



# Libraries ACT Volunteer Program Policies and Practices

September 2013

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Purpose</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Objectives</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Scope</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>5. General Guidelines</b> .....	<b>3</b>
5.1. Definition of Volunteers .....	3
5.2. People not considered volunteers .....	3
5.3. Volunteering by unemployed .....	3
5.4. Volunteering by people with special needs: .....	3
<b>6. Principles</b> .....	<b>4</b>
6.1. Using volunteers .....	4
6.2. Nature of volunteer based services.....	4
6.3. Tasks .....	4
6.4. Intent of purpose.....	4
6.5. Code of ethics for volunteers .....	5
6.6. Volunteering ACT.....	5
6.7. Sources for the recruitment .....	5
6.8. Selection and recruitment .....	5
<b>7. Code of Practice.</b> .....	<b>6</b>
7.1. Responsibilities of volunteers.....	6

7.2. Rights of volunteers.....	6
7.3. Employing volunteers.....	7
7.4. Libraries ACT rights.....	8
<b>8. Parking.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. Insurance.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>10. Work Experience.....</b>	<b>8</b>
10.1. Purpose.....	8
10.2. Scope.....	8
10.3. General Guidelines.....	8
10.4. Placement quotas.....	9
10.5. Work areas for Placement.....	9
10.6. Tasks for Placement.....	9
10.7. Special Projects.....	9
10.8. Responsibilities of the Supervisor.....	9
10.9. Responsibilities of the Work experience student.....	9
<b>11. Review.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12. Further Information.....</b>	<b>10</b>

## **1. Introduction**

Libraries ACT offers a dynamic and responsive library and information service to the ACT community, embracing the unique cultures, recreational needs and heritage of the region.

Libraries are the gateway to the expanding world of information, and inviting places where all members of the community are welcome.

Our services are stimulating, innovative and responsive, enriching the lives of the people of the nation’s capital.

Our customers are people who live, work or study in the act region who require information for recreation or for cultural, educational and personal development.

## **2. Purpose**

To allow the community to become involved in initiating, enhancing and extending library services.

## **3. Objectives**

To provide clear guidelines for the use and involvement of volunteers in Libraries ACT.

To provide clear guidelines for student placement applicants in the Libraries ACT.

## **4. Scope**

This policy covers all volunteer and work experience students.

## **5. General Guidelines**

### **5.1. Definition of Volunteers**

Volunteers are defined as people who undertake activities:

- Of benefit to the community
- Of their own free will.
- Without monetary reward (reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses is not regarded as payment.)

Customers and staff of Libraries ACT may volunteer.

### **5.2. People not considered volunteers**

The following are not considered to be volunteers:

- Those seeking formal work experience
- Those required to perform community work.

### **5.3. Volunteering by unemployed**

Conditions apply for people who are in receipt of unemployment benefits when they undertake volunteer work.

Volunteering is not an acceptable long term alternative for a person seeking paid employment, however it can be valuable as it provides opportunities to learn new skills, maintain existing skills, increase self-esteem and obtain current referees and to network.

### **5.4. Volunteering by people with special needs:**

All applications will be assessed by the Senior Librarians based on library operational requirements, OH&S policies as well as in consultation with TAMs Injury Prevention team

Consideration will also take into account the needs, skills, and abilities of the applicants on a case by case basis.

Trained Carers need to be provided by the volunteer during official volunteer time in the library.

## **6. Principles**

### **6.1. Using volunteers**

A decision to use the services of volunteers' or work experience students will be based on:

- Careful assessment of the tasks that can be performed by volunteers.
- Prior evaluation of the skills and/or knowledge that volunteers can provide.
- Relative costs and benefits of using volunteers.
- Assessment of the impact on paid employment opportunities within Libraries ACT.
- Appropriate consultation with staff, unions and volunteers.
- An assessment of the capacity of the service point to manage and co-ordinate the work to be done by volunteers.
- At the discretion of the Senior Librarian

### **6.2. Nature of volunteer based services**

Libraries ACT will ensure volunteer-based services are:

- Of consistent quality and availability.
- Adequately supervised and managed. There will be a volunteer co-ordinator at each service point at which there are volunteers.
- Adequately resourced.

### **6.3. Tasks**

The tasks to be performed will be clearly defined and then matched to the volunteers' expectations, interests, time commitment and skills.

This involves a detailed description of the task and a competent assessment of the volunteer.

The duties must be meaningful, not contrived or designed to 'make work', and should not exploit volunteers, for example, in the performance solely of tasks that staff are reluctant to do.

