



VOLUNTEER

Handbook

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in volunteering
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an application and
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and pass a
background check.



FVRLibraries

FORT VANCOUVER REGIONAL LIBRARIES



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Thank you and welcome!

Thank you and welcome!

Thank you for becoming a volunteer for Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries. Our volunteers enrich library services and promote us in the community. In return, you'll have the opportunity to expand your knowledge of the library and the many services we offer.

FVRLibraries' volunteer program is one of the largest in southwest Washington, averaging 1500 or more volunteers with approximately 30,000 volunteer hours annually. Our volunteers are a diverse group, working together towards a common goal. A good team attitude is a must!

- We welcome volunteers of all ages and abilities.
- We welcome people of all cultures, genders, backgrounds, beliefs, skills and lived experiences.
- We have opportunities for groups and for individuals.

We're confident that your volunteer experience with FVRLibraries will be pleasant and rewarding. You'll receive:

- Orientation to the district (virtually or in person) and your branch
- Safety information as needed
- Training for your position
- A placement form, including location, schedule, and staff contact information

We hope this handbook will answer most of your questions about the library and our expectations for volunteers. If you have any questions, please call our volunteer coordinator at 360-906-5075.

What you can expect from us

Staff support

Your staff contact or volunteer coordinator can help you with anything related to your volunteer position or the library in general.

Training and communication

We provide training and support for each volunteer position. Some positions may also have a written description and an orientation. Applicants will be matched with open positions based on need, skills, interests, and availability (location and schedule).

Documentation or verification of hours

We keep a record of your hours worked for up to seven years and can verify hours worked with prospective employers and colleges or schools.

Assistance

If differences come up that aren't resolved with your library staff contact, please contact the volunteer coordinator at volunteer@fvrl.org or 360-906-5075.

Inclusion and knowledge

You'll be part of the library team. We hope you'll learn more about the library, acquire new skills, and gain new experiences as you volunteer. Most volunteers gain confidence as they help with programs or projects that help the community and/or increase literacy.





Personal satisfaction

There's always personal satisfaction in knowing you're making a difference in your community. Many volunteers also make friendships with others who value literacy and libraries.

Respectful treatment

All library volunteers are treated with respect. We value everyone's contribution and service to our libraries and community.

Appreciation



You'll be invited to our annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception, with drawings for gift items and certificates of appreciation available for your generous gift of time. We sincerely appreciate those who choose to share their valuable time with the library.

What we expect from you

All interested in volunteering **MUST** complete an application and those 18 & older **MUST** complete and pass a background check.



Share our commitment to excellence and service.

You're an important part of how we deliver our library services to the community.

Work positively with staff, patrons, and other volunteers.

Be respectful and courteous to everyone at all times, maintain a good team attitude, communicate positively with others, and follow up on requests and questions.

Remember, you help create the pleasant environment FVRLibraries intends for all. We need your help in making each day enjoyable and personally rewarding.



Be prompt.

If you'll be late for your shift or unable to report for work, email your library contact or the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible. We appreciate a day's notice except in the case of an emergency.



Contact us if you'd like your hours or volunteer assignment changed.

Please let your library staff contact or the volunteer coordinator know. We can't guarantee we'll have another opening, but we'll do our best to match everyone to positions of interest.

Keep your time sheet current.

We'll provide a time sheet for you to record your volunteer hours. Library contacts at each location will let you know where your time sheet is kept. Please start a new time sheet each month.

Update personal contact information as it changes.

Please notify your library contact or the volunteer coordinator of any change of address, telephone number, or name so our records stay current.

After training, know your duties and how to do them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly.

But know that questions are always welcome.

Report concerns or positive feedback to staff.

This applies to safety or behavior issues you notice, or positive comments you hear.



Library policies: What you need to know

Volunteers must follow all library policies adopted by the library Board of Trustees.

Please pay special attention to the Volunteer Policy (on page 8), the Rules of Conduct, the Collection Policy, and the Confidentiality of Patron and Circulation Records Policy. All our board policies can be found online at fvrl.org/policies.

All patron information is confidential.

Library staff and volunteers never discuss or disclose to any outside person what materials an individual has borrowed or subjects they have requested information for. (Washington State law: WAC 304-20-060)

FVRLibraries believes in intellectual freedom for its patrons of all ages.

