



Policy Type: **Operational**

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Policy Title: Volunteers

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## **PURPOSE**

Milton Public Library's volunteer program provides opportunities for volunteers to participate in the operation of the library while performing a valuable service to the community, becoming more familiar with the library, and supplementing the efforts of paid staff. The implementation of the Volunteer Policy is aligned with the Library's Vision, Purpose, and Values, and Intellectual Freedom Policy.

Milton Public Library (MPL) acknowledges the contributions that volunteers make to MPL programming, collections, spaces, and services. MPL is committed to building strengthened connections with residents and communities.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all volunteers in all programs and services, with the exception of the Milton Public Library Board and its committees.

MPL is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for volunteers, grounded in tolerance and mutual respect. By embracing equity, MPL ensures fair treatment and opportunities for volunteers from all backgrounds, regardless of race, ethnic group, nationality, immigration status, socioeconomic status, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, language, religious affiliation, beliefs, age, or any other prohibited grounds.

## **Section I: Volunteer Program**

The volunteer program creates opportunities for the Milton Public Library to accomplish its goals by engaging and involving volunteers. Moreover, it provides volunteers with an opportunity to grow and give back to the community in meaningful ways.

The Library accepts as volunteers:

- Students participating in community service activities as an educational requirement
- Individuals participating in work programs provided by community health and social service agencies
- Students requiring internships or cooperative placements (not paid)
- Individuals referred by other volunteer programs
- Members of the community

With the exception of community members, in each case, an agreement must be in effect with the organization, school or program from which the volunteers originate and must identify responsibility for management and care of the volunteers.

## **Section 2: Definition of a Volunteer**

A volunteer is defined as any individual who chooses to perform services on behalf of the Milton Public Library, under the supervision of Library staff, without compensation or expectation of compensation, (beyond reimbursement for pre-approved expenses), and who performs a task at the direction of, or on behalf of, Library staff.

## **Section 3: Eligibility for Volunteering**

Opportunities for volunteer positions are considered by the Management team. The library accepts the service of any volunteer with the understanding that such service does not constitute an obstruction to or conflict with the provision of library services to users. Volunteers will not be used to displace staff or to undertake the work of members of the bargaining unit. Family members of paid staff are allowed to volunteer with the library but will not be placed under the direct supervision of their family members who are employees.

The minimum age requirement for volunteers is 14, except for students participating in community service activities as an educational requirement, in which case they must have completed Grade 8. Otherwise, volunteers will be recruited based on their suitability to perform a task on behalf of the Library. All volunteers under the age of 18 must provide signed parental acknowledgement on the application form.

## **Section 4: Requests for Volunteers**

Opportunities for volunteers are proposed by staff to the Management team. Written requests include a description of the volunteer assignment, duration of assignment, and a proposed start date. All staff should understand that successful recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting jobs. Upon agreement in principle by the Leadership team to implement a new volunteer supported program, the details of the new program will be reviewed and discussed with representatives of CUPE Local 4366, prior to implementation.

## **Section 5: Volunteer Position Descriptions**

Position descriptions are developed in consultation with staff before proceeding with recruitment. Volunteers are given clear, complete, and current descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of their assignment. The volunteer position descriptions are reviewed with the volunteer prior to beginning the assignment. They are reviewed and updated at least every three years or whenever a position substantially changes.

## **Section : Tasks that may be performed by Volunteers**

Volunteer tasks may include but are not limited to:

- delivery of materials to homebound patrons
- volunteer supported special projects and events
- care of library plants and gardens
- specialized reading programs
- Teen Advisory Group

The library strives to meet volunteer expectations and offer a satisfactory volunteer experience for both parties. However, it may be deemed necessary to explore options such as renegotiating the terms of the assignment, reassignment, referral to another organization or to local volunteer centres, or placement termination.

Volunteers who are at any time reassigned to a new position will be interviewed for that assignment and receive all appropriate training for success before they begin.

Volunteers will not perform any task or duty for which a license or certification is required if the volunteer doesn't possess such license or certification nor will volunteers be used to displace staff or to undertake the work of members of the bargaining unit.

## **Section 7: Application**

All volunteers must complete a volunteer application form. Application forms are available online at [www.beinspired.ca](http://www.beinspired.ca).

## **Section 8: Risk Management**

The Milton Public Library recognizes there are risks involved within each area of service provision. For the protection of staff and volunteers, the Library endeavours to carefully manage these risks in the following ways. All volunteers are supervised and report to a designated staff supervisor. A clear and accurate position description is developed and risk level for each position is assessed. Screening and training requirements are based on the risk level of the position.

## **Section 9: Screening**

The screening process at Milton Public Library follows the guidelines specified by the “Volunteer Screening” process recommended by *Volunteer Canada* and by following the Screening Check List (Appendix A). These steps include risk management, clear job descriptions, application forms, formal interviews, reference checks, orientation and training, supervision and follow-up, and Vulnerable Sector Screening Police Records Checks for adults, or a Police Information Check for anyone under the age of 18 (paid for by the Library). Individuals who refuse to comply will not be accepted as a volunteer.

