

Ames Public Library Policy
Section: Administration
Subject: Volunteer Services Policy

Board of Trustees
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Policy

Ames Public Library (APL) will utilize volunteers in order to enhance library services, programming and resources.

Definitions

- Adult Volunteer Program: This program includes individuals who are 18 years of age or older.
- Ames Public Library-Youth Volunteer Program (APL-Y): This program involves students in 5th through 12th grades.
- Community Service Program: Participants include people who have a court-ordered community service obligation.
- Fine Alternative Program: This program is offered to library patrons who would like to volunteer in order to reduce their library fines.

Eligibility

Participants in all Volunteer Services programming must be students in 5th through 12th grade, with the following exceptions:

- Groups of children younger than the 5th grade who are completing a community service assignment through school or another organization. Adult supervision from the school or organization may be required.
- A child younger than the 5th grade accompanied by his/her parent, grandparent, or guardian.

All Volunteer Services participants must successfully complete an application process.

Application Process

1. Volunteers must complete a program application and agree to the program guidelines and expectations. If the applicant is a minor, a parent or guardian must sign the application and agree to the terms stated in the guidelines.
2. Following completion of the application, the volunteer must complete an interview with the Volunteer Services Coordinator or designee. Certain volunteer positions will also include an interview with the staff person responsible for supervising the specific volunteer position.

The application process will not be required by service organizations that volunteer as a group and are supervised by an organization staff person or representative, and/or for which the volunteer activity is a single event.

Background Checks

Every applicant 18 years and older will be subject to a background check. The National Sex Abuse Registry will be checked for all applicants. Other agencies may be accessed depending on the position for which the individual is applying. Background checks may be repeated during the volunteer's tenure at APL.

All volunteer applications indicating a criminal history (misdemeanor, felony, deferment) will be reviewed by designated APL staff.

- Applicants with a criminal history will only be accepted if the designated staff determines that the placement of that applicant will not jeopardize the safety of APL patrons and staff or the integrity of APL collections.
- Any applicant with a criminal history including sex or child abuse convictions or deferments will automatically be denied volunteer placement.
- A volunteer or applicant under investigation for or charged with child or sex abuse or criminal acts will be suspended or disqualified from volunteering until the issue is resolved.

The background check process will not be required for service organizations who volunteer as a group and are supervised by an organization staff person or representative, and/or for which the volunteer activity is a single event.

Documentation

A file will be maintained for each volunteer. Files may include the following information: volunteer application; results of background checks; copy of driver's license, if required; copy of any other licensure, if required; results of probationary period; and progress notations. Additionally, APL staff will maintain records of each volunteer's hours of service and job performance.

Volunteer Placement

All new volunteers at Ames Public Library will be assigned a regular position according to their interests, skills, and APL needs. Placement may be contingent on a valid driver's license and the results of a background check. Once placement is determined, all volunteers will be required to review and sign a job description.

Probationary Period

All volunteers will be subject to a probationary period as determined by each workgroup and/or immediate supervisor. The length of probationary period will be outlined in the volunteer's job description. Further volunteer service at APL is contingent on the successful completion of this probationary period.

Supervision

Volunteers who are placed at the library's main branch are considered to be under staff supervision. Supervision will be provided by all APL staff on duty. However, an immediate supervisor for each volunteer position will be described in the volunteer's job description. The immediate supervisor identified will be responsible for training and direct oversight of a volunteer's performance.

Dismissal

Volunteers may be terminated for failure to perform assigned job duties, failure to meet minimum standards of performance, or for violations of library rules. The library staff reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer at any time.

Daily Operations

No department or workgroup of the Library will be dependent on volunteers for daily operations.

Staff as Volunteers

Library staff, or former staff, may be eligible to volunteer under the following circumstances:

- The volunteer position is under the umbrella of a separate Library organization (e.g. APL Friends Foundation).
- The volunteer activity is as a representative of an outside organization (e.g. ISU) which is participating in an event sponsored by the Library.
- Former staff members who have not been employed by the Library for a period of at least three months and are not assigned to their previous job responsibilities.