

Volunteer Handbook

a Guide to Volunteer Service with the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System

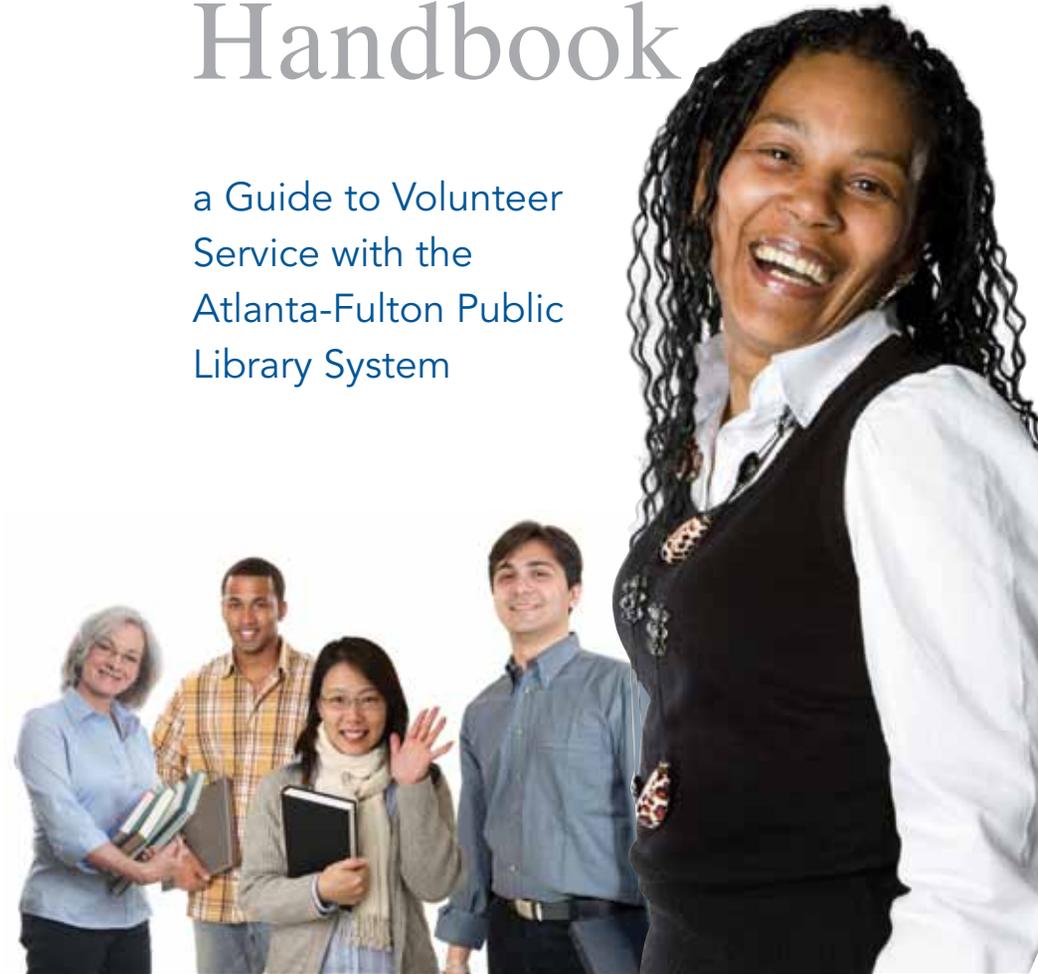


atlanta-fulton public library system

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atlanta-fulton public library system



Welcome to the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System!

Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of all of us at the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, we welcome you! By becoming a Library Volunteer, you join a dedicated and caring team of library service providers. The Library System provides a vast array of resources for people in all walks of life. Your donation of time, talent and energy will be an asset in helping us serve our community.

I hope you will find your experience here to be very rewarding. You will have an opportunity to work with our experienced library staff, be of great help to your fellow citizens and learn new skills. You will be surrounded by fascinating and informative reading materials, creative and engaging programs, computer technology and extensive virtual reference sources.

Our libraries are a gateway to a rapidly expanding collection of resources unmatched in the region. As a volunteer, you will be making a much appreciated contribution to our services. Not only are we able to broaden and enhance our services and activities through the efforts of our volunteers, we are enriched by the creative energy you bring to us. Your service is truly needed and important.

Again, we hope you will find your volunteer experience at the library both satisfying and rewarding. We are glad to have you on our team.

