



Volunteer Information Handbook

Revised February 2022



WELCOME!

Dear Volunteer Applicant,

We are very excited that you are interested in volunteering for the Bedford Public Library System ("BPLS"). Our mission is to provide equal access to library materials, information, and services relevant to the community for the purposes of learning and enjoyment in the areas of personal, professional, and educational needs. To fulfill its mission, the library system employs a knowledgeable staff committed to excellent public service.

This Volunteer Information Handbook ("Handbook") is an opportunity for you to see if volunteering for our system is something that you will enjoy. It will also be a helpful guide to you when you begin. The Handbook is designed to help you understand the following:

- o What you can expect from us
- o What we expect from you
- o Shift procedures and requirements
- o Frequently asked questions

If there are volunteer opportunities available at the time your application is submitted, your application will be reviewed and you will be contacted by the Volunteer Coordinator to schedule your first work time. All applications will be kept on file for six months.

Thank you for your interest in our library. We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions or if you need any further information, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at (540) 586-8911 ext. 1112.

Sincerely,

Jenny Novalis
Library Director

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

As a BPLS volunteer, here is what you can expect of us:

Equal Opportunity

The Bedford Public Library System will not select a volunteer based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or the presence of sensory, mental, or physical disability. We will operate within the principles of equal opportunity guidelines set forth in federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Open Door Policy

The Bedford Public Library System practices an open door policy in which any volunteer who wishes to meet with the Library Director can do so by setting an appointment through the Volunteer Coordinator.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

As a BPLS volunteer, here are the expectations we have of you:

Completion of Required Forms

After your application has been approved, and before you can begin volunteering at the library, there are two forms that we ask you or your parent/guardian to complete. You will find copies of both forms at the end of this handbook.

Appearance

BPLS is a public service organization and expects all volunteers to dress appropriately for a business environment. Each volunteer is expected to exercise good judgment and professional decision-making as he/she chooses workplace attire.

Administrators and supervisors may approve alternate employee attire for a variety of reasons such as accommodations for medical conditions, religious practices, inclement weather, and library events or activities.

Drugs, Alcohol and Cannabis

BPLS recognizes that the abuse of drugs and alcohol poses a serious threat to the safety of volunteers and employees, to the operations of BPLS, and to the public. Accordingly, the use, possession, manufacture, distribution, or sale of such substances on library premises is not allowed. Volunteers may not work while under the influence or with a detectable presence of drugs or alcohol in their system. On-the-job or any off-the-job abuse of such substances which adversely affects a volunteer's performance or other library interests is prohibited. This prohibition includes any prescription narcotics unless the Volunteer Coordinator has expressly approved a volunteer's possession and use of while at work.

Internet Usage

Computer workstations and the network system are the property of BPLS and are intended to be used for library business. In no event is a volunteer permitted to access sexually explicit sites or conduct commercial activities. BPLS reserves the right to monitor use of this network to ensure network security and adherence to library policy as well as to respond to allegations of suspected volunteer misuse or misconduct.

Harassment

It is the policy of BPLS to promote a productive work environment and to be intolerant of verbal or physical conduct by any volunteer, employee, or patron that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

Volunteers are expected to maintain a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity. No form of harassment or other offensive conduct will be tolerated, including harassment for the following reasons: race, national origin, religion, disability, pregnancy, age, military status, sexual orientation, or gender.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and in as impartial and confidential a manner as possible. Volunteers are required to cooperate in any investigation. Retaliation against any person for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Any volunteer who is found to have violated the harassment policy will be released from his or her volunteer responsibilities. A volunteer may also be subject to dismissal if he or she has made a capricious or unfounded charge of sexual harassment.

Each supervisor has a responsibility to keep the workplace free from any form of harassment, and in particular, sexual harassment. No supervisor is to threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that a volunteer's refusal or willingness to submit to sexual advances will affect the volunteer's terms or conditions of service.

Individuals who experience sexual harassment should make it clear to the offending person that such behavior is offensive to them. If such behavior continues, the offended volunteer should bring the matter to the appropriate supervisor's attention or to the attention of other appropriate officials.

Volunteer Conduct

All volunteers are expected to represent the Bedford Public Library System (BPLS) to the public in a professional manner, which is courteous, efficient and helpful.

BPLS expects basic tact and courtesy towards the public and staff, and adherence to library policies, procedures, safety rules, and safe work practices. Compliance with directions from supervisors and providing orderly and cost-effective services to BPLS patrons are also required. In addition, volunteers are expected to preserve and protect library equipment, grounds, facilities, and resources.

