

ELLSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

388 West Main Street | Ellsworth, WI 54011 | 715-273-3209 | www.ellsworthlibrary.org

VOLUNTEER POLICY & GUIDELINES

Purpose:

Volunteers help Ellsworth Public Library enrich its services and will be used to support, but not replace, the work done by paid library staff. The volunteer program serves the needs throughout all library departments and services. The Library seeks to empower volunteers to use their talents in a way that brings them personal satisfaction and contributes toward providing the best public library service in our community. We support the effective utilization of volunteer time and talent as a way to:

- Assist staff, as needed, in critical daily tasks
- Add services of value to new and existing programs
- Promote public awareness of library services and programs
- Increase involvement and support of the library by the public

Volunteer Guidelines:

- Volunteer candidates are required to complete a volunteer application form which will be kept on file.
- Volunteers may be subject to a background check, depending on the nature of their volunteer role.
- Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age. Parents/guardians of volunteers under the age of 18 must sign a consent form for their children to volunteer.
- Candidates will be accepted based on library needs and the candidate's qualifications to meet those needs.
- Acceptance of an application is at the Library's discretion.
- Volunteers are not employees of the Village of Ellsworth.
- Volunteers are recognized by the public as representatives of the Library and shall be guided by the same conduct and behavior codes as employees; this includes wearing appropriate attire.
- Volunteers will be given an overview of the library and relevant training.
- Volunteers can be released from volunteer duties at any time at the discretion of the Library Director.
- Volunteers are asked to adhere to an agreed upon schedule, and to make every effort to contact their supervisor if they will be absent or tardy.
- Volunteers should sign in and out when volunteering.
- All library users have a right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their personal information and the use of library resources. Volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality and respect privacy. Volunteers may be exposed to information of 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. Volunteers are not permitted to use staff workstations without permission from a supervisor.
- The Library shall not be responsible for damage to or loss of a volunteer's personal property while volunteering.

- Volunteers are entirely voluntary with no promises of advancement, no penalty for not volunteering, and no coercion by staff. Court Ordered Community Service volunteers may be required to serve.
- Volunteers may not replace a paid employee or impair the employment opportunities of others by performing work that would otherwise be performed by paid employees.
- Vehicle Operation – Volunteers who operate their own motor vehicle during the course of their volunteering must provide the Library with a valid driver's license and proof of insurance at the Library's request. It is required that the Library has current information on file, so there may be an occasional request to ensure the documents are up to date.

Court Ordered Community Service

Ellsworth Public Library may accept some court-ordered community service volunteers under the following conditions:

- Charges must be non-violent in nature, may not involve theft of any kind, and may not include any harm to minors.
- The Library must be given adequate time to plan and schedule the community service.
- Volunteers must be able to work independently and respect all Library rules during their community service.

Volunteer Rights

- Receive a clear 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 Liability

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, which includes volunteers who act on behalf of public entities, provides that no volunteer of a public entity is liable for harm caused by an act of omission when working on behalf of the entity. In order for a volunteer to be protected, the following requirements must be met:

1. The volunteer must have been acting in the scope of their responsibilities for the Library;
2. Where appropriate or required, the volunteer must have been properly licensed, certified or authorized to perform the activity by state or issuing authorities;
3. The harm must not have been caused by willful, reckless or criminal misconduct, gross negligence or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual who suffered the harm; and

4. The harm must not have been caused by the volunteer's operation of a vehicle for which the state requires the vehicle's owner or operator to possess a driver's license or to maintain insurance.

Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library

The Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library is a volunteer organization established as a 501(c)(3). A Board of Directors sets their policies and oversees their operation and expenditures. Members of the Friends of the Ellsworth Public Library performing tasks at the library related to their organization (i.e. fundraisers, membership drives, etc.) are not required to apply in order to perform their duties at the Library.

The Friends Board or its designee is responsible for their volunteers. However, if a problem arises with one of their volunteers violating policy, while representing or advocating for the Library, the Library Director has the authority to address the concern at that time and take the issue to the Friends' Board for future action.

Friends of the Library members who actively participate as Library volunteers may be subject to a background check depending on the nature of their volunteer role.

Leaving Volunteer Service:

A volunteer selected for work on a special project will discontinue service when that project is completed or terminated, unless other arrangements have been made.

Whenever possible, the library will make an effort to reassign a volunteer, if desired. However, if no other mutually suitable volunteer position exists at the time, the volunteer will be asked to discontinue service and his or her application will be kept on file for 6 months, subject to review should a suitable position become available during that time. In the event that a volunteer is unable to adequately perform the duties assigned to him or her and no other appropriate positions are available, the volunteer may be removed from service.

Adopted by Ellsworth Public Library Board of Trustees: 06/28/2016

Revised: 10/28/2025