

Rutherford County Library System

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in serving as a volunteer with the Rutherford County Library System. Help us improve lives and build a stronger community by empowering our community to Read, Connect, Learn, and Share.

More information about volunteer opportunities at each branch can be found at www.rutherfordcountylibrary.org/volunteer

Please note these few things about getting started as a volunteer at the library. Most applicants will be called or emailed and asked for an interview which usually takes 15-20 minutes. A schedule will be worked out with the appropriate supervisor if we all agree that we are a good fit for one another. Training usually occurs on the job.

Volunteer Program Philosophy

Volunteers are members of a team that are dedicated to offering skills, unique abilities and time without pay to the Library. Volunteers are rewarded by learning new skills and helping the library create a more educated and literate community. We recognize our volunteers by ensuring that they are given opportunities that match their desires and skill sets, by organizing special events and by offering sincere thanks. We endeavor to never waste a volunteer's time.

Volunteer Rights

- Receive a clear comprehensive job description
- Be carefully interviewed and appropriately assigned
- Receive training
- Do meaningful and satisfying work
- Be supported in your role
- Be safe on the job
- Have choices and feel comfortable about saying "no"
- Receive feedback on your work
- Receive recognition for your contribution

Volunteer Responsibilities (as a volunteer you are expected to)

- Be reliable and punctual (Please see details under “attendance “below)
- Be trustworthy
- Respect confidentiality
- Respect the rights of people you work with
- Carry out the specified job description or let us know if the assignment does not meet your expectations or needs
- Give feedback (i.e. participate in evaluations when asked)
- Be accountable and accept feedback
- Be committed to the program
- Avoid overextending yourself
- Acknowledge decisions made by the staff or the organization
- Address areas of conflict with supervisor or library director
- Undertake training
- Sign in and out when volunteering
- Ask for support when it is needed
- Notify your supervisor if you can no longer volunteer

Age

The preferred minimum age for volunteers is 13. Some volunteer positions may be limited to specific ages

Special Needs Volunteers and their Caregivers/Guides

Special needs volunteers who are accompanied by a caregiver or guide - both the volunteer and the caregiver/guide will need to complete a volunteer application. Both of their donated hours should be counted on any hour reports.

Personal Appearance

Volunteers should dress neatly in clean and presentable clothing. T-shirts with inappropriate messages, short skirts, low cut tops and other revealing garments are not allowed. Volunteers, just like library staff, must present a professional appearance to the public. Because of the nature of the work we do, we suggest you wear comfortable, closed toe shoes to avoid injury from falling books.

Attendance

Each supervisor will work with individual volunteers to establish a mutually agreeable schedule. Volunteers are expected to abide by their schedule and to notify their direct supervisor in the event of a change. Habitual absenteeism may result in dismissal from the volunteer program. An active volunteer is one who has given us at least three hours within the last two months.

Advance notification of vacations and other absences is appreciated.

References

Library Staff can give you a reference for educational purposes only. Staff are not allowed to give a professional reference.

Inclement Weather and Emergencies

There are times when a library may be closed due to inclement weather or other emergency. The volunteer should call the library for which they are volunteering if there is any question about the open hours of the building. The inclement weather line is 828-287-6063. The main library number is 828-287-6115.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed inside any library building. Library staff can direct you to designated smoking areas outside the building.

Beverages or food

Those volunteers who require a snack break should discuss options with their volunteer supervisor. Breaks are usually reserved for those who work 3 or more hours at one time.

Behavior

As a volunteer, you are representing Rutherford County Library System to the public. All volunteers are expected to behave in a professional manner, especially when addressing a library patron.

Drug and Alcohol Use

Any Rutherford County Library System volunteer who is discovered possessing, using, selling, or transferring alcohol or illegal drugs will be immediately dismissed. Appropriate authorities will be notified.

Criminal Activity

Any Rutherford County Library System volunteer committing a criminal activity, which includes, but is not limited to theft, vandalism, drug abuse, assault, making threatening statements, or carrying a concealed weapon on library property while on or off duty, will be dismissed. Appropriate authorities will be notified.

Refusal and Dismissal

Rutherford County Library System staff has the right to refuse or dismiss a volunteer. Active volunteers who violate any Rutherford County Library System policy or do not competently fulfill their volunteer duties after a reasonable amount of training and supervision will be dismissed. If you miss your first scheduled day or if two absences occur without notification that is tantamount to a resignation.

Corrective Action

Corrective action may be taken if the volunteer's work is unsatisfactory. Corrective action is within the discretion of the supervisor and may include:

1. Additional supervision
2. Reassignment
3. Retraining with possible suspension
4. Referral to another volunteer position
5. Dismissal from the volunteer program

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the program or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. Dismissal is within the discretion of supervisor.

As a volunteer for the Rutherford County Library System I,
_____, have read, understand and agree to the responsibilities of being a volunteer as outlined in the RCLS volunteer handbook. I pledge to:

- Advance the mission of the Rutherford County Library System
- Arrive on time
- Do my best with the tasks assigned to me
- Accept supervision graciously
- Obey the library's rules
- Conduct myself in a manner befitting a representative of the public library
- Do my part to uphold the high standards of library service

A positive attitude is held in high regard

I have read, understand and agree to the responsibilities of being a volunteer as outlined in the Rutherford County Library System Volunteer Handbook.

I agree to abide by the following guidelines for confidentiality. I will not discuss a patron's library account. If I have a concern or question, I will bring it directly to my supervisor or other library staff member.

- Should a library patron voice a complaint, describe a conflict, or begin to discuss a problem with me, I will encourage that patron to discuss the issue with the library staff. I understand that as a volunteer, I am neither asked, nor expected to, address patrons' individual concerns.
- When participating in a library work environment, or during conversations with library staff, I may learn confidential information about the library's patrons (such as problems with accounts, lost items, overdue fines, borrowing habits). I will treat all information as confidential. I will not discuss it with others.
- I agree to maintain the highest level of discretion in regard to confidential information, files or personal data on library patrons and staff. At no time will I discuss confidential information, files or personal data with other volunteers or patrons.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Thank you for helping us to empower our community to Read, Connect, Learn, and Share!