

Dighton Public Library
Volunteer Policy
Updated January 9, 2025

GENERAL POLICY: Volunteers provide important support to the Dighton Public Library (DPL) staff and perform a wide variety of tasks that are important to the mission of the library. Volunteers supplement, but do not replace the work done by employees. They may perform a wide variety of duties, a range limited largely by the talents and interests of the volunteers themselves and by where the library can make productive use of their assistance.

A DPL volunteer performs a service of his or her own free will, contributing time, energy and talents directly or on behalf of the library. They may help with routine library tasks, special projects, or assist the Friends of the DPL. Volunteers are not paid by library funds, and must consult with the library prior to performance of assigned tasks.

Persons who seek volunteer assignments at the DPL to meet a requirement set by an outside agency for the performance of community service shall be subject to the volunteer selection process and all other provisions of this policy.

RESTRICTIONS:

- Volunteers will not take the place of paid staff already employed by the library.
- Volunteer duties will not replicate a major portion of a paid staff person's job description.
- Volunteer tasks are not critically tied to a specific time or duration.
- Volunteer tasks are typically those that are more flexible with regard to specific scheduled times.
- While it is important for the library to be able to rely on the dependability of volunteers, volunteers are required to notify library staff if they are unable to perform their task or miss a scheduled shift at the library.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does not permit an individual to perform hours of volunteer service for a public agency when such hours involve the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for the same public agency.
- Outside organized non-profit groups who volunteer to carry out a specific project at the library have the burden of complying with federal and state labor laws. For example if a Boy Scout troop asks to paint the library's fence as part of a badge project, the Boy Scout organization would be responsible for complying with child labor laws for that volunteer project.

APPLICATION: Prior to engaging in any volunteer activity, each volunteer will be required to consult with a staff member. Upon approval of the staff, the volunteer may be scheduled for training and work assignments. Each individual who participates in this volunteer program agrees and acknowledges that they are not employees of the DPL or the Town of Dighton. Each individual who participates in this volunteer program shall sign a document releasing the DPL from liability for injuries sustained by him/her.

BACKGROUND CHECKS: As part of the application process, the DPL may investigate an adult applicant's history, which may include a Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI) and/or a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check.

SUPERVISION: Volunteers work directly with library staff members to receive training and complete projects. All volunteers will work with one primary staff member to guide them in their work, however other staff may offer guidance to any of the volunteers.

HOURS OF SERVICE: All volunteer work must be completed within normal library hours unless exceptions have been made by the Library Director. Hours of volunteer service are at the mutual convenience of the volunteer and supervisory staff member. Because supervisory staff often take steps to prepare meaningful volunteer assignments, volunteers are asked give reasonable notice if they are unable to report to work for the agreed upon schedule.

UNAVAILABLE INSURANCE: Neither the Town of Dighton nor the DPL will provide any medical, health, accident or worker's compensation benefits for any volunteer; and volunteers will not be eligible to receive any worker's compensation benefits for any injuries sustained while functioning as a volunteer.

PUBLIC SERVICE: While DPL volunteers may have limited public service exposure, they are expected to act in accordance with library policies and to reflect positive customer service attitudes to all library patrons.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Librarians' professional ethics require that personally identifiable information about library users be kept confidential. While DPL volunteers typically have no exposure to library records, they are expected to respect the confidentiality of library users.

TERMINATION: Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to create a contract between the volunteer or intern and the DPL or Town of Dighton. Both the volunteer and the Berkshire Athenaeum have the right to terminate the volunteer's association with the Athenaeum at any time, for any reason, with or without cause. There will be no formal evaluation process for volunteers.

A volunteer selected for work on a special project will discontinue service when that project is completed or terminated, unless other arrangements have been made.

Whenever possible, the library will make an effort to reassign the volunteer. However, if no other mutually suitable volunteer position exists at the time, the volunteer will be asked to discontinue service and his or her application will be kept on file for one year, subject to review should a suitable position become available during that time.

In the event that a volunteer is unable to adequately perform the duties assigned to him or her, and no other appropriate positions are available, the volunteer may be removed from service