



Volunteer Program

Policy Number: LS 505

Effective: February 2022

Purpose

The Library's Volunteer Program is established to engage the community and provide opportunities for participants to support the library in carrying out its mission. This policy outlines the procedures for processing, utilization, retention, and recognition of volunteers. Volunteerism also strengthens and deepens the library's relationships throughout the community while helping volunteers achieve a sense of satisfaction and learn more about the programs and services offered at the library. This volunteer program is not intended as a path for obtaining full or part-time paid employment with Hillsborough County Government.

Policy

- Prospective volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application.
- Volunteers must be 14 years of age or older.
- Only the following volunteer opportunities are available:
 - Adults: Friends of the Library (FOL) and the Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) Tutor.
 - Young Adults (age 14-18, currently enrolled in school): the Teen Advisory Board (TAB), and the Social Media Intern Program (SMIP).
- The Library *does not* accept volunteers whose service has been ordered by the court system or is in the fulfillment of a legal obligation.
- Volunteers *cannot* be related to library employees or reside in the same household.
- Volunteers are accepted without regard to any individual's age, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, education level or any other legally protected status.
- Volunteers are required to conduct themselves as if employed by the library and must adhere to the policies and practices established regarding work schedule, attendance, conduct, performance, safety procedures, proper attire, etc. Volunteers can be released from volunteer duties at any time at the discretion of the library.

Procedure

Volunteer Processing

- A System Volunteer Coordinator (the Community Engagement Manager) administers the volunteer program and is responsible for intake and processing of the applications, conducting background checks, training library staff, orienting new volunteers, and record-keeping. Each branch supervisor is responsible for working with the System Volunteer Coordinator in communicating volunteer opportunities as outlined above.
- Volunteer Applications may be submitted one of the following ways: 1) Complete a PDF form <https://hcplc.org/about/volunteer-application.pdf> and email, to LibraryCommunityEngagement@hillsboroughcounty.org. OR 2) Complete an online webform at <https://www.hcplc.org/about/volunteer/application> and click "Submit."
- Applicants may not start a volunteer assignment until the application, background check processing, and orientation are completed.
- The System Volunteer Coordinator will perform a background check. If an applicant is determined ineligible based on the background check, the System Volunteer Coordinator will notify the applicant. All rejected applications are immediately deleted.
- The Library reserves the right to reject an applicant based on their criminal background.
- Eligible volunteer candidates are contacted by the System Volunteer Coordinator to register for, and complete the orientation process, which includes filling out and signing the full volunteer packet.
- Volunteers under the age of 18 must have their parent or guardian sign the Volunteer Application confirming approval of their child volunteering. Volunteers under the age of 18 cannot volunteer more than four (4) hours per day.
- Volunteers between the ages of 14-18, currently enrolled in school, are eligible to participate in the Library's Teen Advisory Board (TAB) program or apply for the Social Media Internship program (SMIP).
- Adult volunteers may work a maximum of five (5) hours per day.

Volunteer Orientation, Training and Accountability

The System Volunteer Coordinator will maintain a file for each volunteer of all completed forms and information.

Following the required Systemwide Orientation, Friends of the Library (FOL) and Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) are responsible for training their volunteers for duties related to each organization. FOL and HLC are responsible for tracking and reporting volunteer hours to the System Volunteer Coordinator. Once they have completed this related training, FOL volunteers should schedule a tour with branch staff to meet library staff and to become familiar with the branch they are working to help.

Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and Social Media Intern Program (SMIP) orientation sessions are done virtually during the initial meeting of these volunteer programs. TAB and SMIP volunteer hours are recorded, approved and reported by coordinators of those programs.

Volunteers are covered under Hillsborough County Workers' Compensation while performing duties on Library property.

Upon volunteer separation, the System Volunteer Coordinator sends a thank you letter via mail or email and adds an end date to the volunteer's application. The volunteer's file is retained for three years as required by State of Florida document retention guidelines. All forms are to be shredded at the end of the retention period.

