



Volunteer Handbook

Volunteering Towards Success

Welcome

The San José Public Library staff welcomes you to our team and would like to thank you for selecting the library as a place to share your time, energy and talents. We hope to provide you with a rewarding volunteer experience that allows you to use your skills to benefit customers and enhance library services.

Mission

San José Public Library enriches lives by fostering lifelong learning and by ensuring that every member of the community has access to a vast array of ideas and information.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As a volunteer for the City of San José, you have certain responsibilities that will be reviewed with you once you begin your new assignment. The Branch or Unit Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement is available to review these expectations and responsibilities with you throughout the year. In addition to responsibilities directly related to the volunteer assignment, all volunteers are expected to meet the following responsibilities:

- Comply with [City policies](#), procedures and regulations, particularly those having to do with smoking, alcohol, and other substance abuse areas ([Chapter 1.4](#))
- Keep your work commitment.
- Be willing to participate in job development activities.
- Adhere to all confidential requirements in the course of carrying out duties and responsibilities.
- Refrain from the use of job knowledge or contacts for personal gain.
- Treat customers and co-workers with respect.
- Be aware of Departmental procedures and rules including safety rules.

If you have questions about any of this information you should speak with your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement or the Manager of the Library's Volunteer Program.

Volunteer Rights

Each volunteer in the City of San José is viewed as an important part of the organization's ability to get the job done. As a volunteer you are accorded rights as individuals and volunteers. Below are some of the rights volunteers may expect during their tenure with the City:

- Volunteers are to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Volunteers are to receive proper training for the job to be done.
- Volunteers are to be informed about any reimbursement policy, i.e. for the use of private cars, etc.
- Volunteers are not to be discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- Volunteers will receive information on issues regarding legal protection, liability and other concerns.
- Volunteers will be recognized for their efforts in providing program services.
- Volunteers will be treated as co-workers.
- Volunteers will know as much about the organization as possible.
- Volunteers will be evaluated and receive recognition.

Policies and Procedures

Orientation and Training

After joining the specific Branch/Unit, you will be provided with an on-the-job orientation and training by your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement and/or the staff member you work with. In some instances, training is also provided by other volunteers.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

Volunteers age 18 and over may be required to be fingerprinted and submit to a background check. Volunteers will be informed if fingerprinting is required for their position. Volunteers who do not agree to the required screening will be refused an assignment.

Schedules

Work schedules of volunteers are diverse and varied depending on the volunteer's role (project) and/ or location. Your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement will work with you to establish a schedule that is mutually agreeable.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important. For those times when you are unable to volunteer, you must call your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement as far in advance as possible. If you fail to show for two shifts in a row without calling, it will be assumed that you no longer want to volunteer and you will be withdrawn from the program. Volunteers are expected to be prompt. Being late may inconvenience those who are counting on your assistance. If you are going to be late, please notify your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement in advance.

Workers Compensation

All volunteers are automatically covered under the City of San José Workers Compensation Insurance. You are required to read and sign the Volunteer Signature Form and return it to your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement or staff liaison. This agreement specifies that coverage is available to volunteers, and spells out your legal rights and responsibilities.

Fair Treatment/Problem Solving

If a problem should arise concerning any condition of your work with the Library, you should work to reconcile the matter with your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution from your Coordinator, you should take the matter to the Manager of the Branch/Unit and/or the Manager of the Library's Volunteer program. If you feel that a workable agreement or a satisfactory solution to the problem has not been reached, you may contact the Library's Assistant Director.

Parking

Free parking is generally available for Branch volunteers in parking lots adjacent to each library facility. Volunteers working at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library may park in the Fourth Street parking garage, across the street from the library, for free each time they volunteer. Coordinators of Volunteer Engagement will inform volunteers of the process for receiving parking validation.

Emergencies

The Branch/Unit has a Building Emergency Team that will assist volunteers and customers during an emergency and help ensure an efficient evacuation if needed. Staff will discuss emergency procedures in your orientation.

