

Elkhart Lake Public Library – Volunteer Policy

Volunteers

Volunteers are a valuable resource for the Library; their energy and talents help the Library meet its commitment to providing quality service to the public. Volunteers enhance rather than replace adequate staffing and funding. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the Library Board which is the only body with legal authority to set policy for the Library. Volunteers are expected to perform in cooperation with Library staff and comply with the same rules and regulations that apply to Library employees.

All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application.

Individuals who volunteer to assist the Friends of the Elkhart Lake Public Library are not considered volunteers under this policy.

Screening and Background Checks for Individual Volunteers

Consistent use of appropriate screening and background checks will help assure that properly qualified individuals are selected to perform volunteer activities. Screening and background checks are required by law and are critical for volunteer positions that involve work or contact with children, youth, the elderly or other vulnerable groups. As part of the screening process, it may be necessary for the director to obtain the applicant's authorization to conduct appropriate background checks such as criminal checks, sex offender registries, motor vehicle records, verification of training, and personal/employment references.

Vehicle Operation

Some volunteers may be required to operate their own motor vehicle during the course of their volunteer work.

- A. Volunteers must provide proof of insurance.
- B. A valid operator's license should be verified and documented.
- C. Volunteers shall not be reimbursed for mileage expense.

Supervision and Safety Hazards

Volunteers must be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks in a safe manner. The Director shall determine whether the volunteer has the skills and ability to perform 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.

Volunteer Tasks

Volunteer tasks may include, but are not limited to:

- Shelving books and other materials
- Dusting books and shelves, arranging library materials in a neat manner
- Assisting with programs

Elkhart Lake Public Library – Volunteer Policy

- Designing and setting up displays
- Maintaining the exterior of the library's building and grounds
- Preparing materials for mailings
- Indexing, data entry, scanning
- Presenting programs or teaching classes
- Serving on volunteer boards and committees
- Sorting and merchandising materials for sale
- Advocating for the Library

Volunteer Liability

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 the 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 an operator's license or to maintain insurance.

Youth Volunteers

The Library does allow for youth volunteers. The Library will not allow youth to work in types of work considered hazardous. Youth may be limited in the number of hours worked depending on their age and time of year. Parental consent is required. The parent or legal guardian must sign the Elkhart Lake Public Library Volunteer Application.

Rights and Expectations of Volunteers

1. To be respected and valued and to know what their rights and responsibilities are.
2. To be provided necessary information to carry out their roles as volunteers and to know what is expected of them.
3. To be provided with orientation, supervision and training appropriate to their tasks.
4. To be provided a safe working environment.
5. To be free from harassment or discrimination.
6. To be trusted with confidential information that will help them carry out their assignments.
7. To expect that a spirit of friendliness and cooperation will be the norm in the volunteer work environment.
8. To be able to discuss any problem with the director and receive prompt and fair adjustment of any complaints which may arise.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Elkhart Lake Public Library – Volunteer Policy

1. To carry out agreed upon duties to the best of their ability.
2. To work within the aims, objectives, values and goals of the Elkhart Lake Public Library.
3. To work under the Elkhart Lake Public Library rules, regulations and policies.
4. To be honest and reliable.
5. To respect the privacy and confidentiality of the people we serve.
6. To cooperate and interact with fellow volunteers, library staff, and the public in a positive manner.
7. To help create a pleasant and safe place to volunteer.
8. To read and understand the Volunteer Policy.

Service Organization Volunteer Projects

The Elkhart Lake Public Library recognizes that from time to time a community service organization (Friends of Library, Lions, etc.) may provide a valuable contribution or service to benefit the Library. The Library has established a policy for acceptance of donations and that policy should be followed in all circumstances. In terms of volunteer labor, the director will use the frequency of volunteering and nature of work to determine the need for complete background checks for individuals. Proof of insurance may be required depending on the nature of the work that is to be performed. If a volunteer activity is ongoing and under the direction of the Library, volunteers shall be treated under the same manner and terms of any other individual volunteer.

Revised March 14, 2022

Approved April 11, 2022