Volunteer Recognition

The Library values its volunteers and recognizes their service. Volunteers with 100 service hours or more receive special recognition. FOL and HLC representatives will notify the System Volunteer Coordinator when a volunteer has reached 100 or more hours of service in a calendar year and submit a 100-hour plus form. Volunteers receive a bookplate honoring each 100 hours of service. The bookplate is sent to the Technical Services Center for inclusion in recent library material acquisitions. The volunteer receives a copy of the bookplate with a letter of appreciation from the Library. Volunteers with service hours of 1,000 or more, in total to date, receive formal recognition by the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library Board.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Friends of the Library (FOL)

There are many different Friends of the Library (FOL) chapters associated with Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library (THPL). These groups raise awareness and funds for the library. The Friends accept volunteers to help with book sales, fundraising, build awareness for their charitable organization, and to serve in board positions. For more information on Friends of the Library (FOL) visit <https://foltampa.org>.

Hillsborough Literacy Council Tutor

Adult Literacy Tutors are committed to helping adults achieve basic reading and writing skills as well as English comprehension and communication skills. Adult Literacy Tutors work with adult students in one-on-one sessions or in small groups. Potential tutors, are interviewed, trained, and assigned a student(s) through the Hillsborough Literacy Council. For more information, visit <https://hillsboroughliteracy.org> or email AdultLiteracy@Hillsboroughclounty.org.

Teen Advisory Board (TAB)

Teens ages 14-18, currently enrolled in school, who have a desire to help the community and a love for libraries can join the Teen Advisory Board (TAB). TAB members meet monthly to help plan events, spread awareness of library services and resources, and make suggestions for how the library can improve its services for teens. These hours can be used for Bright Future Scholarships, and THPL works with Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) to apply these hours.

Social Media Internship Program (SMIP)

Hillsborough County students between the ages of 14-18, currently enrolled in school, can apply to participate in a virtual 6-week program to help develop social media skills in a professional work environment. Required 5-8 hours per week for a total of at least 25 hours by completion of internship. They assist with creation of social media graphics and video ideas, assist in writing social media short-form draft posts, and other duties as assigned. These hours can be used for Bright Future Scholarships, and THPL works with HCPS to apply these hours.

Reporting Requirements for Incidents and Accidents

Whenever a volunteer is involved in an accident, they must immediately contact the branch supervisor, regional manager, or branch in-charge staff, who will take the appropriate steps to report the incident and ensure that the volunteer receives appropriate medical attention, if desired.

According to the THPL Incident Reporting Procedures "a volunteer is a person of his/her own free will who provides goods or services to Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library without receiving monetary or material compensation." All volunteer personnel providing services on behalf of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library are considered library employees for purposes of worker's compensation and incident reporting. In the event of an accident involving a volunteer, and the volunteer is seeking medical attention, the following steps should be taken:

- If it is an emergency and immediate help is needed, dial 9-1-1.
- Provide volunteer with a list of approved medical providers:
<https://coin.hillsboroughcounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/2490/Workers-Compensation-Care-Providers?bidId=>
- Complete the Drug Screening Authorization form and provide the volunteer with the nearest location:
<https://coin.hillsboroughcounty.org/FormCenter/HR-Forms-6/Authorization-Form-to-Concentra-106>
- Report the incident via HCPLC Report, followed by the completion of a County Incident Report through the County Online Information Network (COIN):
<http://coin.hillsboroughcounty.org/1237/Risk-Management-Forms>

Additional Guidance

- Volunteers must act in accordance with library policies and reflect positive customer service attitudes to all customers. Volunteers are to refer any Code of Conduct violations to staff and are not to intervene in resolving problem customer behaviors.
- Volunteers must report time worked to their FOL, HLC, SMIP or TAB coordinator.
- Volunteers are to report any safety hazards or injuries immediately to branch in-charge staff. See "Reporting Requirements for Incidents and Accidents" section above for steps to complete.
- To end a volunteer commitment, volunteers should notify their FOL, HLC, SMIP or TAB coordinator of that decision and the effective date.
- By law, a government agency cannot practice any form of discrimination. All library staff and volunteers must treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Volunteers should refer all library policy questions from the public to a library staff member.