Sincerely,

John F. Szabo
Director

LIBRARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Congratulations! You have joined the ranks of over 2,000 wonderful people who volunteer for the library annually. This handbook will introduce you to the volunteer program's guidelines, expectations and benefits as part of your inclusion in the library team.

The mission of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System is to serve as a cultural and intellectual center that enriches the community and empowers all residents with essential tools for lifelong learning.

The library volunteer program provides a vehicle for community members to channel their enthusiasm for the library. Volunteer opportunities offer patrons a way to contribute to the community, fulfill personal goals, achieve a sense of satisfaction and learn more about their library. Volunteer involvement helps the library expand and enrich its services.

The Office of Volunteer Services is the coordinating point for managing and developing the library volunteer program. It is responsible for planning volunteer opportunities, recruiting volunteers and tracking the contribution of volunteers. The Office of Volunteer Services is also responsible for organizing formal recognition of volunteers, including an annual volunteer appreciation event. It is also a contact point for community groups who wish to become involved with the library.

The Office of Volunteer Services is located in the Central Library in downtown Atlanta and serves the entire system. For more information about the vast array of library services and the history and organization of the library go to www.afpls.org.

Contact information:

www.afpls.org, Click "Support AFPLS."
Email: vol.services@fultoncountyga.gov
Phone: 404.730.1965 Fax: 404.335.5829

Staff: Margaret Roach, Volunteer Services Manager
404.730.1963; margaret.roach@fultoncountyga.gov

Marcy Meyers, Volunteer Services Coordinator
404.730.1965; marcy.meyers@fultoncountyga.gov

Macretia Moody, Administrative Assistant
404.730.1964; macretia.moody@fultoncountyga.gov



BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Satisfaction

The greatest reward you can receive is the satisfaction of doing the work itself, meeting new people, becoming part of a team and knowing you have contributed to an important cause.

Knowledge

You will gain a broader knowledge of library services, how the library works and how it benefits the community.

Experience

Your volunteer service will help you gain valuable work experience that can benefit you in a search for employment, for scholarships or for college admission.

References from the Library

If you would like a reference letter or confirmation of service, contact the Office of Volunteer Services. Office staff will issue a letter including hours volunteered and dates of service.

Volunteer Recognition

An annual Volunteer Recognition Program is held in the spring, usually during National Volunteer Week. Volunteers attending are eligible for prize drawings, have an opportunity to meet other library volunteers and learn about the accomplishments volunteers make to the Library System.

President's Student Service Award

High school and college students who volunteer 100 hours or more are eligible for a service pin and a certificate of appreciation from the President of the United States.

Letters of Confirmation

The Office of Volunteer Services will send you a letter including hours volunteered and dates of service after receipt of your letter request form.

Tax Deductions

Volunteers may deduct non-reimbursed expenditures incurred while serving in the library. Automobile mileage, bus or cab fare, and parking fees are examples of deductible items. Volunteers may not deduct the value of their services. Consult your tax advisor or IRS publication #526, Deductions for Charitable Contributions, for a complete description.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays that occur on a Saturday are observed on the preceding Friday.

Holidays that occur on a Sunday are observed on the following Monday.

The Library System is closed on:

New Years Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	3rd Monday in January
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Staff Development Day	2nd Tuesday in October (Columbus Day)
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday & Friday in November
Christmas	December 24 & 25

Occasionally the Library System is closed on the Saturday or Sunday preceding or following a holiday. Refer to the current library calendar for specific dates or check our website www.afpls.org.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Supervision of Volunteers

You will be responsible to the manager of the branch or department where you are assigned. In some cases, the manager may delegate the task of coordinating or organizing your work to another staff member.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES SAMPLER

Below is a sampling of volunteer opportunities. We strive to match your skills and interests with Library System needs. Not all opportunities are available at all branches. Feel free to ask about other possible opportunities or branch placements.

- Adult Literacy Tutor
- ESL (English as a Second Language) Tutor
- Computer Coach/Trainer
- Auburn Avenue Research Library Assistant
- Shelving/Clerical Assistant
- Children's Program Helper
- Homework Help Aide
- Math Tutor
- Shape-Up-the-Shelves
- Book Sale Assistant with Friends Group



Volunteer Name Badges

All volunteers are issued a name badge, which should be worn while on duty. Between shift assignments, badges should be left in the branch or unit in an area designated by the branch or department manager. Wearing your name badge is important for security purposes. Volunteer name badges help patrons distinguish between volunteers and paid staff as well as serve to promote the volunteer program. Volunteers are not to wear name badges from other organizations when on duty at the library, except for cases of projects jointly sponsored by the Library System and another organization.