Volunteers are interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, an assignment prior to being assigned. The interview determines the qualifications of the volunteer and their commitment to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. The interview should also answer any questions that the volunteer has about the library and the assignment. Volunteers perform their duties in the presence of at least one paid staff member. Each volunteer will have a specific staff member to whom they report and who will be responsible for day-to-day support and direction.

## **Section 10: Orientation and Ongoing Training**

Volunteers receive training to provide them with information on the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment; the operation of the program to which they are assigned; the purpose and requirements of the assignment; and hazards that may be encountered (Appendix B).

All volunteers shall receive training from their designated staff supervisor. The supervisor shall provide the volunteer with information on:

- Knowledge and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment
- The operation of the program encompassing their volunteer activity; and
- The purpose and requirements of the assignment
- Any risks associated with their task
- Other mandatory training programs such as Accessibility and Occupational Health and Safety (if applicable)

## **Section 11: Responsibilities of Volunteers**

Volunteers should actively perform their duties and remain loyal to the purpose, policies and procedures of the library. While on Milton Public Library property and/or while performing volunteer activities on behalf of the library, volunteers are expected to maintain a professional level of behaviour. Volunteers must obtain approval from appropriate staff prior to taking any action or making any statement which might affect or obligate the library. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the media, lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or financial obligations. Volunteers do not have access to any privileged information.

## **Section 12: Insurance**

Volunteers are responsible for their own health insurance and are provided with additional information to discuss with their insurance provider to protect themselves while serving as a volunteer. Volunteers are not covered by Milton Public Library's insurance for any damage or injury sustained during the provision of their volunteer service. Volunteers are not entitled to any of the benefits or WSIB normally provided by the Library to its employees. For this purpose all MPL volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Waiver (Appendix C).

Volunteers must be covered by their own vehicle insurance where their assignment involves the use of a vehicle. Volunteers are responsible for their own parking tickets and fines incurred during volunteer assignments.

## **Section 13: Absenteeism**

Regular attendance during all scheduled shifts is expected of every volunteer. This includes reporting on time, and continuing to volunteer to the end of the established time period. Volunteers, who, for any reason, cannot report to their assignment on time, must follow the procedures outlined and agreed to with their designated staff supervisor during orientation. Volunteers are encouraged to advise their immediate supervisor of any absence, whether anticipated or unforeseen, as soon as possible so that service standards can be maintained for all programs and events.

## **Section 14: Dress**

Volunteers are responsible for presenting a good public image, and must dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Volunteers must wear their identification badge while performing their assignments. In the event of an employer or union initiated work stoppage/ legal strike, volunteers will not cross the picket line in their capacity as a volunteer.

## **Section 15: Maintenance of Records**

A system of records is maintained on each volunteer. Volunteer records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as paid staff personnel records. All volunteer records scheduled for destruction shall be placed in confidential waste for destruction.

Volunteer records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as staff personnel records. All records will be kept on site for 6 years and 14 years off site after the individual has ceased to volunteer with the municipality in accordance with the Town's Records Retention By-law.

## **Section 16: Changes to Personal Information**

All volunteers are responsible for keeping their personnel records current regarding their personal information. Volunteers must notify the MPL as soon as possible, in writing, whenever they experience a change in legal name, address, telephone number; and training taken, emergency contacts, or any other changes / updates to their information.

**Section 17: Resignation**

Volunteers may, at any time, decide to discontinue their service with the Library. Notice of such a decision should be communicated, in writing, as soon as possible to their designated staff supervisor.

**Section 18: Unsatisfactory Performance and Dismissal**

Designated staff supervisors are responsible for addressing performance issues with volunteers. Every effort will be made to work with volunteers to improve performance and additional training will be given whenever possible. Volunteers may be asked to leave a position, if their performance is considered unsatisfactory. The Milton Public reserves the right to revoke volunteer permissions in cases where Library policies or procedures have been breached.

**Section 19: Evaluation**

Volunteers may be evaluated upon the completion of their volunteer duties. Volunteer evaluations will provide the volunteer with an opportunity to comment on their position, personal experience and the activities they are involved with; staff will comment on the volunteer's performance in the assigned position. Evaluation methods will vary depending on the volunteer position.

**Section 20: Volunteer Recognition**

All staff responsible for supervising volunteers are encouraged to undertake ongoing methods of recognition on a regular basis. Methods of informal recognition range from a simple "Thank you" to a concerted effort to include volunteers, as appropriate, in program and process planning, and implementation. Supervisors of volunteers are encouraged to find new and different ways of recognizing their volunteers on a regular basis. Recognition should be given as soon after the activity as possible.

**Section 21: Accountability**

The Director, Customer Experience has overall accountability for Volunteers.

Branch Managers and Public Service Librarians are responsible for delivering programs and services that engage volunteers and are accountable for ensuring compliance with the Volunteer Services Policy in their respective areas.

**Related Information**

Appendix A Screening Checklist  
Appendix B Orientation Checklist  
Appendix C Waiver