



ADULT (18+) VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2024

With code of conduct

Updated 9/27/2024

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in serving as a volunteer at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and we look forward to working with you to improve lives and build a stronger community.

More information about volunteer opportunities at each branch can be found at www.cmlibrary.org/volunteer.

Please note the following about getting started as a volunteer at the Library:

Applicants will be called or emailed and asked for an interview, which usually takes 20-30 minutes.

If we all agree that we are a good fit for each other, the next step is a criminal background check. Once the criminal background check is completed and there are no issues, volunteering can begin. Training usually occurs on the job. Our staff are not allowed to give a professional reference unless it is to advance your education, but we can verify your service hours.

About the Library

Libraries mean many things to many people. We serve thousands of people while also responding to the needs of individual library visitors. Since our founding in 1903, our role as a provider of lifelong education in this community has never been more relevant. Focusing on four key areas, we believe we best serve our users and the community by viewing ourselves in the following manner:

Library as Community Services Business

To serve you best, we must provide excellent customer service, new technology, robust volunteer programs, convenient hours and improved access to both the physical and the virtual Library.

Library as Place

We strive to be a place that is accessible and welcoming to all as well as the go-to place for literacy and life-long learning and for finding inspiration and exploring possibilities.

Library as Leader

We want to lead important community discussions, serve as a key partner in literacy and other community priorities, and be a model for digital technology and access.

Library as Community Strategy

We strive to be a catalyst for community betterment, where neighbors can share ideas and develop solutions to community challenges and where volunteers and donors are eager to contribute to a literate, informed community that is working and thriving.

Volunteer Program Mission Statement

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library seeks to empower volunteers to use their talents in a way that brings them personal satisfaction and contributes towards providing the best public library services in our community. Staff and volunteer's partner as a team to implement the mission and vision of the Library. Together, our work builds a highly literate and educated community which improves lives and builds a stronger community.

Volunteer Program Philosophy

Volunteers are members of a team that are dedicated to offering skills, unique abilities, and time without pay to the Library.

Volunteers are rewarded by learning new skills and helping the Library create a more educated and literate community. We recognize

our volunteers by ensuring that they are given opportunities that match their desires and skill sets, by organizing special events, and by offering sincere thanks. We endeavor to never waste a volunteer's time.

Volunteer Rights

- Receive a clear comprehensive job description.
- Be carefully interviewed and appropriately assigned.
- Receive training.
- Do meaningful and satisfying work.
- Be seen as belonging, through inclusion at meetings, social functions, etc.
- Be supported in your role.
- Be safe on the job.
- Have choices and feel comfortable about saying "no".
- Receive feedback on your work.
- Receive recognition for your contribution.

Volunteer Expectations

- Be reliable and punctual (Please see details under "attendance" below.)
- Be trustworthy.
- **Respect confidentiality.**
- Respect the rights of people you work with.
- Carry out the specified job description or let us know if the assignment doesn't meet your expectations or needs.
- Give feedback (i.e., participate in evaluations when asked)
- Be accountable and accept feedback.
- Be committed to the program.
- Avoid overextending yourself.
- Acknowledge decisions made by the staff or the organization.
- Address areas of conflict with the VPP.
- Undertake training.
- Sign in and out when volunteering.
- Ask for support when it is needed.
- Notify your supervisor if you can no longer volunteer.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Chauna Wall, Library Volunteer Manager, at 704.416.0711 or by email at cwall@cmlibrary.org. Your feedback is always welcome, it helps us strengthen our program.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers complete a variety of tasks in all branches of the Library. Some examples are assisting with programs, homework help, tech tutoring, shelving materials, shifting materials, repairing books, helping with displays and decorations, greeting patrons, and assisting customers in the computer areas. The Library's volunteer web page www.cmlibrary.org/volunteer will list available opportunities with descriptions and allow you to submit applications for those open positions.

VolunTeens

The Library accepts applications from teens (13-18) three times a year—spring, summer, and fall. To learn more, visit our website and enter the key word of “VolunTeens” or contact Holly Summers at hsummers@cmlibrary.org.

Court Assigned Community Service

All court assigned volunteers should contact the Volunteer Manager for more information at 704.416.0711. The Library can accept most offenses, however we do not accept those with a history of violence or theft.

