



Centre County Library & Historical Museum

Volunteer Handbook

Last Updated: April 14, 2022

Volunteering at the Library

Centre County Library & Historical Museum is fortunate to have many community members who dedicate their time to volunteering at our libraries. Our libraries could not run as well as they do without these members of our library family.

Opportunities to volunteer vary by library location, and each library has its own needs. Members of our library management team will identify their library's volunteer needs, and the experience and personal traits that are the best fit for each opportunity. Centre County Library & Historical Museum cannot provide an opportunity for every person interested in volunteering at our libraries.

About the Library

Mission

Centre County Library & Historical Museum is a free community destination providing books, information, Internet access, and technology resources to preserve our heritage and promote a lifetime of reading and learning.

Vision

Centre County Library & Historical Museum will be an inviting and vital part of our community by providing access to current technology and services to foster education and to enhance our community's quality of life.

Core Values

- We believe in intellectual freedom.
- We respect all patrons' privacy and confidentiality.
- We believe in access for all.
- We will treat everyone with courtesy and fairness.
- We will be efficient and effective in all we do to provide quality service in a welcoming environment.
- We will be innovative and timely in our response to technology and the information needs of our community.
- We will work in partnership with other organizations to further the Library's mission.
- We will govern with sound financial management and oversight.

History

The first public library in Centre County was the direct result of a bequest from Ann Elmira Humes, in her will of 1935. She left her house (the historic Miles-Humes home,

built 1814-1815) at 203 N. Allegheny St. in Bellefonte to be used as a library, as long as the community would rally with financial support within a reasonable period of time.

The town, led by the Bellefonte Woman's Club, did rally, and in 1938 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Centre County agreed to help to provide funding. On October 25, 1939, the Library & Historical Corporation of Bellefonte opened in the big stone building at the northwest corner of Allegheny and Howard Streets, with a collection of 10,000 volumes. In 1956 the name was changed to Centre County Library & Historical Museum.

In 1977, the CCL renovated the former A&P supermarket building on the northeast corner of Allegheny and Howard Streets and transferred the main circulating collection of the Library to that site on October 23, 1977.

The original Library building, the Miles-Humes home, houses the Pennsylvania Room collections, four museum display rooms, and administrative offices.

The first county Bookmobile took to the roads on December 24, 1941. The current Bookmobile is the sixth, and serves 29 different municipalities in the County, focusing on those areas which lack public transportation and nearby branch libraries.

The Philipsburg Public Library (later renamed Holt Memorial Library) became part of the Centre County Library system in 1963, followed by the Aaronsburg branch library in 1968. In 2010, the Aaronsburg collection was moved to Millheim to become the East Penns Valley Area Branch library. Unfortunately, in 2013, the branch was closed due to state funding cuts.

The Centre Hall Area Branch library, the most recent addition to the CCL system, opened in 1997.

Library Closures

Holiday Closures

Our libraries are closed on the following days during the year:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day Weekend (Saturday-Monday)
- Independence Day (both actual and observed days if different)
- Labor Day Weekend (Saturday-Monday)
- Thanksgiving Day and Friday
- Christmas (December 24-26)

Additional Closures and Modified Hours

Our libraries typically close early on weekday evenings preceding holidays and during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. Our library branches may operate

on a modified schedule or close for staff development or building maintenance intermittently. This information is posted publicly, and your branch's supervisor will notify you in advance if it will affect your schedule.

Other Closings

If the library closes due to weather conditions or other emergency situations, volunteers will be contacted by their supervisor via email. If you are not contacted and are unsure if the library will be closed or not, please check the library's website or social media accounts. Announcements will also be made on local radio and TV stations to alert the public to any closings.

Workplace Practices and Guidelines for Volunteers

Orientation and Training

After you have received your volunteer assignment and schedule, you will meet with the Volunteer Supervisor for your library's branch ("supervisor" henceforth) and you will be given a brief orientation which includes a tour of the library, introductions to staff, and initial training. You may not begin volunteering at the library until you have provided the necessary clearances and background checks to your supervisor.

Minimum Time Commitments

Volunteers are encouraged to commit to at least 2-3 hours per week. Given the amount of time that our library staff spend training new volunteers, we ask for a commitment of at least three months of continuous volunteer service. If you feel that this may be a challenge, please let the branch manager for your branch know. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the branch manager.

Because of the need for background checks and extended training, Centre County Library & Historical Museum does not normally accept court mandated volunteers, but exceptions can be made at the discretion of the branch manager.

The libraries have set days and times for volunteer shifts to help manage the workload at each of our branches, so please plan to come in on your assigned day and at your assigned time. If you need to modify your volunteer schedule, please reach out to your supervisor.

Junior Volunteers

Volunteers must be at least 13 years old. All volunteers under age 18 are classified as Junior Volunteers and must submit a Parent/Guardian Consent Form before starting their volunteer assignment, regardless of the number of hours that they intend to work.

Junior Volunteers who miss three shifts without prior notification and approval will not receive certification for volunteer hours at the library, regardless of the number of volunteer hours completed.

