



HMCPL Volunteer Handbook

Introduction

This is the public's library. It is because of the public in our communities that we are continually ranked as one of the top libraries in Alabama. For over 200 years, we have been proud to connect the residents of Madison County with knowledge, resources, and materials that foster their ability to create, and enable them to explore the universe around them. HMCPL has ten locations throughout Madison County and the city of Huntsville. Each of our locations reflects the unique history and fabric of its surrounding community, which means no two volunteer opportunities are exactly alike. HMCPL volunteers may be found setting up chairs for a concert, pitching in to beautify a library campus, or sharing smiles during an open house. Wherever they are, they are a part of Team HMCPL.

HMCPL aims to provide volunteers with meaningful responsibilities, training, and supervision to help support the Library's ability to serve our communities; however volunteers will not be placed in positions that could jeopardize the Library's ability to operate if a volunteer is unable to report to their shift.

About the Volunteer Handbook

The HMCPL Volunteer Handbook is designed to provide guidance and instruction to volunteers regarding volunteer work, volunteer requirements, and volunteer rules, as well as providing information about the HMCPL Volunteer Program and other HMCPL support opportunities. The information contained in this Handbook is subject to change.

Questions or concerns regarding the information contained within this Handbook should be directed to a volunteer's local library branch manager or the HMCPL Human Resources Department.

Definition of a Volunteer

By offering to serve as a Volunteer with any HMCPL location and/or event, the Volunteer understands and agrees that they are a volunteer as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act and any services they provide to HMCPL are provided solely as a volunteer. The Volunteer likewise understands and agrees that they will receive no compensation, wages or benefits in exchange for

their service, and that they maintain no belief that services offered as a volunteer will in any way result in compensation, wages or benefits. Furthermore, the Volunteer understands and agrees that no representative of HMCPL has made any promise or representation that services offered as a volunteer will in any way result in the Volunteer receiving compensation, wages or benefits.

Volunteer Application Process

Volunteers may be asked to work in a variety of locations and perform a variety of duties, up to and including limited duties involving patron interactions. As such, Volunteers must

- Complete a Volunteer Application to be considered for any Volunteer Position
- Successfully pass a Criminal Background Check including taking responsibility for any associated fees
- Sign a liability waiver, to be kept on file in the HMCPL Human Resources Office
- Agree to follow all Volunteer Guidelines.

Only Volunteers who complete these steps will be allowed to participate in the Volunteer Program. Library Managers are responsible for reviewing volunteer applications for their location, training volunteers for various tasks, and ensuring all required documentation is submitted to the HMCPL Human Resources Department in a timely manner.

Individuals who are seeking volunteer work to fulfill requirements for things such as merit badges or scout troop recognitions, scholarships, internships, college applications or other such programs should contact their local library branch manager before applying. Individuals who fail to contact the local library and receive approval regarding such needs are not guaranteed the documentation required to successfully record their service.

HMCPL does not provide volunteer opportunities to individuals seeking to complete court-ordered community service, or to individuals seeking to reduce outstanding fees on library card accounts.

In the interests of our patrons, staff, and volunteers, HMCPL reserves the right to decline volunteer applications or the service of a particular volunteer at any time, for any reason. Volunteers who violate HMCPL Volunteer Guidelines and/or HMCPL Policies will be asked to discontinue their service, as well as potentially facing further consequences based upon the policy in question and/or seriousness of the violation.

Other Opportunities

In addition to the Volunteer Program, there are many other ways to support HMCPL.

The Friends of the Library are invaluable individuals who go the extra mile to help HMCPL continue to innovate and improve on its offerings. To find out more about getting involved, and to learn about special benefits for FOL members, please visit www.hmcpl.org/fol to find your nearest chapter. Friends of the Library Volunteers are separate from HMCPL Volunteers in

duties, supervisors, and requirements. Please note that Volunteer hours for FOL are not considered HMCPL Volunteer hours for the purposes of the HMCPL Volunteer Program.

Individuals interested in supporting HMCPL but are unable to commit to a traditional Volunteer Position can still help HMCPL in its mission through the Huntsville-Madison County Library Foundation. Please visit huntsvillelibraryfoundation.org to learn about ways to donate to HMCPL.

Volunteer Guidelines

General Guidelines

As a member of Team HMCPL, you represent the Library and its mission at all times. Behavior that contradicts the Library's mission may result in you being asked to discontinue your service.

