



TOPSHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
a community center for all ages



VOLUNTEER MANUAL ***2016***

Topsham Public Library Mission Statement and Service Objectives

Our Mission:

Libraries are places of lifelong learning that are directly tied to a community's quality of life. The Topsham Public Library provides residents of all ages with books, informational resources, technology and services to stimulate personal growth and enrichment while serving as a center of study and community activities.

Over-Arching Service Objectives:

- To provide a center for reading, writing, study and discovery
- To provide an opportunity for learning with informational resources in a variety of formats for all community members
- To provide an educational resource supporting lifelong learning
- To connect patrons to the Internet through public access
- To promote literacy and encourage an interest in reading
- To be a community center for exhibits, programs of interest and meetings
- To provide library reference services (Topsham Public Library Long Range Plan FY2012-15)

I. History of the Topsham Public Library

The first library facility in Topsham was established in 1803 as a "social library for the purpose of promoting knowledge". In 1931, the first public library was incorporated by a group of community-spirited women who established The Topsham Public Library on the second floor of the Androscoggin Firehouse. In 1941, following that tradition, Sarah Whitten bequeathed her family home at 8 Pleasant Street, which became the library's location for the next sixty years.

From its conception the Topsham Public Library filled a vital community need for library services and meeting space. Organizations such as Scouts, 4-H Club, American Red Cross, Garden Clubs, the DAR, the Topsham Farm Bureau, and the Village Improvement Association used the library as a meeting place.

As Topsham's population grew from 2,000 to near 10,000, increasing demands were placed on the town's library. It became apparent to the staff and Board of Trustees that the Whitten home had become inadequate, and a new library facility became an important item in Topsham's long range plan. In 2000, the library moved to a temporary location at the Navy Annex. The Board of Trustees began in earnest to plan for the new facility.

In May of 2004, after a very successful capital campaign, the approval of a bond by town voters, and tremendous effort on the part of the board, staff, and community, Topsham Public Library moved into its first permanent home. This was one of the most significant building projects in the history of Topsham.

Today, Topsham Public Library continues to serve the community as a vital center for meeting, learning, cultural enrichment and dissemination of information. The Volunteer Program will adhere to the Library's Equal Opportunity Policy.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who performs tasks for the Topsham Public Library without wages, benefits, or compensation (including travel expenses) of any kind. Volunteers must be 12 years or older.

Application and Selection

There is a standard application process for selecting volunteers for volunteer service. The process reinforces the importance and value of volunteer service and the need to select the best volunteer for the job at hand.

- **Complete the volunteer application form** – Prospective volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application available at the Library as well as online. Applicants must possess the qualifications established for the position and must be competent and physically capable to perform the specified duties.
- **Be interviewed** – The Volunteer Coordinator will hold an initial interview with each prospective volunteer to determine whether a match exists between the applicant's skills and the positions available to volunteers. Applications will be kept on file for three months. If there is a suitable available position, the offer of such will be made.
- **Sign forms as needed**, including but not limited to: Background Check Agreement, Liability Release, Confidentiality and Library Volunteer Agreement
- **Training** – Each volunteer will receive specific training on how to do their job. Some positions will include on-the-job mentoring from an experienced volunteer or staff person. Be sure to ask any questions you have. Don't assume anything! We want you to be successful.

For those desiring a very short term volunteer opportunity, of no more than a few hours, please contact the volunteer coordinator.

Background Checks

Background checks are required for all volunteers over the age of 18.

Confidential Information

All library patrons have a right to privacy and confidentiality regarding the collection of personal information and the use they make of the Library facilities, collections and website. We have an obligation to our customers to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. As you work with the staff, you may be exposed to information of a confidential nature. Such information is not to be shared with anyone else, including family, friends or acquaintances. No

one is permitted to remove or make copies of any records, reports or documents. Noncompliance will be subject to immediate dismissal and/or possible legal action.

Attendance

Once accepted and placed in a volunteer assignment, it is important that the volunteer report for duty on time as scheduled. We recognize that life happens and there will be times when you are unable to report for a shift. We ask that you communicate with the library as soon as you know of planned absences by emailing tplstaff@topshamlibrary.org so that we may make our best efforts to find a substitute. Keep in mind that 100% of our shelving and shelf reading is performed by our dedicated volunteers. Because we rely so heavily on our volunteers, prolonged or frequent absences may result in loss of position.

Volunteer Performance Concerns

To ensure continuous and successful operation of the Library and the Volunteer Program, and to minimize disruption and conduct that interferes with Library functions, certain expectations of performance, rules and policies are in place. Inability to perform assigned tasks may result in reassignment or loss of position. Infraction of rules or policies may result in dismissal as a volunteer. All decisions regarding dismissal are final.

References

The Volunteer Coordinator will provide references for volunteers upon request.

Issues or Concerns?

If any issues or concerns come up, please do not hesitate to contact the library.



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Background Check Agreement

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? *Yes* *No*

If yes, please describe the nature of the crime and the year of conviction below. Conviction of some crimes is not an automatic disqualification of volunteer work, and this information will be kept strictly confidential.

Are you applying to volunteer in order to satisfy court-mandated community service?

Yes *No*

Full Name (including any middle initial): _____

Date of birth: _____

For how long have you lived in the state of Maine? _____

In connection with my application to engage in volunteer activities, I hereby consent and authorize the Topsham Public Library to obtain a background check.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



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Liability Release

In connection with my voluntary involvement in activities undertaken for, and with the participation and support of the Topsham Public Library, I hereby agree, for myself, my heirs, assigns, executors, and administrators to release, discharge, and hold harmless the Topsham Public Library and Board of Trustees, its employees, agents, and volunteers from all claims, demands, actions or any cause for suit arising from injuries sustained to my person and/or property as a result of my involvement in such activities, whether or not resulting from negligence. I hereby attest that my attendance and involvement in such activities is voluntary, that I am participating at my own risk, and that I have read the foregoing terms and conditions of this release. I understand that the Topsham Public Library does not provide medical coverage, Worker's Compensation benefits or other employee benefits for volunteers.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



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Library Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for considering Topsham Public Library as a place to donate your time, knowledge, skills and abilities. Your good work serves the greater Topsham community by supplementing, enhancing, and supporting library staff in meeting the demand for quality public service.

Topsham Public Library's volunteer and paid staff perform different work, are evaluated on different criteria, and receive different benefits. Volunteers are not Topsham Public Library employees and do not receive salary, benefits, or other compensation.

The library agrees to provide you with

- Meaningful work assignments
- The same courtesy and respect accorded a staff member
- An orientation, training and supervision by a staff member or other trained volunteer; answers to your questions, and feedback regarding your work

As a volunteer, I agree to

- Perform duties as assigned to the best of my abilities
- Accept the guidance and decisions of staff
- Recognize the function of paid staff, maintain smooth working relationships with them, and stay within the scope of volunteer responsibilities
- Dress appropriately and wear a volunteer nametag
- Report on time, as scheduled, and sign in and out of the volunteer notebook.
- Give notice as soon as possible if I must change or cannot keep my schedule, wish to be reassigned, or wish to end my volunteer service
- Respect and act courteously to all patrons and employees
- Refrains from expressing religious, political, social or other personal views to the public
- Maintain the confidentiality of all library and patron information and records and reference queries
- Identify medical, health, or physical limitations related to the volunteer job

I have read and understood the Topsham Public Library's volunteer manual (please check box)

Volunteer's Signature

Staff Signature

Date _____

Date _____