
Section: Public Service Policies

Approval: CEO Date Effective: Mar. 2004
rev. May 2009

Coverage: All Employees Distribution: All Employees

Background Volunteers are a valuable resource to the Library and its stakeholders, supplementing the efforts of paid Library employees to provide quality library collections, services, and programs.

Types of Placement This policy applies to all individuals performing work for the Library without financial compensation, including:

- Secondary school students completing mandatory community service requirements.
- Secondary school students completing co-op programs.
- Individuals referred by churches or other religious institutions.
- Special needs individuals referred by social service agencies / institutions.
- Community members offering programs or services to the Library on a voluntary basis.

Insurance All volunteers doing Library placements on library premises are covered by the Town of Markham's insurance policy for third party liability. Volunteers are excluded from WSIB benefits under the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

Requirements Volunteers shall:

- Be 13 years of age or older.
- Attend a Library Volunteer Information Session
- Commit to a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service.
- Submit a completed application form with references (Appendix C – Volunteer Application).
- Be able to work as a member of a team.

A vulnerable Sector Screening may be required for adult volunteers. The requirement will be contingent on type of work the volunteer is hired to do. If a Vulnerable Sector Screening is required, it shall be at the expense of the volunteer.

Individuals volunteering for community service purposes must provide the appropriate documentation from the sponsoring agency, prior to the commencement of their placement. Appropriate documentation includes:

- Work Education Agreement for Secondary Schools, signed by a teacher or other school official.
- Letter signed by priest/pastor/minister/rabbi or other official for individuals completing religious requirements.

-
- Letter signed by agency/institution officer for special needs people.

Recruitment

Volunteers may apply unsolicited, be invited to apply by Library employees because of special skills, be referred by Information Markham or Volunteer Centre, or respond to Library publicity, including information on the Library's website. Selection of volunteers will be based on the skills necessary to perform particular tasks or projects, the ability of the volunteer to commit to a minimum number of hours, and the timing of the hours required.

Library's Obligations

Volunteer work should be beneficial for both the volunteer and the Library. To ensure a successful volunteer experience, the Library undertakes to do the following for each volunteer:

- Orient the volunteer to the department and work facility at the beginning of the volunteer's placement (see Appendix A – Volunteer Position Orientation).
- Provide a well-defined job description with appropriate training and supervision. To ensure this, the Library may choose to limit the number of volunteers working at a specific location at any one time.
- Provide a work schedule that is acceptable to both parties.
- Provide a safe work environment and explain safe operating procedures for all duties (see Appendix B – Volunteer Position Health and Safety Concerns and Precautionary Measures).
- Maintain a Volunteer Work Log
- Provide a volunteer assignment that is worthwhile and promotes learning and growth.
- Provide verbal feedback regarding work performance, throughout the placement.
- Complete any required documentation pertaining to the individual's progress in or completion of the placement, in a timely fashion.

Volunteer's Obligations

Volunteer experience provides the individual with the opportunity to develop and foster good work habits, which should be beneficial to the volunteer in the future.

The following are the obligations of the Library volunteer:

- Undertake to make a meaningful commitment to the Library.
 - Commit a minimum total time of 40 hours.
 - Report to work, as scheduled, and be punctual.
 - Report all absences to the supervisor in sufficient time that alternate arrangements can be made, if required.
 - Record hours worked and tasks accomplished
 - Familiarize himself/herself with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Library's Health and Safety Policy, and report any safety hazards or incidents to the immediate supervisor.
 - At all times, maintain the dignity and integrity of the Library and the Town of Markham, adhering to the Library's Policies, Procedures, and Rules of Conduct.
 - Wear an identity badge at all times during a scheduled shift
-

-
- Work for a minimum shift length of 2 hours. Do not exceed 4-hour shifts, except in special circumstances.
 - When doing a secondary school mandatory community service placement, complete the placement within 6 months of the start date.

