, all potential volunteers will be assessed and placed in the order their application is received and/or at the discretion of Volunteer Services.

To avoid any seeming confusion, please direct any and all adult volunteer inquiries to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. (Please see *Youth Volunteerism at SFPL* for further instructions regarding youth volunteer intake.)

Volunteer Intake, Orientation, Training & Evaluation Information

The Volunteer Intake Process

The following describes the volunteer intake process. Volunteer intake is broken down into two categories:

1. Adult Volunteer Intake (Skilled and General)
2. Youth Volunteer intake (Please see *Youth Volunteerism at SFPL* for more information.)

Adult Volunteer Intake Procedure (Skilled and General)

1. Prospective Volunteer (PV) contacts the Main Library, a branch library or views the website regarding volunteerism.
2. PV is directed to the Volunteer Program Coordinator (557.4251 or kaiwilson@sfpl.org) or to the website to request an application. Staff may also provide volunteer applications.
3. PV completes the applications and returns it to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.
4. Once the application is received, the Volunteer Program Coordinator will review the application and contact the applicant within 2-3 business days.
5. During the initial phone interview, the Volunteer Program Coordinator will gauge the type of opportunity the PV wants and will explain the current opportunities available. PVs that will volunteer with children must conduct this initial interview in person.
6. The Volunteer Program Coordinator will assess the PV's skills and other qualifications during this initial conversation.
 - a. If the PV will be considered a skilled volunteer, they will be directed to the appropriate Onsite Volunteer Manager who will then assess the PV's qualifications.
7. The Volunteer Program Coordinator will contact the Onsite Volunteer Manager to ensure that the position is still needed and available.
8. The Volunteer Program Coordinator will contact the PV to let them know which opportunities are available for them.
 - a. If the prospective skilled volunteer is approved by an Onsite Volunteer Manager, they will be informed at this step in the intake process. If the 'skilled volunteer' is deemed incompatible with the current needs of a program, they will have the option of continuing the intake process for a general volunteer position.
9. The PV will be invited to attend a volunteer orientation. If the PV does not find any of the available opportunities appealing, they have the option of being placed on a waitlist and their application will be considered current for 6 months.
10. Prospective Volunteers working with youth under 18 must plan time before or after the volunteer orientation to complete a background check and fingerprint screening.
11. After successful completion of the orientation, background check/ fingerprint screening, the Volunteer Program Coordinator will contact the PV's references.
12. The Volunteer Program Coordinator will contact the Onsite Volunteer Manager to inform them that a volunteer placement is imminent based upon the PV's completion of the volunteer orientation.
13. Following the receipt of all paperwork, the Prospective Volunteer will become an SFPL volunteer and be directed to contact the Onsite Volunteer Manager directly to set up scheduling.
14. The volunteer will be responsible for informing the Volunteer Program Coordinator of their schedule.

Volunteer Orientation

All volunteers must attend a library volunteer orientation. Orientations are held once per month. Orientations will cover library history, policies, procedures and all information related to library volunteerism.

Volunteer Evaluation

Volunteers will be evaluated 1 month after placement and again 5 months later (at the 6 month threshold) by their Onsite Volunteer Manager or the staff member that supervises their work. An email message will be sent to the Onsite Volunteer Manager to remind them to complete these evaluations.

Volunteer Scheduling & Attendance

Volunteer Scheduling

Volunteer schedules will be based on the needs of the branch or department. If a volunteer position does not require a particular schedule, please identify a range of time periods in which you wish to have a volunteer onsite. If you request volunteers for ongoing, long-term programming, it is important to inform the Volunteer Program Coordinator of a particular timeframe you wish to have a volunteer onsite for various reasons, including outreach and placement purposes.

Volunteer Attendance

Volunteers are expected to be present for any shift they sign up for. Volunteers unable to make any given shift have been instructed to contact their Onsite Volunteer Manager and the Volunteer Program Coordinator immediately. If a volunteer is absent more than 3 shifts for non compelling reasons, the volunteer may be dismissed. Please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator when issues arise regarding attendance.

Volunteer Sign-In

Volunteer must sign in and out of every shift. Volunteer will have the option of logging hours online or manually.

Volunteer Resignation & Release Procedures

Release Procedures

Volunteers are expected to fulfill their duties and are accountable for their work. Volunteers must follow all library rules and regulations. Volunteers will be released for failure to perform assigned duties, for violations of library rules and procedures, or not adhering to the information set forth in this handbook. If a problem arises relating to your volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator for further guidance and possible solutions. If the problem continues to persist, Onsite Volunteer Managers should complete the 'Removal Form' available on Staffnet.

Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers are very valuable assets to our public library system. Once per year volunteer services will hold an Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Volunteer services will also host smaller, more intimate gatherings for volunteers to meet each other and network with each other. The Volunteer Program Coordinator is always welcome to ideas regarding these smaller activities. Onsite Volunteer Managers can request recognition for volunteers from Volunteer Services.

Volunteer Resources

Throughout the year, volunteer services will offer enrichment opportunities for current volunteers. These opportunities will focus on ways to enhance a volunteer's contribution to the library as well as focus on how the volunteer placement can help in general.

