



Volunteer Handbook

Volunteering Towards Success



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Welcome

The San José Public Library staff welcomes you to our team and thanks you for selecting the library as a place to share your time, energy, and talents. Volunteers are an important asset of the City's workforce and make it possible for the City to deliver services to San José residents. As a volunteer, you represent the City of San José. 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.

At San José Public Library, volunteers are valued as individuals and for their important contributions to the organization. An open exchange of ideas is encouraged throughout the system. We nurture our talents and each other.



Build your future. Support your community. Be a library volunteer.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As a volunteer for the City of San José, your role has expectations and responsibilities that will be reviewed with you once you begin your new assignment. Your assigned point of contact is available to review these with you throughout the year. In addition to responsibilities directly related to the volunteer assignment, all volunteers are expected to meet the following criteria:

- Comply with [City policies](#), procedures, and regulations, particularly those having to do with:
 - Ethical Conduct
 - Code of Ethics (Chapter 1.2.1)
 - Employee Values (Chapter 1.2.4)
 - Drug Free Workplace (Chapter 1.4)
 - Volunteer Management (Chapter 6.1.12) Sections:
 - Policy
 - Screening and Placement
 - Injuries While Performing Volunteer Services

Volunteer Agreements

As a volunteer, you agree to the following:

- Treat customers and co-workers with respect
- Be aware of departmental procedures, rules, and safety protocols
- Maintain a consistent work commitment
- Be willing to participate in job development activities
- Adhere to all confidential requirements while carrying out duties and responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

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 of San José:

- Volunteers are to be treated as co-workers with respect and courtesy
- Volunteers are not to be discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability
- Volunteers will receive training on their assigned task and about the library
- Volunteers will be evaluated and receive recognition
- Volunteers will receive information on issues regarding legal protection, liability, and other concerns (Volunteer Signature Form)

Age Breakdown

All volunteers under the age of 18 must have their legal guardian sign the Volunteer Signature Form, which will be provided to you by your staff liaison.

Youth Volunteers, Ages 13-14

Acquire community service credits through the following volunteer activities:

- SJ Engage
- Summer Learning Ambassadors
- Teen Book Reviewer
- Teen Writer for Short Éditions
- Teens Reach

Youth Volunteers, Ages 15+

Once a teenager turns 15, a more robust offering of volunteer activities becomes available to them. This list includes the activities listed above for volunteers ages 13-14. Each teen volunteer develops basic professional skills and serves as a public library representative.

Adult Volunteers, 18+

Our priority is to provide a safe environment for all members of the community. The San José Public Library has in place a process of fingerprinting all ongoing adult volunteers. Fingerprinting is done at no cost to you. Records from the Department of Justice are kept confidential with the library only receiving information on whether a volunteer has completed or failed the screening process. You can begin volunteering as soon as we receive results which may take 2-3 weeks following your appointment.

Communications

Email

As part of our ongoing efforts to build a stronger volunteerism experience, the Volunteer Services Unit will regularly communicate with volunteers via email. Please be sure to add us to your safe sender list so that you stay informed of upcoming news, workshops, and special events.

The San José Public Library values open communication to ensure we are providing the best volunteer experience. Please sign up for our [eNewsletter](#) to learn about volunteer opportunities throughout our system.

Privacy

Volunteers should respect the confidential information that is available to them. This can include situations where a member of the public asks for assistance with:

- Their personal email
- Their electronic device

Volunteers should refrain from sharing their personal information with the public and collecting Personal Identifiable Information (PII) from staff or members of the public.

Onboarding Process

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

Volunteers ages 18+ are required to be fingerprinted and complete a background check. Volunteers who do not agree to the required screening will be refused an assignment.

The Volunteer Services Unit will work with you to schedule your Live Scan appointment. Once you schedule your appointment, you will receive an email from the City of San José detailing information on what to bring to your Live Scan appointment, location, and parking validation.

Service Groups with Cognitive or Developmental Disabilities

The fingerprinting process is slightly different for these groups. Each group must have an accompanying adult (age 18+) who serves as an onsite monitor. The onsite monitor is the only person required to get fingerprinted and log the volunteer time on behalf of their group.

Orientation and Training

Each volunteer is provided a Volunteer Role Description that outlines their role and responsibilities. You will be provided with an on-the-job orientation and training led by a library staff member. You will be provided with a walk-through of the facility including the:

- volunteer area where you can obtain a volunteer badge and view important information
- where to keep your personal items
- emergency procedures

If you would like to discuss or expand your volunteer role, please reach out to your supervisor.

Logging Hours

You will be responsible for logging your volunteer hours. San José Public Library uses an online volunteer management tool called Better Impact to keep track of volunteer hours. Your supervisor will review how to log your hours through [MyVolunteerPage.com](https://www.sanjose.org/MyVolunteerPage.com).