### **6.4. Intent of purpose**

Where volunteer services are being used, Libraries ACT shall provide and publicise a clear statement detailing:

- Why volunteers are being involved.
- Their roles, entitlements and responsibilities.

## **6.5. Code of ethics for volunteers**

Where volunteers are working directly with recipients of a service, the following issues are true:

- The right of the customer to quick and helpful service.
- Confidentiality (ACT Government Code of Practice).
- Realistic expectations of what can and cannot be expected of the volunteer.
- The right of the customer and the volunteer to personal safety.

## **6.6. Volunteering ACT**

Libraries ACT will use the services of Volunteering ACT when required, including:

- Referral of prospective volunteers.
- Training and advice to volunteers and managers.
- Consultancy service to assist in the management of volunteers.
- Lending library and bookshop.
- Information regarding policy, procedures and insurance.

## **6.7. Sources for the recruitment**

Sources for the recruitment of volunteers, other than Volunteering ACT, will include:

- Community or local papers.
- Posters or brochures in branch libraries and elsewhere.
- Community radio programs.
- Student or senior citizens groups.
- Community service organisations.
- Tertiary educational institutions (especially library studies).
- Multicultural organisations.
- Recruitment drive if deemed necessary

## **6.8. Selection and recruitment**

Prospective volunteers will complete an **application form**.

Applicants will be asked to supply two personal references and obtain a Working with Vulnerable people registration card. Applicants will be recruited in a fair, open and equitable manner.

Selected volunteers will have a trial period of 2 months with a review at the end of this time and regular reviews thereafter.

Volunteers will have the same access to grievance and disciplinary procedures that paid staff have.

Manual handling training is mandatory.

## **7. Code of Practice.**

### **7.1. Responsibilities of volunteers**

While working within the organisation, volunteers have the following responsibilities:

- To provide appropriate references and provide a copy of their Working with Vulnerable People registration card
- To be reliable in their commitment to the organisation and its clients.
- To work within Libraries ACT guidelines and meet the standards of behaviour and dress code expected of paid workers.
- To maintain confidentiality in respect of all information gained in the course of their work. Comply with ACT Privacy Act.
- To follow the ACTPS code of conduct and ethical standards.
- To observe the requirements of the ACT Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- To record attendance for insurance and other purposes.
- To accept and follow directions from their supervisor.
- To ensure that they understand directions given to them and seek clarification if uncertain.
- To ensure that they are capable of performing all given tasks.
- To provide feedback to their supervisor on their progress.
- To report problems as they arise.
- To undertake training as required.
- To attend meetings as required;
- To be appropriately identified when representing Libraries ACT.
- To work as a team member and respect the functions of paid staff.

### **7.2. Rights of volunteers**

Volunteers also have the right to:

- Be advised of Libraries ACT standards, guidelines and expectations, policies and procedures.
- Be given a suitable assignment and clear statement of the tasks to be performed.
- Receive sufficient training to enable them to carry out their tasks.
- Guidance, supervision, support, feedback, counselling and debriefing from their supervisor.
- Speak to and be heard by a person in authority if they have queries or complaints.
- Be informed about communication lines within the workplace.
- Be treated as a bona-fide co-worker of the regular staff.
- Be listened to by staff colleagues.
- Be provided with equipment necessary to do the job.

- Work in a suitable, welcoming and pleasant environment.
- Be given information regarding proposed changes in the workplace that affect their job.
- Proper insurance (including ambulance) whilst on the job.
- Adequate occupational health protection.
- Receive reimbursement of agreed expenses.

### **7.3. Employing volunteers**

To promote excellence in service and maximise the quality of volunteer's experience, Libraries ACT will:

- Make an appropriate commitment to understanding and meeting the legitimate expectations of volunteers and encouraging ongoing feedback. Procedures for recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, support, trial period, volunteer and customer safety, job descriptions, communication channels, workplace conditions need similar attention to that given to paid staff.
- Ensure that application forms, contracts and attendance records are kept for insurance purposes for 7 years.
- Have appropriate forms of recognition for the work of volunteers, for example:
  - Newsletters,
  - Social functions
  - Certificates of service.
  - References when appropriate.
- Undertake periodic reviews to ensure that volunteer tasks continue to be relevant and appropriate for volunteers to perform.
- Clearly define communication channels.