Our Collection Policy (fvrl.org/collection-policy) states that the library collection is “a diverse source of information representing as many viewpoints as possible,” which is “constitutionally protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Washington State Constitution.” “Additionally, materials are circulated freely to all patrons regardless of age... People are free to select or reject materials for themselves and their own minor children but are not to infringe upon the freedom of others to read or inquire... The District does not stand in place of the parent.”



Volunteer Policy

The Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries Board of Trustees (the Board) recognizes the need for and value of volunteers as a resource to further the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District's (Library) ability to provide quality library service.

The Board believes that this collaborative effort can be beneficial to both the library and the individual volunteer. Benefits include fostering greater public interest in the library, and encouraging personal growth for the volunteer.

The library will seek the support of volunteers and volunteer organizations, to actively implement a responsible program of community partnerships, and use volunteer expertise to support existing staff.

It is the intent of the Board that volunteers be used only to enrich budgeted library services and programs and that no volunteers will be used to replace positions that are part of the Library's regularly funded service.

Board Approved: Original Policy April 9, 1990

Revised and reaffirmed: June 10, 2002

Revised: April 13, 2009

Revised: November 16, 2020





Volunteering A to Z

Appearance and attire

Volunteers represent the library while on duty, so it's important to have a neat and clean look. Appropriate workplace clothing is described as clean, neat, without holes, tears, frays, graphics, or logos, but dress comfortably and appropriately for the project you are helping with. If you'll be on your feet, be sure to wear comfortable shoes. Closed-toe shoes are required if working with books and/or carts.

Because the library provides information in a neutral manner, volunteers may not wear political paraphernalia (buttons, jewelry, T-shirts) while representing FVRLibraries. FVRL strongly supports volunteers' First Amendment right to speak out on topics that interest you on your own time.



Since employees and visitors to our libraries may have sensitivities and/or allergic reactions to various fragrances, we try to keep our facilities as scent-free as possible. Personal scented products that are noticeable to others may not be worn by employees or volunteers.

Bad weather

If the library doesn't open or needs to close early due to weather conditions, we will post it on our website at fvrl.org. When in doubt, check the website or call the library before trying to come in. Even if we're open, we want you to be safe, so please email to cancel your shift if conditions in your area are not safe for transportation.

Break rooms

Most of our facilities include a kitchen or break room for the use of staff and volunteers. Most kitchens are equipped with microwave ovens and refrigerators. Some have vending machines where volunteers can purchase snacks or refreshments during a break.

Cell phone usage

Out of respect for coworkers, we ask that you turn your cell phone ringer to vibrate when volunteering. At libraries, we try to keep noise to a minimum for those who may be working or studying nearby. If you are leading a program or group, please silence your cell phone during the program so it is not a distraction.

Cell phone calls or returned calls should occur only a couple of times during a scheduled shift, preferably during break time. We appreciate your focus on the help that is needed while you are volunteering. Receiving calls related to transportation or an emergency is fine, however.





Holidays

All of our locations will be closed on the following days, and Vancouver Mall Library is also closed on Easter. Be sure to check with individual locations if you have a question.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Native American Heritage Day (day after Thanksgiving)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve after 6 pm

Insurance

The library maintains a Volunteer Insurance Policy that provides accident medical coverage and accidental death and dismemberment coverage for volunteers while they are performing work for the library. All registered volunteers are covered while volunteering.

In addition, the library's general liability policy provides volunteers with protection for bodily injury, property damage, or personal injury caused by an occurrence arising out of the performance of the volunteer's duties as long as the volunteer has not been negligent in some way.

Introductory period

Your first 30 days of volunteering at FVRLibraries are considered an introductory period, a time for getting to know your fellow volunteers and library staff, to learn the tasks involved with your position, and to become familiar with our services.

During this period, we'll review how well you fit in the volunteer position, and you can determine if FVRLibraries is a good match for your interests. If during this period, you feel you are not suited for the position, or your performance doesn't meet the expectations in the position description and this manual, we may release you or have you try another position if one is available.

Please understand that completion of the introductory period does not guarantee continued volunteering for any specified period of time.



Name tags

Certain programs or activities may require that you wear a name tag provided by the library.

Parking

Several of our facilities have parking lots or limited library and staff/volunteer parking. The City of Vancouver limits parking to two hours and does issue parking tickets to violators parked in the lot at Vancouver Community Library, but there is metered street parking. For instruction about parking in other locations, check with your library staff contact.

Patron questions

If a patron asks for help beyond the scope of your assignment, please refer them to a staff member. You can answer directional questions. For example, if someone asks “Where are the restrooms?” it’s fine to point them in that direction.