Volunteer Sign-In Procedures

You should sign in and out for every shift on the sign-in sheet for volunteers so that we can keep track of the hours you have donated. Please print your name legibly in ink as it appears on your application. We sometimes have trouble reading cursive writing, nicknames and signatures!

Information on volunteer hours is used to issue certificates of appreciation and other awards, to invite you to the annual volunteer recognition program, to issue letters confirming volunteer service, to report on volunteer involvement to administration and the Board of Trustees and to make recruitment and training plans. Remember, your volunteer service makes your library look good!

Change in Assignment

If you wish to change your assignment, take an additional assignment or change locations, please contact the Office of Volunteer Services at 404.730.1965. We will try to accommodate your request.

Address/Emergency Contact

Please inform the Office of Volunteer Services and your supervisor immediately if your address, phone number or the emergency contact name and phone number listed on your application changes.

Group Volunteer Projects

Shape-Up-the-Shelves activities are ideal, one-time service projects for groups. An abbreviated volunteer registration form must be completed and signed by all individuals and a parent or guardian (if applicable) prior to helping with group projects. These pre-scheduled activities can be arranged by calling 404.730.1965.

Volunteer Orientation and Training

You will be given a brief tour of the branch or department, shown where to sign-in and out, where relevant information is posted and where to keep your

name badge and belongings. Most volunteers are then given "on-the-job" training in their assigned branch or department. Some branches have a regularly scheduled volunteer orientation session. In some cases, more specialized training has been developed for positions such as literacy tutor, English as a Second Language tutor, tour guides and some other assignments.

Volunteer Schedule and Attendance

You and your supervisor will arrange a mutually convenient work schedule. The staff counts on your attendance once a schedule is established. Please call the branch or department as soon as possible if you are unable to fulfill your assignment. If you are unable to volunteer for an extended period of time (vacation, summer), please let your supervisor know as early as possible and contact the Office of Volunteer Services 404-730-1965, vol.services@fultoncountyga.gov. *As always, remember to sign in and out!*



Resignation

If you can no longer volunteer, please submit a resignation notice (verbal or written) to your supervisor or to the Office of Volunteer Services. You can further assist us with our planning by completing an exit interview form providing more in-depth information regarding your departure from our program. Exit interview forms are in your handbook folder or can be obtained by calling 404.730.1965.

Confidentiality

Any patron information or other library records you may encounter during the course of your volunteer activities must be kept confidential in accordance with state laws covering library records.

Customer Service/Referring Reference Questions

If your volunteer position requires interaction with patrons, please use the service question, "How may I help you?" Always maintain a friendly and professional demeanor. Answer any directional questions, but refer reference questions to library staff. The following is an example of when and how to refer reference questions. *You are shelf-reading in the 800 section and a patron asks you about a book or specific topic in that section. You may say to the patron, "Yes, this is the section and you may*

browse through this area, but the best way to proceed with your search would be to speak with a librarian. They would be glad to assist you further in your search and have extensive knowledge of resources."

Dress Guidelines

Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their assignment. Volunteers are expected to be neat and professional. This is particularly important for volunteers interacting with the public and carrying out duties in public areas. If you have any questions, check with your supervisor.



Volunteers Working with Children

Volunteers who help with children services in such areas as homework help must agree to the Rules of Conduct for Volunteers Working with Children form and provide references. These Rules of Conduct are designed to protect a vulnerable population. The rules specifically cover these points: Volunteers are not to indulge any child with gifts of money, food or presents. (Donations to a homework help center or children's program as a whole are welcome.) Volunteers shall not arrange to meet a child outside of the library. Volunteers are not to give a child or children a ride home or elsewhere or take a child or children out of the library unless assisting with an official outing accompanied by staff.

Trainee/Special Programs

The Office of Volunteer Services also places individuals who are paid a stipend by another agency, and serve in the library as trainees to gain training and work experience. The AARP's Seniors in Community Service Employment Program is an example of this type of opportunity. If you are participating in one of these programs, you should sign in and out on the appropriate form. This form should be forwarded to the sponsoring agency. Your branch or unit will report your hours to the Office of Volunteer Services so that we can track this in-kind service performed for the Library System and recognize your contributions.

Interns

The library provides unpaid internships for students enrolled in college or other educational programs. If you enroll in a library degree program and are interested in gaining experience through an internship, please contact the Office of Volunteer Services. There may be opportunities for students in other types of degree programs also.

