

Volunteer Policy

PURPOSE

The Sparta Free Library recognizes the great contributions volunteers can make to the library and community. The potential liability exposure in engaging the services of volunteers is also recognized.

POLICY

A volunteer is a person who performs a service for, with the knowledge and consent of, and at the direction of the library without the benefit of salary or wages.

Individuals who volunteer to assist the Friends of the Sparta Free Library are not considered library volunteers under this policy. The Friends of the Sparta Free Library is a separate 501c3 entity and maintains its own volunteer policy.

Volunteers are expected to perform in cooperation with library staff and comply with the same work rules, policies, and procedures applicable to library employees.

The library does not accept volunteer work to meet disciplinary requirements.

Screening and Background Checks

Consistent use of appropriate application screening and background checks will help assure that properly qualified individuals are selected to perform volunteer activities. Such techniques will also help screen out individuals whose background may render them unsuitable for particular activities. These are critical for volunteer positions that involve work or contact with children, youth, elderly, or other vulnerable groups.

As part of the screening process, it may be necessary to obtain the applicant's authorization to conduct appropriate background checks. The scope of these activities will be determined by the particular volunteer activities and may include:

Contacting personal and employment references.

Criminal background checks, including the use of information from the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), state crime information center and state/local sex offender registries, and any applicable municipal court(s).

Motor vehicle records checks.

Prior employment and military background checks.

Verification of education, training, certification and licenses.

Personal, face-to-face interviews.

Vehicle Operation

Volunteers who operate their own motor vehicle during the course of their volunteer work will need a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.

Safety Hazards

Volunteers must be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks in a safe manner. The supervisor shall be responsible for determining whether the volunteer has the skills and ability to perform assigned tasks safely, considering:

The extent of safety training depends upon the type of activities assigned.

The supervisor shall ensure that volunteers are properly trained to perform activities safely. Training shall be conducted by the supervisor before the volunteer is assigned any potentially hazardous duty.

Volunteers shall be provided with, and trained on the use of, personal protective equipment (PPE), where it is warranted. Personal protective equipment will depend on the specific activity, and may include: safety vests, eye protection, hand protection, hearing protection and head protection. Supervisors will enforce the use of PPE when necessary.

Volunteer Liability

Volunteers are not employees of the library.

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, which includes volunteers who act on behalf of public entities, provides that no volunteer of a public entity is liable for harm caused by an act of omission when working on 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; and
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 a driver's license or to maintain insurance.

Compensation

A volunteer is a person recognized and authorized by the library to perform services for the library without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. Failure to manage a volunteer under this premise can convert the volunteer to an "employee", whereby compensation and benefits might then be mandated.

Volunteers must sign the Sparta Free Library Volunteer Waiver Form.

Per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (29 CFR 553.103), library employees are prohibited from volunteering without pay to perform the same type of services the individual is employed to perform.

Youth Volunteers

No minor 17 years old or younger shall be permitted to perform activities in any occupation determined to be "particularly hazardous" under the FLSA. Outside of hazardous or potentially hazardous duties, the FLSA permits minors to perform most other types of work.

Parental Consent: Volunteers under the age of 18 must have documented parental consent. The parent or legal guardian must sign the Sparta Free Library Youth Library Volunteer Waiver Form.

Rights of Volunteers

To be respected and valued and to know what their rights and responsibilities are.

To be provided necessary information to carry out their role as volunteers and to know what is expected of them.

To be provided with orientation and training appropriate to their tasks.

To be given support and supervision from a designated person in their work group.

To be provided a safe working environment.

To be free from harassment or discrimination.

Volunteer Responsibilities

To carry out the agreed upon duties to the best of their abilities.

To work with the aims, objectives, values and goals of the library.

To work under the library rules, regulations and policies.

To be honest and reliable.

To be capable of interacting with the public and staff in a positive manner.

Responsibilities of Library Supervisors Who Utilize Volunteers

To provide orientation, training, personal protective equipment (PPE), and assistance to enable volunteers to meet the expectations of their volunteer positions.

To provide ongoing support and supervision.

To treat the volunteer as an equal partner in achieving the goals of the library.

To ensure compliance with all aspects of this policy

Approved by the Library Board 11/07/2016