

NOTE: This "Library Volunteer Policy Template" is provided by the Nioga Library System to member libraries. Any final version should be checked for consistency with the library's charter, bylaws, any applicable collective bargaining agreement, and policies. Whenever possible, prior to adoption by the Board of Trustees, the policy should be reviewed by the library's lawyer. In addition, the library should confirm the extent to which volunteers are covered by the library's general liability insurance.

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[NAME] Library Volunteer Policy	Passed on: INSERT Revised on:
Policy passed and evaluated not less than every 5 years by: Board of Trustees	Position responsible for compliance: Director

Policy

Volunteer work is unpaid service to the library that can greatly enhance the library's mission, ancillary operations, and connection to the community.

Therefore, to support the mission of the library, enhance library operations, comply with labor law, and promote a culture of safety in the library, the [NAME] Library (the "Library") follows the below "Rules and Procedures" for working with, selecting, and confirming volunteers.

Rules and Procedures

A. Scope of Volunteer Work

To ensure such service is additive and consistent with the law, unpaid volunteers at the Library may not:

- Replace or augment paid staff to do the work of paid staff
- Do anything but tasks traditionally reserved for volunteers at the Library
- Be required to work certain hours, or be used to keep the library open for the minimum hours it is required to be open per state regulation
- Be required to perform duties involuntarily
- Be under any contract
- Be paid for their services (except reimbursement for expenses)
- Be given a library worker e-mail account or password access to enable access to library user records

Typical volunteer tasks at the Library are:

"Special projects" Helping with a special display, a one-time digitization project, or basement clean-out	"Facility extras" weeding the garden, watering plants, dusting between regular cleaning service
"Special Events"	"Outreach Extras"

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Extra help with hospitality, tech, or community relations during an event	Serving as a greeter, roaming stacks to see if assistance is needed and connecting the patron to assistance
"Added programming" An extra story hour, yoga session, or other service not part of core operations	INSERT
"Enhanced Services" Special service related to services but beyond the usual (for example, training session on using a 3-D printer, or specific hours of added assistance).	INSERT

B. Library Employees as Volunteers

A person who is a paid employee of the Library may volunteer for the Library. However, such service may not be required or expected, and the type of work the employee does as a volunteer must be completely different from the type of work they do as an employee.

C. Students as Volunteers

Students working in the library may perform any task, including that typically done by paid employees, so long as:

- they attend an institution of learning with courses leading to a degree, certificate or diploma;
- they are completing residence requirements (internship).

Students continue to be exempt during the periods when school is not in session (e.g., during the summer) if they:

- were students during the preceding semester;
- have not yet graduated or completed the educational requirements of the program OR are a graduating student enrolled in an institution where they plan to continue their education and are considered students between terms.

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As required by law, if a student is volunteering under this provision, the Library will retain records showing:

- Start date of work
- Nature of the work performed
- A statement from the student's school, which attests that they are a student whose course of instruction leads to a degree, diploma or certificate;
- End date of work.

D. Background Checks and References

Drafting note: Your library should consult with its liability insurance carrier to get guidance on their preference or requirements for vetting volunteers. If volunteers are to ever work with unaccompanied minors, or any type of vulnerable population, or have even incidental access to private information, a criminal background check should be part of the policy.

To promote a culture of safety, the library requires a personal reference from a library user [and a criminal background check] before confirming a volunteer's role in a "volunteer letter."

Any record of conduct suggestive of actions contrary to the environment the library seeks to create will be a basis for the library not accepting a person's offer to volunteer. In making such a determination, the Library will be mindful of the State of New York's public policy regarding individuals with a criminal background.

The Library does not discriminate on the basis of any category protected by law when working with volunteers.

E. Declining an Offer to Volunteer

The Library may deny an offer to volunteer without providing a reason, but typical reasons for denying a volunteer opportunity will be:

- The Library does not have the capacity to coordinate with another volunteer at that time;
- The Library has determined it does not have volunteer work that fits the person's interests or skills;
- The Library has found the person to not meet the requirements of this policy.

F. Confirming a Volunteer Role at the Library

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For volunteers who will service on a routine basis, the Library will confirm the scope of the volunteer experience in a "Volunteer Letter."

RE: Volunteering at the Library

Dear NAME:

Thank you for volunteering at the [NAME] Library!

Your routine service for the library will include INSERT.

Your regular hours of service will be INSERT.

Ethics

Attached to this letter, please find the New York Library Association Code of Ethics.

As you will see in the Code, the library is ethically obligated to serve all patrons without bias, and to protect their confidentiality. While you will not be handling confidential library records, it is expected that you will support the library's ethics and not discuss or reveal any person's use of library services. Thank you for helping us uphold this important commitment.

Safety

We work to make sure the library is safe. Our safety plans and other safety-related policies are on our website. If you ever have a concern about safety, please alert NAME or NAME. If you observe or experience an injury while volunteering at the library, please report it immediately.

Respect

We work to ensure the Library has a respectful environment. Our anti-discrimination policies are on our website. If you ever have a concern about safety, please alert NAME or NAME. If you observe or discrimination or harassment while volunteering at the library, please report it immediately.

Important Details

[Insert any other details specific to volunteering at your library]

Thank you! We look forward to you helping us enhance the services we offer to the community.

Sincerely,

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For volunteers who arrive for a one-day or one-time event, the Library will use a sign-up sheet:

Thank you for volunteering at the [NAME] Library for our [EVENT] on [DATE].

Safety & Respect

We work to make sure the library is safe and respectful. Our safety plans and our anti-discrimination policies are on our website and can be provided upon request. If you have a concern about safety or respect throughout the day, please alert NAME. If you observe or experience an injury while volunteering at the library, please report it immediately.

Important Details

[Insert any other details specific to volunteering at your library that day]

To acknowledge the above important items, and to sign in as a volunteer, please sign in below:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Cell #</i>	<i>Why you're volunteering today</i>

G. Volunteer Records

All references, background checks, volunteer letters, and documentation related to volunteers will be kept permanently, and all other records pertaining to the volunteer will be kept for at least seven years after the volunteer experience is over.¹

Volunteer records are not considered confidential library user records, but certain volunteer records may be considered personnel records not subject FOIL, as determined by the particular record.

¹ This is to conform with the requirements of LGS-1 636, which applies to public libraries. Association libraries may wish to follow this retention period as a best practice, although it is not required.