Volunteer Badges

The Library will provide you with a volunteer badge, which you are required to wear while volunteering in the Library.

Recording Hours

San José Public Library uses an online volunteer management tool to record volunteers' hours. This record is used to keep track of a volunteer's hours, determine if service levels have increased, and identify which services volunteers have enhanced. Your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement will familiarize you with the process.

Volunteer Area

Each Branch/Unit has a designated area for volunteers to obtain a volunteer badge and view new and important information regarding volunteer services in the Library and community. A safe location for volunteers to leave their personal items while volunteering at the Library is also provided.

Dress and Appearance

Each volunteer represents the City to library customers. Your appearance contributes to the overall impression that our City portrays. Clothing appropriate to a casual business environment is expected as all volunteers are expected to present an image that is both professional and appropriate to their working conditions.

Safety

Safety is everybody's business, and must be given primary importance in every aspect of performing your volunteer activities. We want to protect you against injury and illness. Please report all injuries to your staff liaison immediately. Also advise staff of any equipment or situation that may pose a safety hazard or if you experience or witness any inappropriate behavior in the library.

If you are concerned about the safety of a child, or any other Library customer, bring it up to a Library staff member immediately.

Each volunteer is provided a Volunteer Role Description that outlines their role and responsibilities. If you would like to change or expand your volunteer role, speak with your supervisor first. Volunteers should not meet with customers outside the Library to continue their volunteer work without informing a Library staff member ahead of time.

Visitors and Children

We appreciate the importance you place on your role as a volunteer, and ask that you refrain from visiting with friends and family during your shift at the library. In most instances, children are not allowed to accompany volunteers to work.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside all City facilities. Volunteers and employees who wish to smoke may do so outside the building at least twenty feet from the entrance.

Alcohol

Volunteers shall not consume or possess alcoholic beverages on City premises. Volunteers who violate this policy are subject to immediate dismissal.

Drugs

Any volunteer who brings, possesses, is under the influence of, uses, transfers, sells, or attempts to sell on City property or while on City business, at any time, any form of narcotic, drug, or hallucinogen, except prescribed drugs and under the direction of a physician, is subject to immediate dismissal.

Risk Management and Safety

Each registered volunteer is included in the City's Risk Management and Safety program. This means that before you begin your service, the Library will inform you of safe work practices as required for employees. Any injury to volunteers or losses to any third party which involved a volunteer must be reported and processed in accordance with existing City policies on matters of this nature.

Discrimination and Harassment

It is the policy of the City of San José to promote and maintain a work environment free of illegal discrimination and harassment in employment.

A volunteer who believes that he or she has been the victim of discrimination or harassment should immediately report the alleged harassment or discrimination to their supervisor or another Library staff member. Any volunteer who believes that he or she has witnessed or has knowledge of any harassment or discrimination in the workplace is strongly encouraged to report the acts or occurrences.

For more information, refer to the City of San Jose Discrimination and Harassment Policy ([Chapter 1.1](#))

Vehicle Usage and Travel/Mileage Reimbursement

Volunteers who are required to use a vehicle in the pursuit of their duties are required to have completed the City's Defensive Driver class. Volunteers who must use their own vehicles in the pursuit of City business will not be covered against accidents and injury. All drivers are required to have a current driver's license and auto insurance. Volunteers will not normally be eligible

for mileage reimbursement. However, supervisors of volunteers have the option of reimbursing volunteers on a case-by-case basis.

Resignation

Due to varied circumstances, volunteers occasionally choose to leave the program before the completion of their commitments. If, for any reason, you cannot complete your project as planned, please inform your staff liaison of your decision and try to allow us sufficient time to find a qualified replacement.

Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules, policies, and regulations of the City of San José or who fail to meet goals satisfactorily are subject to dismissal. A volunteer may be dismissed at any time. The City of San José reserves the right to request that a volunteer leave immediately if circumstances warrant such action.