



Volunteer Handbook

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North Valley Public Library Volunteer Handbook

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Message from the Director

Welcome to the North Valley Public Library! We are delighted to have you on our team, and we hope that your volunteer experience here is satisfying and rewarding. We value your unique talents and appreciate your help in accomplishing our goals of providing informational materials and programs to our community for life-long learning, personal growth and entertainment.

The North Valley Public Library Volunteer Program is a mutually beneficial relationship between the library and the community it serves. Your generous contributions of time and talent are strengthening our community and making the North Valley Public Library stand out as the heart of Stevensville. Thank you! We couldn't do it without you!

About this Handbook

This handbook is intended to help you become familiar with the policies of the North Valley Public Library Volunteer Program. It contains policies and procedures adopted by the NVPL Board of Trustees concerning volunteers and related matters. The Library Director is charged with interpretation and implementation. Should you have any questions about the Handbook's contents please refer them to the Volunteer Coordinator or to the Library Director.

In situations not explicitly covered by this Handbook, the fundamental principles of fairness, consistency and common sense will be employed. Conditions may require the library to supplement, modify or eliminate any of the work rules or policies described in this Volunteer Handbook without prior notice. The Handbook does not constitute a guarantee that your volunteer service will continue for any specific period of time or end only under certain conditions. Your service at NVPL is a voluntary relationship and nothing in this Handbook constitutes an expressed or implied contract of employment.

A Brief History of the North Valley Public Library

Our library opened on July 1, 1904 as a free public library. The founders were Mrs. Bruce Wells, Mrs. Henry Buck, Mrs. Louise May and Mrs. Clarence Calkens. They were given a room for the library in Town Hall on Main Street. At first, the Reading Room Society paid for a librarian, books and magazines from their own funds. In 1911 the town passed a special levy to support the library and in 1914 the holdings were officially made town property. The library remained in the same location until 1983 when it moved to Town Hall on Buck Street. In 1990 Ken and Norma Bangs made a generous donation of the current building where the library has remained since 1991. In 2004, Stevensville voters supported the library in the establishment of an independent library district, the first in the state of Montana.

North Valley Public Library Service Priorities

The North Valley Public Library Provides:

- A safe and welcoming environment for people to meet and interact with others in the community;
- Information services to answer questions and instruction to help people find, evaluate and use information effectively;
- Materials, programs and services to meet recreational needs; and
- Resources to learn more about personal and community heritage.

Volunteers Defined

Volunteers:

- Comprise all individuals who voluntarily give of their time and talents to help further the mission of North Valley Public Library. These include the Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library and adults and young people who perform various tasks that benefit the library.
- May also include teens and adults who are providing court-ordered community service. (Note: The library does not accept individuals who commit crimes such as robbery or theft or crimes against persons.)
- Are involved in a wide range of library activities. They are valued and treated with the same courtesy and respect accorded paid staff members.
- Do not receive salary, benefits or other compensation; are not used to replace or reduce the number of paid staff; are not placed in positions that would jeopardize the library's ability to operate if a volunteer were absent.

Role of the Library Volunteer

For the library, volunteers serve to:

- Expand support for routine tasks and special library projects,
- Enhance the level and quality of customer services, and
- Provide supplemental expertise.

For individuals, volunteering helps to:

- Provide personal satisfaction, growth, and enrichment as well as opportunities to acquire new technical, office, administrative, or customer service skills;
- Impart a sense of personal achievement from learning new skills or successfully completing a project; and
- Increase feelings of self-worth and pride from helping others.

For the community, volunteering helps to:

- Create a positive community image of the library;
- Bring information about local ideas, issues and concerns back to the library so that staff and administration can better meet community needs;
- Foster community support for the library by encouraging local citizens to become "shareholders" in a local organization;
- Afford people the opportunity to make legal restitution to the community through library service; and
- Meet individual, civic organizations' and religious groups' requirements for community service.

Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and implementing all aspects of the volunteer program. The Volunteer Coordinator reports to the Library Director.

Position Responsibilities:

- Review volunteer applications with the Director.
- Keep records of applications.
- Interview applicants.
- Arrange training of approved applicants.
- Train volunteers in all aspects of their job descriptions.
- Schedule volunteer shifts on a monthly and as-needed basis.
- Keep the volunteer schedule up-to-date.
- Arrange substitutions and changes when necessary.
- Be familiar with and follow library policies and procedures. Read posted notices on the volunteer bulletin board to keep informed of new or changed procedures.
- Work effectively with staff, volunteers and the public.
- Report volunteer hours on a monthly basis to RSVP, Experience Works, etc.
- Work with volunteer supervisors to design appropriate volunteer awards, recognition and benefit programs.
- Perform other duties as needed.

Position Requirements: Personnel and organizational skills, computer skills and the ability to perform physically demanding work such as lifting books and standing for long periods of time.

Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers are recruited and selected based on their qualifications and availability and the library's need at the time.