Court-Required Volunteer Services

The Library System accepts volunteers completing court required community service on a limited basis. The Office of Volunteer Service must screen all applicants prior to beginning their hours. If you are doing court-required community service, you are expected to follow the same rules as other volunteers, complete your time sheet accurately (in addition to any paper work the court has given you) and adhere to the schedule once it is set. Court-required service is kept confidential beyond your supervisor and the Office of Volunteer Services. Call 404.730.1965 for more information.

Confirmation Letters

The Office of Volunteer Services will provide you with verification of your volunteer hours for community service, school or other requirement upon request. A Volunteer Hours Letter Request form is included in the Volunteer Handbook folder. Please plan ahead, turn in the form and allow for up to five working days for the office to generate a confirmation letter.

Family Volunteering

Family volunteerism is encouraged. Children younger than 13 may volunteer at the library if a parent or guardian enrolls as a volunteer and accompanies his or her child. These can be one-time or ongoing tasks/projects depending on the assignments available at the library. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to model volunteering and for youngsters to give back to their library.





Library Friends Organizations

The Friends of the Library organizations are separate, non-profit organizations formed specifically to support and advocate for the library. The Friends are organized by library location. You do not have to be a member of a Friends organization to volunteer at the library, but we encourage you to learn about the Friends and consider joining. Most require a small membership fee. These groups hold events such as author's programs, staff appreciation functions and book sales. They also donate funds to support various programs, purchase materials and fund other needs of their library facility. If your branch does not have a Friends group and you are interested in starting one, contact your Branch Manager or the Volunteer Services Manager at 404.730.1963.

Resolving Problems/Dismissal of Volunteers

Like staff, volunteers must fulfill their duties, are accountable for their work, must follow library rules and exhibit professional behavior at all times. Volunteers are terminated for failure to perform assigned duties, failure to meet minimum standards of performance or for violations of library rules and procedures. However, staff must always deal fairly with volunteers. If a problem arises relating to your volunteer assignment, talk with your supervisor or the unit manager. Usually a mutually satisfactory solution can be reached. If their response is unsatisfactory or your questions have not been answered, you may call the Volunteer Services Manager at 404.730.1963.



Severe Weather and Emergencies

The Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System generally does not close due to severe weather. However, during severe weather, please follow the same guidance we give our staff: use your judgment and do not put yourself at risk attempting to attend your shift. Library closings, if any, will be announced on major radio and TV stations. Please call if you are unable to make your scheduled shift. Your supervisor should alert you to any emergency procedures in your unit. Please report any emergency situation or accident to your supervisor immediately.

Standard Rules for Staff and Volunteers

Conversations with patrons, staff members and other volunteers should be carried on in a normal tone and kept within reasonable limits. Personal telephone calls should be short and infrequent. Personal, long-distance calls are not permitted.



The library is a drug free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of alcohol or any controlled substance on library premises is prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in the immediate termination of a volunteer and may have legal consequences.

Fulton County prohibits discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability and/or sexual orientation. Staff and volunteers must exhibit behavior that is respectful and illustrates equality toward all individuals and should not make comments or engage in behavior that can be construed as reflecting discrimination, bias or sexual harassment.

INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

Staff and Volunteers

Volunteers and staff are also internal customers of each other. The attached list indicates the courtesies and responsibilities volunteers and staff should extend to each other to develop successful teamwork:

As a Staff Person, I pledge to:

- Provide adequate information, training and assistance for volunteers to be able to meet the responsibilities of their positions.
- Ensure diligent supervisory aid to volunteers and provide feedback on performance.
- Respect the skills, dignity and individual interests of volunteers and do my best to match these individual skills with the needs of the volunteer assignment.
- Be receptive to any comments from volunteers regarding more efficient ways in which we might mutually accomplish our respective tasks.
- Respond promptly to inquiries or referrals about volunteer service in my unit.
- Treat volunteers as partners with agency staff, jointly responsible for completion of the agency mission.

As a Volunteer, I pledge to:

- Perform my duties to the best of my abilities.
- Accept staff supervision and adhere to agency rules and procedures, including record-keeping and any other specific requirements of the volunteer position.
- Complete required training and be proactive in learning what I need to know in order to perform my duties to the best of my ability.
- Meet time and duty commitments, arrange for a substitute or provide adequate notice so that alternate arrangements can be made.
- Try first to resolve any concerns with my supervisor and/or the unit manager before going to a higher level.
- Support staff as a partner in completing the agency mission and provide feedback on better ways in which we might mutually accomplish our respective tasks.