Volunteers should be prepared to:

- Be polite, friendly, and helpful to Staff and Patrons
- Be present and punctual for your assigned shifts
- Be in communication with your library location if you will be unable to make a shift or if you will be unavailable for a period of time due to vacation, illness, or other responsibilities
- Be honest about abilities, skills, and willingness to perform tasks and complete projects. We are happy to work with you to find an opportunity that you are comfortable with to help you enjoy your time with us

Volunteers are required to:

- Sign in and out for every shift to accurately keep track of your time with us
- Accept the guidance and instruction of Library Staff
- Respect confidentiality and privacy for Staff, Patrons, and your fellow volunteers
- Follow all guidelines and policies of the Library and the HMCPL Volunteer Program
- Never show up for a shift under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other prohibited substances
- Adhere to the Volunteer Personal Appearance Guidelines at all times
- Always wear their Volunteer Badge when working to clearly identify them as a Volunteer
- Never enter Staff Only Areas of the library buildings without explicit permission from a Library Staff Member

When interacting with patrons, Volunteers should make certain to refer any question that is not purely directional (i.e. 'Where is the Children's Area? Where is the bathroom?') to a Library staff member unless otherwise directed.

Volunteers may be given the opportunity to help with special events during the year, such as Walk-A-Thons, National Library Week celebrations, or other events. Should you choose to volunteer for a special event, you may be asked to attend a special orientation for that event.

Personal Appearance Guidelines

HMCPL requires all volunteers to follow Personal Appearance Guidelines to present an image in line with the Library's mission and to protect Volunteers from injury due to clothing choices. Select special events may require special dress codes, which will be conveyed to you at the by the event's coordinator.

All Volunteers must wear their Volunteer badge during their shifts. Volunteer badges allow staff and patrons to identify Volunteers and let Volunteers indicate that they are currently working as opposed to using the library for personal use.

Volunteers are expected to maintain good personal hygiene as a courtesy to our patrons, staff, and other volunteers. This includes the absence of offensive odors including but not limited to: body odor, strongly scented perfumes, body sprays, deodorants, lotions, etc., and odor from consuming any form of tobacco, nicotine, tobacco-like, or nicotine-like products.

It is not reasonable to list all examples of appropriate or inappropriate attire for Volunteers. Below are general guidelines for Volunteers to follow. Should Volunteers have uncertainty regarding an item or clothing, it is recommended that they err on the side of caution and select different items to wear during their shift. Volunteers should remember that they might be asked to bend, stoop, stretch, lift, reach, or otherwise be active during their volunteer work.

Examples of Inappropriate Clothing Choices:

- Excessively ripped, torn, stained, and/or worn clothing*
- Athletic shorts and/or short shorts, short skirts/mini-skirts/mini-dresses
- Revealing clothing, including sleeveless, strapless, backless, see-through, or low cut shirts and/or dresses
- Clothing with screen-printed text or logos that otherwise violate these guidelines
- Open toed shoes
- Excessively draped/flowing/full articles of clothing (these may get caught on shelves or other items and tear)
- Excessive jewelry

Examples of Appropriate Clothing Choices:

- Slacks/trousers, jeans in good condition*
- Knee-length shorts or skirts made of durable fabric
- Solid color and/or non-logo patterned shirts that do not contain offensive images including figures, symbols, and/or text, or otherwise contradict the Personal Appearance Guidelines
- Comfortable, low-heeled, closed toes shoes
- Light jacket or sweater (The Library can be cold, even in summer)
- Clothing that can withstand dirt and/or dust, particularly if you are volunteering for an outdoor opportunity

*Due to style trends, some clothing come with rips or worn patches already on them. For the purposes of the Personal Appearance Guidelines, jeans in good condition include jeans with minor decorative wear (such as worn patches no bigger than three inches by three inches) that do not expose skin between the tops of the individual's shoulders and the tops of their knees.

In addition to clothing, during their shift HMCPL also asks Volunteers to refrain from wearing any advertising and/or support merchandise (such as buttons, lanyards, stickers, pins) that overtly or aggressively promote any of the following:

- Brand names
- Political figures, parties, or messages
- Religious figures, parties, or messages

This includes items that express dislike for any of the above. Volunteers with questions regarding this policy should contact the HMCPL Human Resources Department.

HMCPL Volunteers are asked to cover any tattoos that contain graphic or offensive images, including figures, symbols, and/or text, while they are volunteering. Such tattoos may be covered with clothing or bandages.

HMCPL reserves the right to ask Volunteers to change their attire if it is inappropriate for the work they will be performing or for representing the Library.

Record Keeping Guidelines

Volunteers are asked to sign in and out at the beginning and end of each shift using electronic time keeping tools, or the use of paper logs. Library Staff may direct volunteers to the appropriate log-in method.

These records allow HMCPL to have accurate accounts of individuals in the building in the event of an emergency, as well as allowing the Library to track volunteer hours by department, location, and/or task. These statistics can help the Library apply for needed funding, as well as allowing us to report statistics to the City, County, and State per request. All reported data is anonymous.

