



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

WORCESTER  
  
PUBLIC LIBRARY



## Welcome to the Worcester Public Library!

You are joining a dedicated group of dedicated volunteers who help with myriad tasks ranging from ensuring our patrons are easily able to locate library materials, to assisting our librarians with events and special projects, to providing behind-the-scenes administrative support.

While the work performed by our volunteers varies greatly, one thing is consistent: the gifts of your time and talents play a vital role in helping us provide outstanding service to our community. Your volunteer efforts help the Worcester Public Library further our vision of being a welcoming destination and leading provider of resources to inform, enlighten and enrich our diverse community. Our staff and patrons alike are grateful for your contributions. We hope that your experiences here are meaningful and rewarding and we look forward to working closely with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Lindsay". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cheryl" being more prominent than the last name "Lindsay".

Cheryl Lindsay  
Human Resources Assistant  
Volunteer Coordinator



## Overview

The Volunteer Program of the Worcester Public Library aims to provide meaningful opportunities for residents to give back to our community by supporting the library's mission and goals, while developing critical skills and learning about everything the library has to offer.

The Human Resources Office facilitates volunteer opportunities, recruitment and onboarding, and tracks volunteer contributions. It serves as the primary point of contact for individuals and community organizations looking for opportunities to get involved and as a resource for current and past volunteers. Internships and placements from community partner organizations are coordinated through the Human Resources Office.

### Contact Information:

[mywpl.org/volunteer](https://mywpl.org/volunteer)

Email: [volunteer@mywpl.org](mailto:volunteer@mywpl.org)

### Staff:

Peggy Lelievre

Human Resources & Development Manager

508-799-1642

[plelievre@mywpl.org](mailto:plelievre@mywpl.org)

Cheryl Lindsay

Human Resources Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator

508-799-1675

[clindsay@mywpl.org](mailto:clindsay@mywpl.org)



# Benefits

## Satisfaction

You will play an invaluable role in connecting our patrons to our many resources, all while meeting new people and working as part of a team.

## Knowledge

You will gain greater insight into how the library system operates and learn more about the materials, services, and programs offered by the WPL.

## Experience

Through your volunteerism at WPL you will gain experiences and develop skills that can be useful as you seek employment or admission to college.



## References from the Library/Letters of Confirmation

Upon request, the Human Resources Office will issue a letter including the hours volunteered and dates of service.

## Volunteer Recognition

The Worcester Public Library's Volunteer Recognition event is held annually each summer and provides an opportunity for library staff to formally thank volunteers for their commitment and contributions. Volunteers have the chance to meet other library volunteers and learn about the accomplishments of library volunteers over the course of the year.

## Tax Deductions

Volunteers may be able to deduct non-reimbursed expenditures incurred while serving in the library. Automobile mileage, bus or cab fare, and parking fees are examples of deductible items. Volunteers may not deduct the value of their services. Consult your tax advisor or IRS Publication 526, Deductions for Charitable Contributions, for a complete description.

## Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Volunteers age 55 and over may be eligible for additional benefits through Worcester Area RSVP, a non-profit organization that is a part of the Senior Corps program operating nationally by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). For more information please contact RSVP directly by visiting [rsvpworchester.org](http://rsvpworchester.org) or calling 508-791-7787.



# Requirements for Volunteering

## Prerequisites

Prior to volunteering you must:

- Submit a completed volunteer application to the Human Resources Office
- Pass CORI and SORI background checks
- Attend a Volunteer Orientation

## Age

You must be at least 14 years old to volunteer at the Worcester Public Library. If you're under 18 years, a parent/legal guardian must complete and sign the parental consent portion of the volunteer application.

## Commitment

We request that volunteers make a minimum three month commitment to a regular weekly schedule, as staff members count on your consistent attendance.





# Volunteer Policies, Procedures & Expectations

## Orientation and Training

Every volunteer will attend an orientation to volunteering at WPL that includes library policies and procedures, a brief history, and tour of the library. Volunteers will receive more in-depth and specific training from their departmental supervisor.

## Schedule and Attendance

The Human Resources Office will work with you and your supervisor to determine a mutually convenient schedule. Typically, you will have a regular weekly schedule. Once your schedule has been established, the staff count on your attendance. Therefore, please notify your supervisor or the Human Resources Office as soon as possible if you are going to be absent.