Special Volunteers

Special Volunteers are short-term volunteers who contribute to a specific project or event at a library. These volunteers contribute eight (8) or fewer hours of volunteer service per year. Special Volunteer cannot work with children unless supervised by a staff member. Special volunteers under the age of 13 must be accompanied by an adult chaperone (not a library employee) during the entirety of their volunteer service.

Work Assignments

Volunteers are typically accepted at the library for specific tasks or projects, such as shelving, covering books, displays, or indexing. When the volunteer's normal work is completed, they will be assigned additional work to assist with library operations through the end of their shift.

Recording Hours Worked

Pennsylvania requires libraries to report the number of volunteer hours contribute each year, and we also like to recognize our volunteers for all the work that they do for us. Keeping these records accurate is very helpful to us. Please be sure to sign in and out for each of your volunteer shifts so that we can keep track of your important work.

Absences and Late Arrivals

Our libraries rely on our volunteers to ensure that operations run smoothly each day. As such, missing a shift without notification can result in a backup of work for staff (things not being shelved, less coverage of the Circulation Desk, delayed processing of new books, et cetera).

If you know ahead of time that you will not be able to work your regular shift, please let your supervisor know as soon as possible. For extended leaves of absence, we will try to hold your position open or find a temporary replacement, but the position cannot be guaranteed for you.

If you are sick or have a last-minute change of plans or you will be late for your shift, please call the library to let your supervisor know your situation.

If you do not come in for your shift three weeks in a row and have not contacted your supervisor, we will assume that you have ended your volunteer contract with us and we will seek a replacement.

Breaks

Volunteers are encouraged to take a 15-minute break during their shift. Each of our locations has a staff break area, which volunteers are welcome to use during this break. Please restrict eating to these break areas, as some of our libraries have restrictions on food or drink.

Dress Code

Please dress for comfort, but remember that the library is a public service organization and we would like to maintain a neat, professional appearance at all times. Volunteers will be given nametags to wear to identify themselves during their shift.

Personal Effects

Each library should have a safe place to store your personal belongings while you are working. We cannot, however, be responsible for misplaced items. Please be careful about where you put personal belongings and be sure to take everything with you when you leave.

Required Background Checks

The following background checks are required for all volunteers except Special Volunteers (less than 8 hours per year) and Junior Volunteers under the age of 18. Volunteers are responsible for providing all background checks to the library prior to starting their volunteer service:

Criminal Background Check, through the PA State Police:
<https://epatch.state.pa.us/TandCVolunteerAction.do>

Child Abuse History Clearance, through the PA Department of Child Welfare:
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

Volunteers who have lived in Pennsylvania for less than ten (10) years are required to submit an additional FBI fingerprint clearance.

No individual shall be retained as a volunteer if the Criminal History Record Check indicates that the individual has been convicted of a felony charge, or has pled guilty to or nolo contendere to a felony charge. No individual

Accident Insurance

While you are working at the library, you are covered by the library's general liability insurance. Please notify your supervisor immediately if any accident or injury occurs while you are doing volunteer work.

Performance Evaluation

Informal evaluation is an ongoing process throughout the year. Any problems are addressed as soon as they are brought to the attention of your supervisor and will be resolved in the best interests of the library.

Once per year a more formal written evaluation *may* be done by both the volunteer and their supervisor. At this time, volunteers will have the opportunity to voice any concerns they might have or to offer suggestions on how to improve the efficiency of their jobs. Likewise, the volunteer's supervisor may write a brief evaluation of each volunteer's performance for that year. If this is done, one copy will be given to the volunteer and another will be kept on file.

Resignations

Volunteers who wish to resign their positions are asked to submit their resignations in writing at least two weeks prior to their last working day. This gives the library time to find additional help for the tasks assumed by the position being vacated.

Patron Confidentiality

The state of Pennsylvania has a law that protects the confidentiality of library circulation records. Therefore, unless mandated by a court order, no library worker may give out information contained in those records. This includes borrowers' names, addresses, phone numbers, materials they have checked out, or any other personal information. Please be very careful not to discuss private patron information with anyone.

Patron Problems

If you work in a public area, you may come in contact with a patron who is upset due to a problem or complaint, or who is behaving in an inappropriate manner. If this happens, please inform a staff member of the situation or, if the patron wishes, direct them to a staff person. Please do not try to resolve the situation yourself. These matters should be handled by staff members only.

Library Contact Information

The best way to reach a supervisor during hours that the library is closed is through email. If you do not know your supervisor's email address, you can email cardhelp@centrecountylibrary.org and the message will be forwarded to the correct supervisor.

During normal library hours, please call your library directly to let them know of any conflicts with your schedule.

Volunteer Benefits

The efforts of volunteers are greatly appreciated by the library staff, Library Board of Trustees, and patrons. We also hope your volunteer experience rewards you with the satisfaction and pleasure of donating your time to a worthy cause.

As a benefit of volunteers for the library, volunteers may receive expanded benefits such as extended checkout times for materials and waived fines. These privileges extend only to the volunteer (not family members) for the duration of their time as a volunteer.

Additionally, volunteers may request letters of reference from their supervisor after they have completed at least three months of volunteer service. Please contact your supervisor with the specifics of your request at least two weeks in advance.

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