

Bucks County Free Library

Management

Volunteer Policy

Policy Statement

Volunteer time, energy, and goodwill are valuable assets to the Bucks County Free Library (BCFL). Volunteers enhance the work of paid staff and help enrich library services. The volunteer program offers citizens a way to contribute to the community, fulfill personal goals, and learn more about the library.

This policy serves as the foundation for the BCFL volunteer management system.

Definition: A library volunteer is defined as an individual who helps with regular work done on behalf of BCFL without promise, expectation, or receipt of any compensation for services provided, whether salary, benefits, or reimbursement of expenses.

Regulations

General

Volunteers are recruited without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic. BCFL provides reasonable accommodations to qualified volunteers.

Nothing in this policy or in the volunteer's library service creates a contract or employment relationship between the volunteer and the library.

Volunteers are not covered by the library's Worker's Compensation insurance. Volunteers may receive accident benefits by BCFL in the event that an accident occurs during the course of work on behalf of the library.

Volunteer placement is based on the applicant's qualifications, the needs of the library at a given time, the volunteer's ability to commit to a consistent amount and schedule of hours, and the availability of staff time for supervision. The library is not able to guarantee a position for each prospective volunteer and may reject any application without cause.

Young people ages 12 to 17 may volunteer as long as they have parental permission. A child under 12 may volunteer only if a parent or guardian is present at all times. Five or more people from the same organization may apply as a group. Groups applying with children are required to provide adult volunteers to supervise, with a minimum adult-child ratio of one adult for every 12 children age 12 and above. The library does not accept volunteer groups of children under age 12.

Adult volunteers ages 18 and older are required to submit to criminal background checks. Those that work with children are required to submit child abuse background checks.

Volunteers are expected to meet the same standards of professionalism required of paid library staff. Volunteers are considered to represent the library while involved in library activities, particularly when interacting with the public. All volunteers are required to follow library policies, procedures, and guidelines in the same way as paid staff.

A volunteer who fails to meet job requirements or violates library policies and expectations will be subject to dismissal.

The library does not accept court-ordered volunteers. Bargaining unit and non-exempt BCFL employees are not permitted to serve as library volunteers, including furloughed employees. Volunteers who are family members of library staff may not be placed under the direct supervision of their family member.

Job Descriptions and Assignments

Each volunteer position has a written job description that outlines the required qualifications, job duties, training, and minimum expected time commitment. Volunteer job descriptions may include the regular work of paid library employees but may not represent the full job description of any paid library employee.

Application and Interviewing

All prospective volunteers, including young volunteers, must complete application forms and provide references from at least two individuals who are not related to the applicant. As part of selection and placement, all volunteer applicants are screened and interviewed by a library staff member and references are checked.

If there are no suitable volunteer opportunities at the time a prospective volunteer applies, forms will be kept on file for three months at the request of the applicant. Applicants will be contacted if a project is identified that matches their interests and qualifications.

Record Keeping

All personal information about individual volunteers is treated as confidential, and will not be disclosed to anyone without permission, except in cases of subpoena, court order, or other appropriate law enforcement request.

Orientation and Training

All volunteers receive orientations to help them become familiar with the library, ranging from on-the-job mentoring to formal instruction. Volunteer hours accumulated during orientation or training count as part of total service hours.

Volunteers are not scheduled to work until after they have completed background checks, orientation and training, and reviewed all relevant library policies and procedures.

Trial Periods and Evaluations

All volunteers have a trial period to determine if the position is suitable for both the library's needs and the volunteer's skills or interests. Performance evaluations are conducted periodically and may be formal or informal, depending on the assignment.

Both the volunteer and the library have the right to end the volunteer's association with the library at any time.

Exit Interviews and References

Because short-term volunteers are not held to strict performance standards, BCFL does not provide references regarding the quality of their work. Written or verbal references for short-term volunteers will include only verification of the dates and hours worked and a description of the tasks accomplished.

BCFL provides qualitative references for volunteers only for those who have worked regularly scheduled weekly hours at least six months or 48 total service hours in any time frame. A volunteer requesting a qualitative reference must complete a written release giving the library permission to disclose information to outside parties.

Adopted by the Board of Directors November 21, 1989

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