Age

The preferred minimum age for volunteers is 13. Some locations/departments may limit volunteers to adults (age 18 and older). Children 5 years and older may volunteer with a parent or guardian. **A parent or guardian must always be present with the child.**

Special Needs Volunteers and their Caregivers/Guides/Assistants

Caregivers who accompany special needs volunteers are required to complete a volunteer application and criminal background check (if over the age of 18). This is in addition to an application for the individual seeking to volunteer. Hours for both will be counted. **Caregivers must always be with the volunteer during their shift at a branch.**

Personal Appearance

Volunteers should dress neatly in clean and presentable clothing. T-shirts with inappropriate messages, short skirts, low-cut tops, and other revealing garments are not allowed. Volunteers, just like library staff, must present a professional appearance to the public. Because of the nature of the work, we do suggest you wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes to avoid injury from falling books.

Attendance

Each library location will work with individual volunteers to establish a mutually agreeable schedule. Volunteers are expected to abide by their schedule and to notify their direct supervisor in the event of a change. Missing the first day or two back-to-back dates or habitual absenteeism without notification is grounds for dismissal. An active volunteer is one who has given us at least three hours within the last two months.

Advance notification of vacations and other absences is appreciated.

References

Library staff can give you a reference for educational purposes only. **Staff are not allowed to give a professional reference.**

Inclement Weather and Emergencies

There are times when a library branch may be closed due to inclement weather or another emergency. The volunteer should call the branch where they volunteer if there is any question about the open hours of the building. The inclement weather line is 704.416.0191. The number for general information is 704.416.0100.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed inside any library building. Library staff can direct you to designated smoking areas outside the building.

Beverages or food

Those volunteers who require a snack break should discuss options with your volunteer supervisor. Breaks are usually reserved for those who work 4 or more hours at one time. Only bottled water with a cap will be allowed on the library floor.

Behavior

As a volunteer, you are representing the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. All volunteers are expected to behave in a professional manner when interacting with both customers and library staff.

Library volunteers overseeing activities or programs WILL:

- Show respect for the rights, safety and welfare of program participants
- Maintain a professional and respectful demeanor when engaging with program participants
- Document actions or conversations when a program participant has behavior issues and inform a staff supervisor
 - Report any violation of a library behavior policy or concerns about program participant behavior immediately to library staff
 - Report any concerns about personal safety, harassment, or intimidation by program participants
 - Report any concerns about a patron or program participant to your supervisor immediately

Library volunteers overseeing activities or programs WILL NOT:

- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory, offensive, or culturally insensitive language including inappropriate slang
 - Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any program participant
- Accompany a patron into a restroom or assist them with personal care
- Invite program participant to their home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times in their role as a volunteer
- Transport a program participant in a vehicle
- Give program participant gifts or personal items
- Dispense medication or share personal medication with others
- Perform errands on behalf of program participants
- Solicit business during the library program
- Use patrons' personal information for personal gain

Volunteers working in an educational setting WILL NOT:

- Broker any agreements to provide services outside of the library program
- Reveal personal information (i.e., Identification Number, Social Security Number, bank account information, etc.) about a patron gained during a library program
 - Provide services (i.e., legal assistance, translation services, etc.) beyond the scope of the volunteer duties.

We respectfully request that volunteers not enter staff spaces unless directed to do so and to please keep conversations to a minimum while in these spaces to ensure an uninterrupted workflow. Our staff is often busy with a wide variety of tasks, all with their own unique requirements and sometimes excessive socializing can hinder productivity. We appreciate volunteers being mindful of this. If you need help from the Volunteer Point Person (VPP) or supervising staff, staff will be more than happy to find them for you.

EDI

Please note, the Library is a proud supporter of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Harassment of any type will not be tolerated. Comments or behavior that is racially insensitive and or sexually suggestive are grounds for immediate dismissal.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Any Charlotte Mecklenburg Library volunteer who is discovered possessing, using, selling, or transferring alcohol or illegal drugs will be immediately dismissed. Appropriate authorities will be notified.

Criminal Activity

All volunteers aged 18 and older must submit and pass a criminal history check.

Any Charlotte Mecklenburg Library volunteer committing a criminal activity, which includes but is not limited to theft, vandalism, drug abuse, assault, making threatening statements, or carrying a concealed weapon on library property while on or off duty, will be dismissed. Appropriate authorities will be notified.

