



Volunteer Program

Policy Number: LS 505

Effective: October 2018

Purpose

The Library's volunteer program is established in order to engage the community and provide opportunities for participants to serve and support the library in carrying out its mission. This policy outlines the procedures for recruitment, processing, utilization, retention, and recognition of Hillsborough County residents who donate their time and talents to help offer more services to the public at no additional cost.

While the Library actively recruits and provides a receptive climate for community volunteers, this volunteer program is not intended as a path for obtaining full or part-time paid employment with Hillsborough County Government.

Policy

Volunteers are not recruited to replace salaried employees. They are to be used to enhance activities and programs and are to be encouraged to bring their talents and experience to Library Services in meaningful ways.

Current employees who choose to serve as a library volunteer on their own time may only do so outside of their standard work hours and away from their assigned work location. This also applies to employees who volunteer for a partner organization (for example, the Literacy Council).

Volunteer types include but are not limited to General Volunteers, Community Service and Friends of the Library.

Procedure

Volunteer Processing

The Library's Volunteer Program is administered by a System Volunteer Coordinator responsible for training and mentoring library staff, creating recognition programs, and overseeing meetings of Branch Volunteer Coordinators. Each branch/department has a local Branch Volunteer Coordinator responsible for volunteer intake and processing,

training and managing volunteer performance; retention and release of volunteers; record keeping, and other duties as appropriate.

Anyone interested in volunteering will be directed to the branch/department where they would like to volunteer. The Branch Volunteer Coordinator or designated staff will provide prospective volunteers with a Library Services Volunteer Application, ask about the type of jobs they would be interested in performing, and hours available. Mandated community service workers will be considered by all library branches, provided they meet the background check requirements. Applicants may not start work the same day as submitting the application. All applicants must meet with the Branch Volunteer Coordinator in person for a brief interview and orientation prior to starting work. When the Branch Volunteer Coordinator receives the completed Volunteer Application, they perform a background check, following the procedures on the Branch Volunteer's instruction sheet. If an applicant is determined ineligible based on the background check, staff will notify the applicant. All rejected applications are immediately shredded. The Library reserves the right to reject an applicant based on their criminal background. Adjudicated offenses from the last 10 years that disqualify a community service worker include, but are not limited to:

- Violent/Sexual crimes - murder, manslaughter, rape, felony assault, battery, hate crimes, inclusion in the FDLE sexual offender database.
- Property crimes - robbery, burglary, larceny, theft, vandalism, destruction of property.
- Arson.
- Fraud, identity theft, extortion.
- Manufacture, distribution, sale, or felony-level possession of drugs.
- Felony weapons offenses.
- Trespass violation.
- Violations of the library's Code of Conduct.

All other offenses are considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Regional Manager.

Following a background check, eligible volunteer candidates are contacted by the Branch Volunteer Coordinator to complete the volunteer packet and orientation, and if there is an immediate opening, sets up a time and date to report to work and provides the name of the staff member to contact at the branch/department.

Volunteers 13-17 years of age must have their parent or guardian sign the Volunteer Application confirming approval of their child volunteering. Volunteers between 13-15 years of age must be an active member of the Teen Advisory Board (TAB).

Volunteer Assignments & Performance

No volunteer will be expected to work until fully trained on the job. The Branch Volunteer Coordinator will maintain a file for each volunteer of all completed forms and information. Volunteers may work for a maximum of five (5) hours per day, unless otherwise approved by the Regional Manager. Volunteers may perform any assigned task for which they are qualified and approved by the supervisor or manager. Sample tasks include Administrative or Program Support; Material Management and Shelving; Cleaning/Straightening; Friends Projects; Special Events and Projects. More job descriptions are available in the volunteer training material.

Volunteers must have staff verification when signing in to report to work and signing out when leaving work using the Volunteer Timesheet. Volunteers are responsible for returning any outside sign-in sheets to the appropriate agency once completed by staff. Monthly statistics are to be sent to appropriate library departments by the Branch Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers are covered under Hillsborough County Workers' Compensation while performing duties on Library property. Volunteers related to library employees or residing in the same household are subject to the conditions specified in the County's HR policies and procedures. Individuals may not volunteer at a branch or department that is supervised by or is the work site for a library employee to which they are related. Any exceptions must be approved by a member of library administration not related to the volunteer applicant.

Volunteer performance will be evaluated periodically by the Branch Volunteer Coordinator who will continually mentor, coach and train the volunteer. Issues with a volunteer's performance will be brought to the attention of the Branch Volunteer Coordinator as well as the Branch Supervisor and documented on the evaluation form to be reviewed with the volunteer. If the volunteer's performance does not improve, the Branch Volunteer Coordinator, in agreement with the Branch/Department Supervisor and Regional Manager, will inform the volunteer their services are no longer required.

Upon volunteer separation, the Branch Volunteer Coordinator sends a thank you letter (available in packet) via mail or email and adds an end date to the volunteer's application. The volunteer's file is retained at the branch for a three-year period as required by State of Florida document retention guidelines. All forms are to be shredded at the end of the retention period.

Volunteer Recruitment & Recognition

Community volunteers are recruited on an ongoing basis. Potential volunteers are often recruited through the following methods: Asking library customers if they would be interested in helping out; Friends of the Library groups; Signs in the branches, brochures, and the library web site; Community meetings or other outreach events; and System wide promotional programs.

The Library values its volunteers and considers recognition of their service a priority. Recognition programs are organized by Branch Volunteer Coordinators together with Branch Supervisors and Regional Managers and are accomplished at least once a year. Types of recognition include but are not limited to Certificates of recognition; Volunteer Appreciation events; Small prizes and/or gift awards; Book Plates. Volunteers with 100 service hours or more receive special recognition. The Branch Volunteer Coordinator notifies System Volunteer Coordinator when volunteer has reached 100 or more hours of service in a calendar year and submits a 100-hour plus form. Volunteers receive a book plate honoring each 100 hours service. The book plate is sent to the Technical Services Center for inclusion in recent library material acquisitions. The volunteer receives a copy of the book plate with a letter of appreciation from the Library. Volunteers with service hours of 1,000 or more in total to date receive formal recognition by the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library Board.

Branch/Department Supervisor Responsibilities

- Manage their branch/department volunteer program.
- Ensure that staff are properly trained to work with volunteers, familiar with the policies and procedures, and create an inviting atmosphere for volunteers.
- Organize at least one volunteer recognition program a year in consultation with Branch Volunteer Coordinator.
- Provide tasks for the volunteers that correspond with the needs of the branch.
- Clearly communicate what is expected of the volunteers to the entire branch team as well as the volunteers.

Regional Manager Responsibilities

- Ensure their branches have an active volunteer program.
- Ensure their Branch/Department Supervisors are following all policies and procedures.