The library at all times has the discretionary options to both not accept an individual for volunteer service and to terminate a volunteer from library service.

Volunteer Needs Assessment

The need for volunteers is not a reflection of personnel or departmental deficiencies, nor does it imply that future requests for paid staff will not be seriously considered. NVPL staff will identify appropriate volunteer opportunities. Job descriptions for these are included at the end of this Handbook. The need for volunteers may vary, and the existence of a job description does not guarantee that volunteer work will be available. Special projects may also provide volunteer opportunities not described here.

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited from a cross section of the Stevensville community and represent different races and ethnic backgrounds reflecting the makeup of the area, as well as people of various ages and with varied physical and learning abilities. Volunteers may also have diverse beliefs, skill levels and a wide array of educational levels.

Age

Students aged 16 to 18 often come from local service groups or organizations, such as scouting or school programs that require students to do community service before graduation.

Younger children may volunteer under the direct supervision of a parent or responsible adult who also volunteers at the library.

Adult. Adult men and women volunteers are recruited as individuals and from local service and professional organizations as well as businesses, many of which encourage employees to perform community service. Unemployed workers and semi-retired or retired individuals are also recruited.

Interest

The library recruits general volunteers as well as special-interest volunteers for well-defined tasks. The goal is to match volunteers' demonstrated interests with volunteer jobs. For example, the library may choose to recruit individuals with backgrounds in early education for the children's program, coursework in English or literature to lead a book club or experience in event planning to organize library events. The possibilities are endless!

Skills, Training, and Education

Recruiting for specific skills, training or education allows the library to match volunteers with jobs that require knowledge, skills and abilities in specific areas.

Time

Volunteers are recruited both for activities that are sustained over a long period of time and for activities of short duration. A short-term time commitment is usually project-oriented or connected with an event. Ongoing tasks, such as shelving and processing new library materials, are suited to people who would like to volunteer at NVPL on a regular basis.

Disability

Individuals with physical or learning disabilities are welcome library volunteers. Their success depends both on the staff's ability to devote supervisory time and on identifying levels of work that fit within the individual's skill/ability levels.

Legal Distinctions

There are two types of volunteers: community volunteers and court referred volunteers.

Community. Community volunteers are individuals or groups, such as scouts, who volunteer to fulfill organizational or educational requirements or for personal fulfillment and pleasure.

Court-ordered. The library accepts volunteers who are ordered by the court to provide community services. It is understood that while the library is not required by law to accept anyone the court refers, many of these individuals are talented and skilled people who made a mistake and want to work through the incident.

Court-ordered services involve teens and adults working at the library as restitution for offenses committed in the community. Such people are convicted of driving under the influence (DUIs), driving while intoxicated (DWIs), and minor traffic infractions (e.g., no automobile insurance, speeding, or excess parking tickets), truancy or possession of a controlled substance. The library will not accept individuals who are violent or sexual offenders.

The library has the option not to accept or to terminate court-ordered volunteers at the library's discretion.

Application/Hiring Process

There is a standard application process for selecting volunteers for volunteer service that is similar to the process used for paid employees. The process reinforces the importance and value of volunteer service and the need to select the best volunteer for the job at hand. It also clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the library and volunteer staff.

The process requires the volunteer to:

- Fill out a volunteer application. If a suitable volunteer placement is not available at the time of application, applications will be kept on file for one year.
- Be interviewed by the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Library Director.
- Sign a North Valley Public Library Volunteer Agreement.
- Complete the North Valley Public Library Volunteer Orientation Program.

For those desiring a very short-term volunteer opportunity of no more than a few hours, there is also a simplified Project Volunteer Application. Because such assignments do not allow time for training, they are generally limited to tasks such as decorating for holidays or assisting with routine chores. Unless they are well known to staff, volunteers of this nature may not work with the public.

Reference and Background Checks

Reference and/or background checks may be performed to learn more about the personality of an individual and how that person relates to others. Questions asked are kept specific to the job. Checks are performed only with the prior written consent of an individual and information is kept confidential.

Reference and/or background checks are required for volunteers working with vulnerable customers, such as children, the elderly or the physically challenged and in sensitive areas such as patron or donor databases or the handling of money.

Unpaid Expenses

Volunteers do not receive salaries, benefits or other compensation. Expenses directly related to volunteer service are generally deductible from state and federal income taxes. Therefore volunteers may wish to keep an on-going record of transportation and other relevant expenses.

Volunteers are discouraged from paying for any supplies or materials themselves. If volunteers require any supplies or materials in order to perform their duties, they should speak with the Volunteer Coordinator prior to making any purchases.

Library and Volunteer Responsibilities

While to the public, a volunteer is part of the library's staff, volunteer and paid staff perform different work, are evaluated on different criteria and receive different benefits.