Parking

Free parking is available for Branch volunteers in parking lots adjacent to each library facility. For those volunteering at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, parking validation will be provided if you park in the [Fourth Street parking garage](#), across the street from the library.

Visitors

Library users or personal acquaintances will come in from time to time. It is your responsibility not to engage for an extended period while on assignment.

Guests

We appreciate the importance you place on your role as a volunteer and understand that you may wish to bring a guest (i.e. significant other, friend, children) to observe your service. Please request approval from your supervisor so that they may have your guest complete the One-time Volunteer Signature Form.

In most instances, children are not allowed to accompany volunteers to work. If you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer with your child, please ask your supervisor about the Volunteer Away Your Fines opportunities.

Policies and Procedures

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 supervisor. This agreement specifies that coverage is available to volunteers and spells out your legal rights.

Schedules

Your supervisor will work with you to establish a mutually agreeable schedule. It is your responsibility to adhere to it.

Attendance

For those times when you are unable to volunteer, you must call your supervisor as far in advance as possible. If you fail to show up for two shifts in a row without notifying staff, it will be assumed that you no longer want to volunteer and you will be dismissed.

Tardiness

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 inform your supervisor as soon as possible.

Dress and Appearance

Your appearance contributes to the overall impression of the City of San José. To present an image that is both professional and appropriate, volunteers are expected to dress in business casual attire. Volunteers should avoid wearing clothes with inappropriate language or images. T-shirts are acceptable but should not depict anything racial, sexual, or political in nature. Images depicting pop culture icons are acceptable if the image is not offensive. The clothing must be clean and free of odors, stains, rips, or tears.

Safety

Reporting

To protect our community against injury and illness, we ask that you promptly report any of the following to Library staff:

- injuries
- safety concerns
- faulty equipment/situation that may pose a safety hazard
- experience or witness any inappropriate behavior in the library

If you are concerned about a child's safety or the safety of any other Library customer, please inform a Library staff member immediately.

Injuries

All volunteers shall immediately report all injuries or incidents to their supervisor or volunteer administration staff. Volunteers are covered under the City's Workers' Compensation self-insurance. The City's standard Workers' Compensation Incident report is to be used for the immediate recording of an injury.

Emergencies

The Branch/Unit has a Building Emergency Team that will handle emergencies and help ensure an efficient evacuation if needed.

As a volunteer, your responsibility in an emergency is to keep yourself safe and follow directions from library staff or Emergency Response Personnel. In a life-threatening emergency, don't hesitate to call 911.

Prohibited

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited inside all City facilities. Volunteers and employees who wish to smoke may do so outside the building at least 25 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 any form of illegal drug (i.e. narcotic, hallucinogen, etc.) on City property or while on City business, at any time, is subject to immediate dismissal. Medication prescribed to you by your physician is acceptable.

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 they 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 they have 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 José Discrimination and Harassment Policy ([Chapter 1.1](#))

Purchasing Supplies

Volunteers are not allowed to purchase supplies for library programs or operations with the expectation of reimbursement. The City's Reimbursement Policy does not allow the Library to provide volunteers with any form of payment for services rendered.

Driving

The time spent driving to and from the Library does not classify as volunteer service. Volunteers can only log the time they spend volunteering onsite. Volunteers should never be asked to drive their personal vehicle or a city vehicle as part of their responsibilities.

Offsite Volunteering

Volunteers ages 18+ may be invited by their supervisor to volunteer offsite at outreach events. Volunteering off-site is at the volunteer's discretion and you must be accompanied by a library staff member when doing so. Volunteers cannot be assigned to an off-site opportunity without their consent.

Volunteers should not meet or exchange personal information with library users outside the Library to continue their volunteer work.

End of Service

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.

Contact

If you have questions about any of the information covered in this handbook, reach out to your Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement (COVE), Library Service Volunteer Supervisor (LSVS), other onsite Coordinator, or the Volunteer Services Unit.

If a problem should arise concerning any condition of your work with the Library, you should work to reconcile the matter with your supervisor. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution from your supervisor, you should take the matter to the Manager of the Branch/Unit.

If you feel that a workable agreement or a satisfactory solution to the problem has not been reached, you may contact the Volunteer Services Unit.

Volunteer Services Manager

Robert Miranda

robert.miranda@sjlibrary.org

408-808-2085

Volunteer Coordinator

Carolina Ramirez

carolina.ramirez@sjlibrary.org

408-808-2181

The Volunteer Services Unit regularly sends communication via the following emails. Please add to your safe sender list:

- San José Public Library - Volunteer Services Office
message@volunteer2mail.com
- SJPL Volunteer Svc
volunteer@sjlibrary.org