## Supervision

Every volunteer will be assigned and report to a departmental supervisor. This supervisor is responsible for providing job-specific training and maintaining an appropriate level of supervision. Your supervisor will be your first contact for answering any questions.

## Examples of Volunteer Tasks

Below is a sampling of volunteer opportunities. Note that the volunteer needs of the library vary over time and by location. We will do our best to match your skills and interests with library needs. Feel free to inquire about other possible opportunities or branch placements.

- Shelving Assistant
- Children's Program Assistant
- Administrative Assistant
- Shelf Reader
- Book Sale Assistant (Friends of WPL)
- Food For Thought Bookstore Assistant (Friends of WPL)

## Volunteer Timesheet Procedures

Volunteers are responsible for signing in and out for each shift, noting on the timesheet provided the start and end time of the shift, number of hours (to the nearest one-quarter hour), and a brief description of the task or assignment. Timesheets will be collected monthly.

## Letters of Confirmation

Upon request, the Human Resources Office will provide you with verification of your volunteer hours. Please provide at least one week for the office to generate a confirmation letter.

## Resignation

If you are no longer able to fulfill your volunteer duties, notify the Human Resources Office in writing as soon as possible.

## Holidays

The library, including all branches, will be closed on the following dates:

**New Year's Day:** January 1

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** Third Monday in January, preceding Sunday

**President's Day:** Third Monday in February, preceding Sunday

**Patriots' Day:** Third Monday in April, preceding Sunday

**Memorial Day:** Last Monday in May

**Juneteenth:** June 19

**Independence Day:** July 4

**Labor Day:** First Monday in September, preceding Saturday – Sunday

**Columbus Day:** Second Monday in October

**Veterans Day:** November 11

**Thanksgiving Day:** Fourth Thursday in November

**Christmas Day:** December 25

## Inclement weather

You will find information about any library closings, delayed openings, and early closings by visiting [mywpl.org](http://mywpl.org) or by calling 508-799-1655. Please call to notify your supervisor or the Human Resources Office if you are unable to make your scheduled shift.





## Parking

The Worcester Public Library will validate McGrath lot parking for volunteers at the Main Library. To do so, bring the ticket you pull at the gate to the Human Resources office when you arrive to volunteer. Free parking is available at all other branches.

## Badges

Every volunteer will be issued a name badge, which is to be worn at all times while volunteering. Some volunteers will be provided badges that grant them access to nonpublic areas, as required by the volunteer's duties. Badges should only be utilized while volunteering. If you misplace your badge, promptly notify the Volunteer Coordinator to obtain a replacement.

## Lockers/Personal Belongings

The Volunteer Coordinator or your supervisor will advise you as to where you may store your personal belongings during your shift.



## Customer Service

Volunteers and staff members alike are expected to provide exceptional, friendly customer service to all patrons. When interacting with patrons, greet and ask how you may assist them. If you are unable to help a patron, accompany them to the appropriate staff member. If that staff member is not available provide the patron with the appropriate contact information.

## Reference Questions

While you are volunteering, patrons may see you working and assume that you are a librarian. If someone asks for your assistance you may respond in the following manner, "The best way to proceed with your search would be to speak with a librarian. They have extensive knowledge of the available resources and would be happy to assist you." Accompany the patron to the reference desk and ask the librarian for assistance. Librarians are trained to interview a patron to determine what they really need.

You may answer directional questions (e.g. "Where are the restrooms?") or questions concerning the location of specific items. If you have any difficulty locating the item, immediately accompany the patron to the reference desk for a librarian's assistance.

## Dress Code

While working, volunteers represent the library to the public. As such, volunteers are expected to dress in a neat manner that is appropriate for their duties. While it is important to dress comfortably, especially for certain volunteer tasks that are more physical in nature, please avoid clothing with distracting images or logos, articles that are ripped, torn, or unwashed, and "flip flop" style shoes.

## Confidentiality

Any patron information or other library records you may come across during your volunteering must be kept confidential in accordance with WPL policies and state laws regarding library records.