Refusal and Dismissal

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library staff has the right to refuse or dismiss a volunteer. Active volunteers who violate any Charlotte Mecklenburg Library policy or do not competently fulfill their volunteer duties after a reasonable amount of training and supervision will be dismissed. **If you miss your first scheduled day or if two absences occur without notification that is tantamount to a resignation.**

Corrective Action

Corrective action may be taken if the volunteer's work is unsatisfactory. Corrective action is within the discretion of the Library Manager, Volunteer Leader, or Volunteer Point Person and may include:

1. Additional supervision
2. Reassignment
3. Retraining with possible suspension
4. Referral to another volunteer position
5. Dismissal from the volunteer program

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the program or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. Dismissal is within the discretion of Volunteer Point Person, Volunteer Manager and/or Branch Manager.

The following actions are prohibited on Library property for all:

- Distributing or posting printed materials/literature that have not been approved.
- Selling and/or soliciting for services, money, or items.
- Possessing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Smoking or other uses of tobacco.
- Consuming food or consuming beverages in open containers within the Library.
- Sleeping or putting your head, feet, or legs on the table.
- Not wearing shoes or shirt, or wearing clothes unbuttoned or unzipped.
- Bringing animals in other than assistance animals.
- Any loud, unreasonable, and/or disturbing noises created by persons, electronic devices, or cell phones.
- Any behavior that is disruptive to library use.
- Intentionally damaging, destroying, or stealing any library property, or a patron's or employee's property
- Taking library materials into restrooms.
- Removing library materials from the premises without authorization through established lending procedures.
- Moving tables, chairs, or other furniture.
- Adults using children's area. This area is for children and their parents or care providers only.
- Leaving a child under eight years of age unattended by a responsible person.
- Leaving any child or young adult (up to age 17) in the Library after closing time.

- Misuse of restrooms. Restrooms are for library patrons only. No changing of clothes, shaving, or bathing is allowed.
- Bringing in more than one canvas, nylon, paper, or plastic bag. No bag can be over 18 inches in length. Larger bags of any type, bedrolls, or luggage are prohibited.
- Carrying weapons of any type.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct of any kind, fighting or challenging to fight or using obscene/offensive words likely to provoke violence. Any other illegal acts or conduct in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation.
- Failure to comply with the established rules and regulations may result in exclusion from the Library for the day, or permanently, and/or in arrest.
- Theft of library materials is a serious offense and will result in permanent exclusion from the Library and arrest.
- Communication of threats, physical violence or sexual offenses will result in permanent exclusion.
- Trespassers will be arrested and prosecuted.

Addendum to Communicate Through Microsoft Teams with Mentees and Parents

- I, _____ consent to electronic communication with mentees and parents only through monitored Microsoft Teams channels provided by CML (collectively, “Communications”). Parents/guardians of Mentees will have access to Communications as well via Microsoft Teams. Communications will only relate to work done in the Program, and irrelevant/inappropriate communication will not be tolerated. Mentee agrees to abide by the Microsoft Services Agreement Code of Conduct (www.microsoft.com/en-us/servicesagreement) as well as the ImaginOn Teen Loft Professional Mentorship Program Code of Conduct. Agreement to these terms confirms Mentee’s ability and consent to send and receive Communications related to the Program.

The info above may not apply to you and your assignment.

Scroll down to sign confidentiality and the verification of having read the handbook forms.

Please review and sign the following forms.

As a volunteer for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to the responsibilities of being a volunteer as outlined in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library volunteer handbook. I pledge to:

- Advance the mission and core values of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.
- Arrive on time.
- Do my best with the tasks assigned to me.
- Accept supervision graciously.
- Obey the Library’s code of conduct (see page 4).
- Conduct myself in a manner befitting a representative of the public library.
- Do my part to uphold the high standards of library service.
- I understand a positive attitude is held in high regard.

I have read, understand and agree to the responsibilities of being a volunteer as outlined in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Volunteer Handbook.

I agree to abide by the following guidelines for confidentiality. I will not discuss a customer's library account. If I have a concern or question, I will bring it directly to the volunteer point person or other library staff member.

- Should a library customer voice a complaint, describe a conflict, or begin to discuss a problem with me, I will encourage that customer to discuss the issue with the library staff. I understand that as a volunteer, I am neither asked, nor expected to, address customers’ individual concerns.
- When participating in a library work environment, or during conversations with library staff, I may learn confidential information about the Library’s customers (such as problems with accounts, lost items, overdue fines, borrowing habits). I will treat all information as confidential. I will not discuss it with others.
- I agree to maintain the highest level of discretion about confidential information, files or personal data on library customers and staff. At no time will I discuss confidential information, files or personal data with other volunteers or customers.

Volunteer Signature

VPPs, please keep this piece of paper in your files.

If volunteers have questions, please contact your Volunteer Point Person or contact Chauna Wall at cwall@cmlibrary.org