VOLUNTEER/SHIFT REQUIREMENTS

1. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old.
2. Volunteers must work a minimum of 1 hour per shift.
3. If you are selected to participate in our volunteer program, the Volunteer Coordinator will work with you to create a work schedule.
4. Volunteers should make every effort to come when they are scheduled to work. Notify the Volunteer Coordinator at 540-586-8911 or nheddings@bpls.org as soon as possible if you are unable to work your scheduled shift (see FAQ #5).
5. Volunteers are expected to sign in and out every time they work. The work log is kept at the Library Services Desk.
6. The Volunteer identification badge must be worn at all times.
7. Refer all reference questions to the Library Services or Youth Services staff.
8. Help us keep the library tidy. Pick up and throw away any trash. Gather unwanted books from tables and shelves and deliver them to the Library Services staff.
9. Cell phone use is not allowed while on your volunteer shift.
10. Friends and family members are not allowed to join you while you are on duty.
11. While volunteers are working, personal items should be left behind the Library Services desk or in the safe place the Volunteer Coordinator designates.
12. If the Volunteer Coordinator is not available, refer to the library desk staff for your next task.

SHIFT PROCEDURE

Beginning your shift

- Arrive 10 minutes before your shift begins.
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator that you have arrived. You will be given a safe place to put your personal items, coat, backpack, etc.
- The Volunteer Coordinator will give you an identification pin and explain what is on the agenda for the day.
- Sign in.

During your shift

- Perform the assigned tasks in accordance with the information outlined in this Handbook.
- If you complete your assigned tasks prior to the end of your shift, notify the Volunteer Coordinator. If there are no other tasks available, you may end your shift.

Ending your shift

- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator that your shift has ended and that you are leaving.
- Sign out and leave your identification badge with the Volunteer Coordinator.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. **How will I know if the library is closed due to inclement weather?**

In order to determine whether or not the library has been closed or delayed due to inclement weather, call (540) 586-8911 and the answering message will have that information recorded.

2. **Does the Library close for holidays?**

BPLS is closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	3 rd Monday in January
President's Day	3 rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1 st Monday in September
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4 th Thursday in November
Day after Thanksgiving	Following Friday
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25
Day after Christmas	December 26

The library will be closed on any other day appointed by the Library Board.

3. **Will I get a lunch break?**

Lunch breaks may or may not be given depending on the length of your shift as well as the time of day you are scheduled to work. The Volunteer Coordinator will determine whether or not a lunch break is necessary during the scheduling process.

4. **How will I know if what I am wearing is appropriate?**

See our policy on *Appearance* in this Handbook for details. Any questions about the dress code can be answered by the Volunteer Coordinator.

5. **What happens if I am unable to come in when I am scheduled and I forget to call?**

When you are scheduled to work, the BPLS staff members rely on you to help get tasks completed. It is an inconvenience to our staff when you are expected to report for a shift and you fail to notify someone that you will not be able to make it. Therefore, if you fail to notify the Volunteer Coordinator that you are unable to work when scheduled on more than one occasion, you will be relieved of your volunteer duties. See #4 of *Volunteer/Shift Requirements* in this Handbook.



Bedford Public Library System

Serving Our Community Since 1900

321 North Bridge Street
Bedford, VA 24523
www.bplsonline.org

Volunteer Agreement Volunteer Program

As a volunteer of the Bedford Public Library System, I agree

- To abide by the library's policies and procedures,
- To maintain confidentiality of all information regarding use of the library by an individual, understanding this to be required by Library policy and by State law,
- To dress appropriately and act courteously to patrons and employees,
- To maintain high ethical standards and be law abiding in all respects,
- To accept the supervision of the staff member assigned to me.
- To report on time as scheduled and report to the staff member assigned to me, to notify my department ahead of time if I am not able to work, and to record time worked,
- To give notice if I no longer wish to volunteer at the library, and
- To sign the Liability Release Form.

I certify that I have read, understand and agree to the requirements listed above.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Volunteers under 18 year of age must have consent of a parent or legal guardian:

I consent to allow my child/ward _____ to provide volunteer services to the Bedford Public Library System. I further certify that I am the parent/legal guardian of the above mentioned child.

Printed Name _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____

Date _____



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Release of Liability Volunteer Program

I understand and agree that the Bedford County Public Library System shall not be liable for any loss, damage or injury resulting from any acts on my part, and I agree to hold harmless and indemnify the Bedford Public Library System from the results of such acts.

I personally assume all risks in connection with my participation as a volunteer and I hereby expressly forever release the Bedford Public Library System, its officials, agents, employees, and volunteers, from any acts of active or passive negligence on the part of Bedford Public Library System, its officials, agents, employees and volunteers.

I understand that I am not covered by worker's compensation.

I authorize the Bedford Public Library System to seek emergency medical treatment for me in the event of accident, injury or illness.

I understand that my volunteer assignment may be terminated at any time by myself or by the library.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

This form must also be signed by a parent or legal guardian if the volunteer is under 18 years of age.

I give permission for my child/ward to participate as a volunteer and agree to be bound by the conditions stated in this waiver and release form.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____