A climate of mutual respect and confidence will be cultivated between staff and volunteers. Managers will foster good relations between staff and volunteers by:

- Clearly defining volunteer's areas of work.
- Defining roles, rights and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.
- Identifying complementary roles played by both parties in achieving a common goal.

All staff involved in managing volunteers will be given proper management support and recognition and allowed sufficient time to enable them to adequately carry out their responsibilities.

Libraries ACT will make funding provisions for the recruitment, orientation, training and supervision of volunteers, as well as accommodation, and facilities.

Libraries ACT will reimburse out of pocket expenses, from within existing allocations, incurred by volunteers in the course of their duties, for example:

- Training.
- Materials and other incidentals.

#### **7.4. Libraries ACT rights**

- To interview applicants to match the most suitable applicant to the position/s available.
- To identify the number of volunteers that are required at each service point or branch.
- To change or terminate a volunteer's placement.
- To refuse an application and/or refer them to Volunteering ACT.

## **8. Parking**

Volunteers are to be supplied with a voucher to allow free parking for up to 2 hours in voucher and meter parking areas, in compliance with any posted time limit.

Volunteer co-ordinators requiring a voucher contact the Volunteer Manager.

## **9. Insurance**

The Office of Financial Management, Chief Minister's Department, has taken out a whole of Government Insurance policy that includes cover for volunteers:

Further details are available from Risk Management policy, Office of Financial Management, Chief Minister's Department

Volunteers using their own car to make deliveries to the Housebound must have a current drivers licence, current registration and current car insurance.

## **10. Work Experience**

### **10.1. Purpose**

To provide clear guidelines for student placement applicants in Libraries ACT.

### **10.2. Scope**

Libraries ACT accepts applications from students seeking work experience at the discretion of the Senior Librarian of the placement location.

### **10.3. General Guidelines**

Students must belong to one of the following categories:

- Secondary or College Student

- CIT or University Students: must be studying to attain a qualification in Library and Information Science or a qualification in a related field
- Students with special needs: students must be properly assessed for suitability to working in a library environment.
- Students with overseas qualifications seeking accreditation through University or CIT: Applicants must have an overseas qualification in library and information science or a qualification in a related field.

#### **10.4. Placement quotas**

The branch may accept one secondary and one tertiary student per semester or school term or at the discretion of the Senior Librarian

#### **10.5. Work areas for Placement**

The student should be introduced to all areas of the Libraries ACT including: Collection Management, HLS and The Mobile Service, the ACT Heritage Library, and at least one other library location. (Due to Insurance Issues the Placement cannot travel on the Mobile Buses or assist with the Courier Run)

#### **10.6. Tasks for Placement**

Shelving, shelfreading, request list, expired requests, children's activities, selfchecker assisting, preparing spine labels, discard processing. Assistance with special programs.

#### **10.7. Special Projects**

Topics as determined by library placement supervisor or as part of student placement.

#### **10.8. Responsibilities of the Supervisor**

Each Senior Librarian/Work Experience Supervisor shall:

- determine the amount of work experience that can be realistically provided
- allocate a responsible person to supervise the work-experience participant and ensure they are supervised at all times
- provide the work-experience participant with details of the appropriate contact officer in case of emergency or inability to attend
- maintain records of the work-experience participant's attendance
- ensure work-experience participants adhere to Libraries ACT Policy and Tams Code of Conduct.
- complete any required appraisals of the work-experience participant's performance during the period of work-experience

#### **10.9. Responsibilities of the Work experience student**

The work-experience participant shall:

- provide the library with documentation from the relevant institution/organisation

- demonstrate the work-placement is an approved part of a relevant program or course of study and that they are covered under the Worker's Compensation Policy of that institution/organisation;
- comply with all Libraries ACT Policy, and procedures, and the reasonable and lawful instructions of the work experience supervisor
- comply with Tams standards of professional behaviour including courtesy and confidentiality during the period of their work-experience
- contact the library supervisor designated as their supervisor during the period of the work-experience within 30 minutes of the agreed starting time, should they be unable to attend on any particular day
- discuss any issues or concerns relating to the work-experience activities assigned to them with the library supervisor, Senior librarian and/or the work experience supervisor from the relevant institution
- Ensure that they are appropriately attired following the Libraries ACT Dress Guidelines.

## **11. Review**

This policy will be reviewed biannually.

## **12. Further Information**

The Libraries ACT Volunteer Program will be co-ordinated by a Volunteer Coordinator

*International Volunteer Day is 5th December every year.*

*National Volunteer Week is an annual event held in the week after Mother's Day.*