## Privacy

If a patron requests, staff and volunteers must give their first names, but are not required to provide their last names, nor should they give out the names of co-workers or any other personal information. It is good practice to inform your supervisor and the Human Resources Office if a patron has requested your name, and any relevant information regarding your interaction.

## Volunteers Working with Children

Volunteers who work in the Youth Services Division, or otherwise volunteer with children, must agree to the Rules of Conduct for Volunteers Working with Children, which are designed to protect a vulnerable population. The Rules of Conduct specifically cover the following: Volunteers are not to indulge any child with gifts of money, food, or presents (donations to the library as a whole are welcome). Volunteers shall not arrange to meet a child outside of the library. Volunteers are not to give a child or children a ride home or elsewhere or take a child or children out of the library unless assisting with an official outing accompanied by staff.

## Phone Usage

The use of cell phones during your shift is not permitted, except in the case of emergencies. Please be sure to silence or turn off your phone during your shift.





## Headphones

The use of headphones while volunteering is not permitted. Your full attention is required to ensure accuracy and to be alert to those patrons who may need assistance.

## Reading

While performing your volunteer tasks you may come across materials that are of interest to you. Resist the temptation to read during your shift. Instead, put the items aside to read on your break or check out at the end of your shift.

## Voices Carry

Be mindful that conversations with patrons, staff members, and other volunteers should be carried on in a normal tone.

## Emergencies

Immediately report any emergency situation or accident to your supervisor. Your supervisor will alert you to any emergency procedures.

## Change in Assignment

If you wish to change your volunteer assignment or location, please contact the Human Resources Office. We will do our best to accommodate your request.

## Address/Emergency Contact

Please inform the Human Resources Office as soon as possible of any changes to your address, phone number, or emergency contact information.

## **Friends of the Worcester Public Library**

The Friends of the Worcester Public Library is a separate non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to enhancing the library's services. The Friends promote public awareness of the library and its resources, raise funds to support library programs and activities, and advocate legislative support of the library. The Friends of WPL host semi-annual book sales and run the Food for Thought Bookstore.

## **Resolving Problems**

If a problem arises relating to your volunteer assignment, promptly bring it to the attention of your supervisor. Generally a mutually satisfactory solution can be reached. If, however, their response is unsatisfactory or you have unanswered questions you may contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Dismissal of Volunteers**

Volunteers, like staff, must fulfill their duties, are accountable for their work, and must follow library policies and procedures. Library staff will work with volunteers to resolve any issues that arise, however volunteers may be dismissed for failure to perform assigned duties, failure to meet minimum standards of performance, or for violating library policies.

## **Internships**

Internships are available on a limited basis and coordinated through the Human Resources Office. Please contact the Human Resources Office no less than six weeks prior to the start of your internship and provide the dates of service, number of hours, and all other internship requirements.



## Group Volunteer Projects

Group volunteer projects are available on a limited basis. Please contact the Human Resources Office at least six weeks prior to your desired date of service.

## Our Commitment to Volunteers

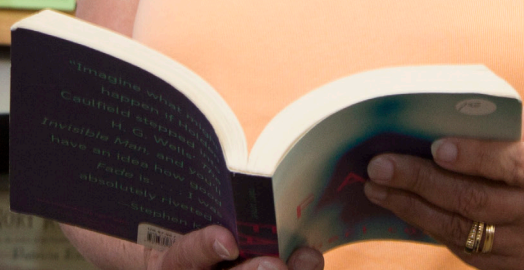
The Worcester Public Library will:

- Match the Volunteer Candidate with opportunities that meet their interests and skill set
- Respect volunteer's time, interests, abilities, service, and commitment to the library
- Conduct orientation to the Library System
- Provide a welcoming environment
- Provide appropriate training
- Honor three month commitment
- Maintain appropriate levels of supervision
- Be available to answer questions and provide respectful feedback
- Be proactive in seeking solutions to problems

## Volunteer Commitment to WPL

As a Volunteer, I pledge to:

- Thoroughly and accurately complete assigned tasks
- Meet three month commitment term
- Seek answers to questions
- Respect staff time – be reliable and prompt; notify WPL of any absences
- Follow library policies and procedures
- Be willing to take direction from supervisors
- Be proactive in seeking solutions to problems





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Worcester, MA 01608  
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