



BERKSHIRE ATHENAEUM

1 WENDELL AVENUE • PITTSFIELD, MA 01201-6385

Pittsfield's Public Library Since 1872

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. **GENERAL POLICY:** Volunteers provide important support to Berkshire Athenaeum staff and perform a wide variety of tasks that are critical to the mission of the Athenaeum. Volunteers supplement, but do not replace the work done by employees. They may perform a wide variety of duties, a range limited largely by the talents and interests of the volunteers themselves and by where the library can make productive use of their assistance.
2. **DEFINITIONS:** A Berkshire Athenaeum volunteer performs a service of his or her own free will, contributing time, energy and talents directly or on behalf of the Athenaeum. Volunteers are not paid by library funds, and must be accepted and enrolled by the Athenaeum prior to performance of assigned tasks. There are three basic categories of volunteer:
 - 2.1. **VOLUNTEER:** Any individual, sixteen years or older, who assists with work done at the Berkshire Athenaeum, without remuneration.
 - 2.2. **STUDENT INTERN:** Any middle school, high school, college student, or organization (like boy or girl scouts) working on advanced awards, who performs volunteer work, without remuneration, as part of an authorized school or organizational program to earn academic credit or merit awards.
 - 2.3. **COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Persons who seek volunteer assignments at the Berkshire Athenaeum to meet a requirement set by an outside agency for the performance of community service shall be subject to the volunteer selection process and all other provisions of this policy.
3. **RESTRICTIONS:**
 - 3.1. Volunteers will not take the place of paid staff already employed by the library.
 - 3.2. Volunteer duties will not replicate a major portion of a paid staff person's job description.
 - 3.3. Volunteer tasks are not critically tied to a specific time or duration.
 - 3.4. Volunteer tasks are typically those that are more flexible as to specific scheduled times.
 - 3.5. While it is important for the Athenaeum to be able to rely on the dependability of volunteers, the non-arrival of a volunteer will not adversely impact the regular day-to-day operation of the Athenaeum.
 - 3.6. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does not permit an individual to perform hours of volunteer service for a public agency when such hours involve the same type of services which the individual is employed to perform for the same public agency.

- 3.7. Outside organized non-profit groups who volunteer to carry out a specific project at the library have the burden of complying with federal and state labor laws. For example if a Boy Scout troop asks to paint the library's fence as part of a badge project, the Boy Scout organization would be responsible for complying with child labor laws for that volunteer project.
4. APPLICATION / APPOINTMENT: Prior to engaging in any volunteer activity, each volunteer will be required to submit an Athenaeum volunteer application form and speak with a supervisory staff member. Upon approval of the Library Director or supervisory staff, the volunteer may be scheduled for training and work assignments. Each individual who participates in this volunteer program agrees and acknowledges that they are not employees of the Berkshire Athenaeum or the City of Pittsfield. Each individual who participates in this volunteer program shall sign a document releasing the Berkshire Athenaeum from liability for injuries sustained by him/her.
5. BACKGROUND CHECKS: As part of the appointment process, the Athenaeum may investigate an applicant's work and personal history, which may, depending upon a prospective volunteer's assignment, include a Criminal Offender Record Inquiry (CORI) and/or a Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check.
6. VACANCIES: Volunteers are selected based on their qualifications in relation to the needs of the library at any given time and their reliability. Unsolicited volunteer applications are generally routed to each of the Athenaeum's departments to determine if a vacancy exists that matches the skills of the applicant. If there are no suitable volunteer opportunities, application forms will be kept on file for a period of one year. Applicants will be contacted if a project is identified that matches their interests or qualifications.
7. SUPERVISION: Volunteers work directly with library staff members to receive training and complete projects. All volunteers will be assigned one primary staff member, generally a departmental supervisor, to guide them in their work, however other staff may offer guidance to any of the volunteers.
8. HOURS OF SERVICE: All volunteer work must be completed within normal library hours unless exceptions have been made by the Library Director. Hours of volunteer service are at the mutual convenience of the volunteer and supervisory staff member. Because supervisory staff often take steps to prepare meaningful volunteer assignments, volunteers are asked give reasonable notice if they are unable to report to work for the agreed upon schedule.
9. STUDENT INTERNS: Student interns will be sought by supervisors through educational contacts in area schools and colleges. A job description will be tailored for each internship that will stress the value of the project for both student and Library. A representative of the school or college will usually be involved in developing the job description and outline of the project. The supervisor who shapes an individual project will be responsible for the training and supervision of the student intern. While interns may be very valuable to the Athenaeum, the Library must also offer a genuine educational opportunity. Because much

staff time will be required, each project must be carefully planned and approved by the Library Director before an intern is accepted. Participation in student internship programs shall be considered a privilege which may be revoked at any time by the Berkshire Athenaeum or the student intern. All schedules will be worked out between the student intern and the supervising librarian and should not conflict with school schedules. A method and schedule for evaluation will be agreed upon between the supervising librarian and the school or college representative before the student intern is accepted. The supervising librarian will follow this schedule and report student progress to the representative.

10. UNAVAILABLE INSURANCE: Neither the City of Pittsfield nor the Berkshire Athenaeum will provide any medical, health, accident or worker's compensation benefits for any volunteer; and volunteers will not be eligible to receive any worker's compensation benefits for any injuries sustained while functioning as a volunteer.
11. PUBLIC SERVICE: While Athenaeum volunteers typically have limited public service exposure, they are expected to act in accordance with library policies and to reflect positive customer service attitudes to all library patrons.
12. CONFIDENTIALITY: Librarians' professional ethics require that personally identifiable information about library users be kept confidential. While Athenaeum volunteers typically have limited exposure to library records, they are expected to respect the confidentiality of library users.
13. TERMINATION: Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to create a contract between the volunteer or intern and the Berkshire Athenaeum or City of Pittsfield. Both the volunteer and the Berkshire Athenaeum have the right to terminate the volunteer's association with the Athenaeum at any time, for any reason, with or without cause. There will be no formal evaluation process for volunteers.