Visible Volunteerism

One of the best outreach tools to attract great volunteers is being visible! The Volunteer Program Coordinator is invested in keeping our volunteer program vibrant and visible. Each branch has the option of working with the Volunteer Program Coordinator to create a 'Volunteer Hub', which would be tailored to have all the most updated information about the library's volunteer program! Please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator for more information and to set one up at your site.

Emergency Procedures & Liability

Volunteer Injury Procedures & Liability

Volunteers are instructed to immediately report every volunteer-related injury, regardless of severity, to their Onsite Volunteer Manager or any available SFPL staff member. That staff member should contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator; the Volunteer Program Coordinator maintains volunteer applications that contain personal emergency contact information, if needed. If the volunteer is in need of immediate medical attention, staff should assist in contacting the correct authorities.

After receiving initial treatment for any injury, volunteers have been instructed to contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator for follow up.

Sexual Harassment & Volunteers

Although volunteers are not considered "employees", there have been judgments of liability against organizations that allow sexual harassment of volunteers. Please treat all volunteers with respect and if awkward situations arise, please inform the Onsite Volunteer Manager and the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Volunteers with Disabilities & the ADA

As a local government agency, the San Francisco Public Library is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to be a "Title II" entity. Potential volunteers with disabilities will be welcomed as participants in the Volunteer Program if their participation will not fundamentally alter the nature of the service or activity to which they will be contributing. "The volunteer is a program participant, it would follow that the program must be made accessible to volunteers with disabilities, which sometimes means providing reasonable accommodations."¹

Because the library is considered a public institution, it serves the organization best if we attempt to "reasonably accommodate" volunteers with disabilities. Should volunteer requests for accommodations become unattainable, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator immediately.

¹Linda Carter Batiste, JD. Excerpted from <http://askjan.org/corner/vol04iss02.htm>

Supplement Information

Every new volunteer agrees to the following guidelines to working with youth under the age of 18. Please be aware of these guidelines and report any problems to the Onsite Volunteer Manager and the Volunteer Program Coordinator immediately.

¹Linda Carter Batiste, JD. Excerpted from <http://askjan.org/corner/vol04iss02.htm>

San Francisco Public Library Guidelines For Working With Children & Under-aged Teens

Volunteers working under the direction of library staff members provide services which enhance children's programs. All staff members should be aware of the following checklist which all adult volunteers agree to.

- On-duty volunteers must *never* touch children or teens.
- Volunteer must *never* give food or gifts to the children or teens.
- Volunteers must *never* offer to drive or walk with children or teens anywhere outside of the library.
- Volunteer should *never* meet, visit or make arrangements with children or teens outside of the library.
- Any problems with the children or teens must be referred to the Children's Librarian immediately, so he or she can help resolve them.
- Volunteers must *never* discuss religious, political or sexual matters with any children or teens.
- Volunteers must show *all* non-library materials to the Children's Librarian before using them or presenting them to the children or teens.
- Volunteers must consult with their individual Onsite Volunteer Manager for specific rules in place at that library.
- All contact and communication between volunteers and children/ teens must take place in the library.
- Volunteer and the children or teens they are working with should not exchange phone numbers, email addresses or other personal information.

Violating any of the above criteria will result in immediate dismissal for SFPL's volunteer program. If library staff observes any problematic behavior deemed inappropriate or harmful to children and/or under aged teens, please immediately report this to the Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Youth Volunteerism at SFPL

The youth volunteer program at SFPL consists of unpaid youth volunteers. Please note, youth Summer Reading Program and KidPower do not have the same intake procedure as other youth volunteers. SFPL volunteer services provide intake support for volunteers 13 years old and older. Youth volunteers will be managed locally. Volunteer Services will track youth volunteer hours as well as provide letters of confirmation of service.

Youth Intake Process

1. Prospective volunteers download standardized application from SFPL website, Room 651 at Main, by calling Volunteer Program Coordinator (VPC) at 557.4251 or from branch library. Youth app. will be available on Staffnet.
2. Prospective volunteer should return application to desired branch location.
3. Individual branches choose how they wish to handle the intake of youth volunteers as far as interview, placement, etc. (Branches should designate a person that I will have contact with regarding youth volunteers.)
4. Branches should then forward a copy of the completed youth application to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Branches should keep a copy on file onsite if branch will be hosting volunteer. A copy is forwarded to the Volunteer Program Coordinator for tracking, recording, maintenance and recognition purposes. The branch contact will complete the bottom portion of the document.
5. All branches are asked to keep a reasonable number of "Shift Placement Slots." (At least one) The idea is that if a prospective youth volunteer can't be placed at their 1st choice library (most likely location for youth: proximate to home or school), they have the option of possibly being placed at a location that is just a bit further. If not, the Main Library will serve as default placement. This policy strives to keep youth library volunteerism accessible to all.
6. Prospective youth volunteers will attend an orientation given by Teen Services Coordinator or by their Onsite Volunteer Manager.
7. Youth volunteers will be able to log their hours via our website or manually. If logged online, hours would need to be approved by Onsite Volunteer Manager.
8. Youth community service volunteers can request and receive letter of confirmation upon completion of service.
9. Standardized youth application will not be used for Summer Reading/ KidPower youth volunteers. Only for youth placed as homework helpers, general library helpers, program assistants, computer lab helpers, etc. will complete the standardized application form.

All of this information is available for review and download on Staffnet at http://staffnet/Public_Affairs/volunteerservices.html.