Volunteer Complaints

Volunteers who have complaints regarding the Volunteer Process or their general volunteer experience should contact the HMCPL Human Resources Department as soon as possible, with the understanding that there may be a delay in response due to the day and time of the complaint.

Volunteers who have complaints regarding patron and/or staff behavior during a shift are strongly encouraged to inform the location staff or department Manager on Duty. Volunteers can contact the Manager on Duty by asking any staff member for their name and contact information. This information is different for each location, department, or special event and may also be

different depending on the time of day or numerous other factors. Please check with a staff member for the current Manager on Duty Information.

HMCPL values the safety, wellbeing and happiness of its Volunteers and we take all complaints seriously however not all complaints warrant action. Please understand that the Library is open to the public and only individuals who are found to be in violation of HMCPL Policies will be asked to leave. With this in mind, HMCPL strongly encourages you to report any complaints so that Staff is aware of situations that may escalate and can take prompt action should action be warranted.

Volunteers who are unsatisfied with the response to a complaint should contact the HMCPL Human Resources Department for an evaluation of the response. This evaluation may result in changes to policy or procedure, or in the education of staff of proper responses. Due to privacy rights, the Volunteer who expressed the dissatisfaction may not be informed of any details regarding the resolution to their complaint. All decisions regarding complaints made by the Human Resources Department are final.

Retaliatory action against any individual involved in a complaint situation, including patrons, staff members, and/or volunteers will not be tolerated.

Volunteer Usage of Library Materials and Resources

HMCPL expects all volunteers to treat our collections with care and respect. Library materials of any kind should not be taken or moved without explicit permission. Library materials are not to be left in lockers, desks, drawers, or other private and/or inaccessible places. Library materials should never be treated or handled in any way that could cause damage or destruction to the materials.

All HMCPL Volunteers are subject to the same HMCPL Circulation Policies as patrons, including but not limited to policies governing loan periods, renewal limits, hold limits, and fees. Circulating materials should never be removed from the library shelves and/or premises without being properly checked out to the Volunteer's library account. Volunteers must also follow Library Card Policies with regard to checking out materials and must present either their library card or a valid photo I.D. to check out materials.

All HMCPL Volunteers are also subject to the same HMCPL Computer Use Policies as patrons, including but not limited to policies governing usage, reservation queues, and printing/scanning/faxing fees.

All HMCPL Volunteers are prohibited from using any HMCPL Staff computer or device unless given explicit permission by an HMCPL Staff Member.

HMCPL Volunteers are prohibited from using HMCPL Resources for anything but Library business. HMCPL Resources include, but are not limited to, the Library collections, equipment (including phones), supplies, staff, and premises. Volunteers who are not currently working a volunteer shift are allowed the same use of Library Resources as patrons.

Additionally, Volunteers are prohibited from representing themselves as agents or employees of HMCPL in any way and are not allowed to use HMCPL's reputation, good will, logo, name, and/or organizational identity for their or any individual's gain, benefit, or advantage. Volunteer service can be listed on a resume or job application but must be clearly identified as a volunteer position with the understanding that HMCPL does not provide professional references.

Electronic Device Usage

Electronic devices should be silenced or turned off during volunteer shifts. Except for emergencies, messages and notifications should be retrieved and answered only during breaks or on the Volunteer's personal time. Electronic devices that have a vibrate notification setting are considered to be silenced for the purposes of this policy.

Smoking and Tobacco Products

In order to provide a healthful environment for employees and Library visitors, the following activities are prohibited in all Library buildings and property and all Library vehicles:

- Smoking, including tobacco-less E-cigarettes and all other electronic smoking devices
- Using tobacco products of any kind

Any visitor to a Library facility or grounds who violates this policy shall be requested to extinguish all smoking materials or to cease use of tobacco products. Failure to comply will result in a request to leave the building and grounds.

Tobacco use is also strongly discouraged on all public or private property adjacent to the grounds of any Library facility due to fire and personal safety issues.

Volunteers who violate this policy will be asked to discontinue their service.

Ending Volunteer Service

In the interests of our patrons, staff, and volunteers, HMCPL reserves the right to decline acceptance of a volunteer application at any time and/or to dismiss the service of a Volunteer at any time. If you are asked to discontinue your volunteer service, you will receive notification of your dismissal, the reason for your dismissal, and summary of your service to the Library.

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with HMCPL at any time with no reason for the resignation given. Volunteers are required to notify their library location of their resignation as soon as possible, ideally two weeks prior to their last shift.

Certificates of Volunteers Hours may be requested by emailing the contacting the HMCPL Human Resources Department within one year of the period of volunteer service. For privacy reasons, records of volunteer hours for periods longer than a year are not available.