The library will provide to volunteers:

- The same courtesy and respect accorded to a staff member.
- Orientation, training and supervision by a staff member or other trained volunteer.
- A willingness to address concerns and be open to suggestions.
- Meaningful assignments.
- Recognition for your contributions.

Volunteers will:

- Display a positive attitude.
- Work with library staff to accomplish the goals set by the library.
- Perform assigned duties to the best of their abilities.
- Represent the library when actively serving as volunteers.
- Seek the guidance and accept the decisions of staff.
- Recognize the function of paid staff, maintain positive working relationships with them and stay within the scope of volunteer responsibilities.
- Wear a volunteer name badge.
- Report on time, as scheduled, and check in with designated staff upon arrival at work.
- Record volunteer hours in the volunteer log.
- Give prior notice to a supervisor as soon as possible if the individual:
 - Must change or cannot keep her/his schedule,
 - Needs to take an extended leave, or
 - Wishes to be reassigned.
- Give notice upon ending volunteer service.
- Comply with the Volunteer Personal Appearance Policy, found in the following section of this Handbook.
- Respect and act courteously to all patrons and employees.
- Refrain from expressing religious, political, social or other personal views to the public.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all library and patron information.
- Disclose in advance medical, health or physical limitations related to the volunteer job.

Information for Volunteers

This section provides a variety of information that will be helpful to new volunteers as well as to volunteers who have been working at the library for some time.

Volunteer Personal Appearance Policy

It shall be the responsibility of all volunteers to represent the library to the public in a manner which shall reflect favorably the library's image. These guidelines apply during all scheduled work, except when the library is closed to the public for the day.

Library volunteers shall be well groomed and dressed in a manner suitable for the public service environment. The library encourages volunteers to consider their personal safety and protection when choosing work attire.

The public should be able to recognize designated volunteers on duty. Name tags are provided by the library and are required during open hours.

The Library Director may designate exceptions to this rule for holidays or other special events. The volunteer's supervisor will discuss the subject of personal appearance with the volunteer if it is felt that the volunteer does not reflect the image of the library positively.

Fee Waiver

As a volunteer, you are eligible for a waiver of overdue fines. We do ask that you return any borrowed materials on or before the due date.

Parking

Parking is limited so plan accordingly. There are 3 or 4 spaces behind the building, which are usually designated for staff, depending upon the time of day or day of week. There are spaces in front of the building available for volunteers as well as patrons.

Personal Belongings

There is a coat rack for your use in the Staff Work Room. Purses can be stored either on the coat rack or behind the front desk.

Break Room

Currently, we do not have a formal break room; there is a back work room that is utilized for breaks or lunches during warm weather. During winter, depending upon availability, breaks can be taken in the Montana Room, the New Book area, the seating area near the front desk, or the

Children's Room. For your convenience, there is a refrigerator in the back room, plus a microwave, toaster oven and coffee pot.

Record Keeping

We keep track of the hours donated by our volunteers each year for state and federal reports and for our own use. Please record your hours in the designated notebook behind the front desk each time you volunteer.

Schedules

The Volunteer Coordinator maintains a monthly schedule for volunteers which you can access via Google Calendar. A hard copy will also be available in the volunteer mailbox.

If you are unable to work your scheduled shift, please call the Volunteer Coordinator or staff on duty at 777-5061. We appreciate knowing in advance if you are planning a vacation or time away.

Off-Duty

We would love to see you at the library during your off-duty hours. If you are not working, please do not come into the staff areas (e.g., behind the front desk). Feel free to come into the staff mailbox area to check the volunteer mailbox for schedules and notices.

Volunteer Insurance

Authorized volunteers are covered by the library's general liability insurance. Please be sure to report any accidents to the library staff immediately.

In-service Trainings and Meetings

Volunteers are expected to attend informational/procedural meetings from time to time. We encourage open communication and exchange of views and information.

Training and Evaluations

Volunteers are a vital part of the North Valley Public Library's success. It is one of our primary goals to make sure that you feel satisfied with the volunteer work you do here. The Volunteer Coordinator and staff want to hear back from you on job satisfaction. If you feel the need for a change, or perhaps feel the need for more or different training, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know so we can accommodate your request. This also applies to the amount of hours or days that you volunteer. If you desire to increase or decrease your volunteer time, please let us know so we schedule it. Please keep us informed of any health changes that might affect or hinder the current job you are doing.

On behalf of the trustees, staff and our patrons, we thank you for your generosity. We hope your experience here is a positive one.

Recognition Events

Recognition and appreciation of our volunteer's contributions is important to us. We have a volunteer appreciation event on an annual basis and we do our best to let you know how much we appreciate your efforts on regular basis.

Leaving Service

When a volunteer project or assignment is completed or eliminated, the volunteer's service is discontinued. If desired, an effort may be made to reassign a volunteer. However, if no other mutually suitable volunteer work exists at that time, the volunteer will be asked to discontinue service. The library reserves the right to terminate a volunteer from library service at any time.