Safety

At FVRLibraries, we always put safety first.

- We have an in-house safety committee that keeps safety tools updated.
- We also train our library staff for bloodborne pathogen procedures, CPR, and anti-harassment, and they are there to support the volunteers.
- Each work unit also has a stocked first aid kit available for staff and volunteers.





You will receive an orientation soon after you begin volunteering. Please be aware of the fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and all exits at your location. If a fire or fire drill happens, please evacuate the area as quickly as possible. Staff members will be evacuating the building and will need to concentrate on their procedures. Most locations have a sign-in area, for volunteers, which helps staff to know which volunteers are scheduled at the time. Generally staff will meet up with volunteers in the parking lot to make sure everyone is accounted for or has left the building.

Your orientation will also include instruction on safe lifting procedures (push rather than pull, and lift with your legs). Always keep safety first. If you feel a need for a refresher, be sure to ask.

Two of our larger library branches (Cascade Park Community Library and Vancouver Community Library) have security guards. Please contact them if you observe or encounter an unsafe issue.



Report any accident or illness that may happen to you, a staff member, another volunteer, or a patron. You may be required to fill out a report form.

Security

Maintaining the security of FVRLibraries volunteers, staff, and buildings is everyone's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course. For example:

- Always keep cash properly secured (most common for book stores or book sales). If you are aware that cash is not securely stored, immediately inform the person in charge.
- When you leave FVRLibraries' buildings, make sure all entrances are properly locked and secured.

Departure or dismissal

Departure

If life brings changes and you are no longer able to commit to volunteering, please tell your library staff contact at least two weeks in advance. This will allow us to make sure your assignment is covered and ensure a smooth transition. If you are leaving because of a negative experience with the volunteer program or library district, please let us know, and give us your suggestions for improvement. The volunteer coordinator will schedule an exit interview by request (volunteer@fvrl.org or 360-906-5075).

Dismissal

Volunteers who don't follow these guidelines or perform their volunteer duties satisfactorily are subject to dismissal. Except in cases of immediate dismissal (see below), the volunteer may have an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff.

FVRLibraries has the right to request a volunteer to leave immediately for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- A no-show absence of more than two times without communication or a valid emergency
- Refusing to follow directions from library staff or abide by library policies
- Unwillingness or inability to support and further the library's mission or the objectives of the program

- Lies or falsification of information on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records
- Breach of confidentiality of personal information
- Misusing legally prescribed or over-the-counter drugs or other substances in a manner that compromises performance and/or safety. However, this does not prohibit volunteers from the lawful use and possession of prescribed medications while volunteering.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing volunteer assignments
- Theft of property, embezzlement, or misuse of agency funds, equipment, or material
- Possession or use of a dangerous weapon on FVRLibraries property, even if the volunteer has a permit to carry the weapon
- Harassment or discrimination of any kind
- Abuse or mistreatment of library patrons or coworkers
- Illegal, violent, or unsafe acts

Volunteers are expected to report any prohibited conduct or concerns to library staff and/or Human Resources.



Learn more about **FVRLibraries**

Our mission: To strengthen our communities through knowledge, experiences, and creativity.

Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries serves almost 500,000 people over 4,200 square miles in Clark, Klickitat, Skamania, and part of Cowlitz counties. Learn more about us at fvrl.org.

We offer the community many services:

- **15 library locations** and two **bookmobiles**
- **A large collection of materials** to check out, including books, eBooks, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, magazines, newspapers, and more
- **Librarians who answer questions** through email and phone calls and can be scheduled for one-on-one help
- **Free Wi-Fi** and public internet computers
- **Books by Mail** for the homebound
- **Interlibrary loan** services for borrowing books the district doesn't own
- Fun, educational, and cultural **events** for all ages at our libraries

- **Meeting rooms** and other amenities available to the public
- **Programs** at schools and community centers
- **Online resources** for all ages available with your library card, including scholarly journals, newspapers, language-learning resources, test prep, legal information, genealogy, career help, crafts, and more
- **A monthly library email newsletter, *Library News*.** Let the volunteer coordinator know if you would like to be on the mailing list, or sign up on our webpage at fvrl.org/newsroom.



Contact information

Name of volunteer _____

Your staff contact: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

As a backup, you can always contact our district volunteer coordinator, who works out of our Operations Center:

Sherry Braga

2018 Grand Blvd
Vancouver WA 98661
360-906-5075
volunteer@fvrl.org



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