

Elkhart Lake Public Library – Volunteer Policy

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable resource for the Library; their energy and talents help the Library meet its commitment to providing quality service to the public. Volunteers enhance rather than replace adequate staffing and funding. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the Library Board which is the only body with legal authority to set policy for the Library. Volunteers are expected to perform in cooperation with Library staff and comply with the same rules and regulations that apply to Library employees.

Screening and Background Checks for Individual Volunteers

Consistent use of appropriate screening and background checks will help assure that properly qualified individuals are selected to perform volunteer activities. Screening and background checks are required by law and are critical for volunteer positions that involve work or contact with children, youth, the elderly or other vulnerable groups. As part of the screening process, it may be necessary for the director to obtain the applicant's authorization to conduct appropriate background checks; such as, criminal checks; sex offender registries; motor vehicle records; verification of training and personal/employment references.

Vehicle Operation

Some volunteers may be required to operate their own motor vehicle during the course of their volunteer work.

- A. Volunteers must provide proof of insurance.
- B. A valid operator's license should be verified and documented.
- C. Volunteers shall not be reimbursed for mileage expense.

Supervision and Safety Hazards

Volunteers must be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks in a safe manner. The Director shall be responsible to determine whether the volunteer has the skills and ability to perform tasks safely. The extent of safety training depends upon the type of activities assigned. Where hazards exist, safety procedures should be in place. Volunteers must be properly trained to minimize the possibility of injury. Some hazards include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Lifting: Teach volunteers proper lifting techniques (lifting stacks of books)
2. Machinery & Equipment: Provide personal protective equipment and ensure that guards are kept in place (operation of disc cleaner)
3. Fall Hazards: Eliminate trip hazards (step stools are inspected)
4. Fire Prevention: Ensure that extinguishers are visible and accessible. Escape routes must be posted.
5. Housekeeping: Eliminate slip and trip hazards, secure extension cords, clean up spills, etc. Keep aisles, stairways, electrical panels, alarm panels and exits free of debris.

Volunteer Job Descriptions

Job descriptions for volunteers set the basis for:

- A. Selection and placement of applicants.

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- B. Formulating content of training.
- C. Establishing standards of performance in supervising and evaluating volunteers.
- D. Understanding scope of work, responsibilities and limitations of the position.
- E. Assisting in clear communication between staff and volunteers.

Volunteer Liability

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 applies to various categories of volunteers, including those acting for public entities. It does not preempt any state law, which provides additional liability protection for volunteers. This act provides that no volunteer of a public entity is liable for harm caused by an act of omission when working on the behalf of the entity. In order for a volunteer to be protected, the following requirements must be met:

- 1. The volunteer must have been acting in the scope of their responsibilities for the Library;
- 2. Where appropriate or required, the volunteer must have been properly licensed, certified, or authorized to perform the activity by state authorities;
- 3. The harm must not have been caused by willful, reckless or criminal misconduct, gross negligence or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual who suffered the harm.
- 4. The harm must not have been caused by the volunteer's operation of a vehicle for which the state requires the vehicle's owner or operator to possess an operator's license or to maintain insurance.

Youth Volunteers

The Library does allow for youth volunteers. The Library will not allow youth to work in types of work considered hazardous. Youth may be limited in the number of hours worked depending on their age and time of year. Parental consent is required. The parent or legal guardian must sign the Elkhart Lake Public Library Volunteer Application.

Rights and Expectations of Volunteers

- 1. To be respected and valued and to know what their rights and responsibilities are.
- 2. To be provided necessary information and training appropriate to their tasks.
- 3. To be provided with orientation, supervision and training appropriate to their tasks.
- 4. To be provided a safe working environment.
- 5. To be free from harassment or discrimination.
- 6. To be trusted with confidential information that will help you carry out your assignments.
- 7. To expect that a spirit of friendliness and cooperation will be the norm in the volunteer work environment.
- 8. To be able to discuss any problem with the director and receive prompt and fair adjustment of any complaints which may arise.

Volunteer Responsibilities

- 1. To carry out agreed upon duties to the best of their ability.
- 2. To work within the aims, objectives, values and goals of the Elkhart Lake Public Library.
- 3. To work under the Elkhart Lake Public Library rules, regulations and policies.
- 4. To be honest and reliable.

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5. To respect the privacy of the people we serve.
6. To cooperate with fellow volunteers and staff.
7. To help create a pleasant and safe place to volunteer.
8. To read and understand the Volunteer Policy.

Service Organization Volunteer Projects

The Elkhart Lake Public Library recognizes that from time to time a community service organization (Friends of Library, Lions, etc.) may provide a valuable contribution or service to benefit the Library. The Library has established a policy for acceptance of donations and that policy should be followed in all circumstances. In terms of volunteer labor, the director will use the frequency of volunteering and nature of work to determine the need for complete background checks for individuals. If a project is a one-time activity the service organization should complete the Sponsor Volunteer Waiver Form. Proof of insurance may be required depending on the nature of the work that is to be performed. If a volunteer activity is ongoing and under the direction of the Library, volunteers shall be treated under the same manner and terms of any other individual volunteer.

Revised September 8, 2014 - Deleted introductory paragraph