Duties

Volunteers provide support services and assistance to employees, as requested by employees and directed by a supervisor or designate. Volunteers will not be used to replace or displace unionized employees. Tasks will be such that they can be performed satisfactorily with reasonable in-house training.

The following tasks are deemed appropriate for volunteers:-

Collection Maintenance Assistance:

Under the direction of the Borrower Services Supervisor or designate:

- Perform preshelfing routines such as putting carts in order and shelf-reading
- Shelve and maintain tidiness of library items in the browsing collections including periodicals, newspapers, CDs, board books, and paperbacks
- Affix labels as assigned
- Pull out periodicals and newspapers according to retention guidelines and condition for employees to assess
- Prepare books for booksale, and tidy booksale area
- As appropriate, assist with emptying drop boxes
- Check non-print materials for damage
- Search for items listed on reports (weeding reports, claimed returns, etc.)
- Shift items on shelves
- Tidy up display areas

Program Assistance:

Volunteer participation in reading/tutoring and other programs is covered under a separate policy – please refer to “Use of Volunteers in Reading/Tutoring and other related Programs”.

Under the direction of programming staff or designate:

- Perform crowd control during programs
- Assist with creating or posting bulletin boards or displays
- Decorate for programs or holidays
- Set up and clean up meeting rooms for programs
- Assist during programs/events/outreach/workshops as needed

General Maintenance:

Under the direction of the Borrower Services Supervisor or designate:

- Dust and wash shelves, wash toys, books and video covers
- Clean PAC screens and keyboards
- Photocopy
- Take out recycling
- Cut scrap paper, sharpen pencils, and replenish supplies at PACs
- Groundskeeping/gardening
- Assist with supply delivery such as opening boxes

Fundraising:

- Friends of the Library

Evaluation

The volunteer will be given verbal feedback regarding performance. After ten hours of volunteer service, duties will be reviewed and tasks reassigned, as necessary. The sponsoring agencies often require various types of evaluation or follow-up to each placement. The Library undertakes to complete required written and verbal evaluations in a timely fashion. These include the following:

- Written evaluations for post-secondary students in work placements completed by the Supervisor overseeing the individual's work.
- Written evaluations for co-op program students completed by the Supervisor overseeing the individual's work.
- Written confirmations of completion of hours, as required.
- The designated supervisor of the volunteer shall complete a Volunteer Work Summary Form.
- All volunteers shall complete a Volunteer Exit Evaluation Form upon their completion of service.

**Early Termination
Of Placements**

The Library may choose to terminate individual placements at its discretion. This may occur when a volunteer fails to meet obligations, as defined above. Library employees shall follow these steps:

- The decision to terminate volunteer placements resides with the Branch Manager.
- As required, the Supervisor discusses with the volunteer her/his failure to meet obligations as described in the foregoing.
- The Supervisor documents this discussion and informs the Manager.
- The Supervisor closely monitors the volunteer's performance to ensure there is sustained improvement.
- Should there be insufficient improvement, the Supervisor issues to the volunteer (copying the Manager) a written warning, indicating the following:
 - The nature of the concern.
 - Specific dates when problematic behaviour occurred.
 - The date of the previous verbal warning.
 - An indication that the placement may be terminated if the problem continues.
- The Supervisor informs the sponsoring agency of the problem, indicating that the placement may be terminated if the problem continues.
- If there is still insufficient improvement following this, the Supervisor updates the Manager, who then renders a decision concerning termination.
- The Branch Manager informs the volunteer and/or the sponsoring agency of the decision to terminate.
- The Manager updates the Director, Service Delivery concerning this decision, outlining the reasons for termination.
- In cases where the volunteer is found to have committed an illegal activity in the Library or in association with the placement, the placement is terminated immediately, without warning. The sponsoring agency is informed of this decision.
- Should an illegal act be committed, the Library will follow established procedures and may pursue any appropriate legal action.