



**CHARLOTTE
MECKLENBURG
LIBRARY**



VolunTeen Handbook





WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. Your participation significantly impacts our ability to improve lives and build a stronger community. The VolunTeen Handbook contains essential guidelines and information for your role, so please take the time to read it thoroughly.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library serves over one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, through 21 locations and online services. Its mission is to improve lives and build a stronger community, while supporting our six guiding principles. Founded in 1903 as a Carnegie Library, it remains dedicated to lifelong education and providing valuable experiences as a trusted community resource, inspired by its customers, staff, and supporters.

LIBRARY MISSION

To improve lives and build a stronger community.

VISION

The essential connector of a thriving community of readers, leaders and learners. Together, we will build a library system that not only meets the needs of today, but also anticipates the possibilities of tomorrow.

VOLUNTEEN PROGRAM

If you are between the ages of 13 and 18, you can apply to be a VolunTeen up to two times a year, at any one of our locations.

Note: You can only apply to one location per session. Refer to the [VolunTeen FAQs](#) for a more comprehensive list of frequently asked questions and answers.

All VolunTeens should review the VolunTeen Handbook prior to their interview. If selected, the VolunTeen Coordinator at the respective branch location will provide the necessary orientation and training to set you up for success.



VOLUNTEEN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library aims to create a safe and welcoming space for all customers to read, learn, explore, create, and participate in programs. The guidelines are designed to ensure safety, enjoyment, and protection of Library staff, customers, and facilities.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

All adult volunteers aged 18 and older at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library must pass a criminal history check. Volunteers committing crimes such as theft, vandalism, drug abuse, assault, making threats, or carrying concealed weapons on library property will be dismissed and reported to authorities.

DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO USE

Any Charlotte Mecklenburg Library volunteer found with alcohol, tobacco products, including vape products, or illegal drugs will be dismissed immediately, and authorities will be notified.

SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS/GUIDES/ASSISTANTS

Caregivers accompanying teen volunteers who need support must complete a volunteer application and a criminal background check (if over 18). This is in addition to the application for the individual volunteering. Both caregivers' and volunteers' hours will be counted, and caregivers must be present with the volunteer during their shift at a branch.



WELCOMING SPACE FOR ALL

Harassment, including racially insensitive or suggestive comments, will not be tolerated and may result in immediate dismissal.

COMPUTER, E-MAIL AND INTERNET USAGE

Library technology is designated for library business use. The library monitors access to computers, email, and internet services and prohibits disruptive or offensive usage, including viewing certain content on library or personal devices on library premises. Read the [Internet Policy](#).

MEDIA

You should not be in contact with the media or its representatives regarding a library issue without approval from the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer or the Chief Library Services Officer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a VolunTeen, you are representing Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to the public. All volunteers are expected to behave in a professional manner, especially when addressing library customers or staff. Customer and volunteer information at the library is confidential and must not be shared.



VOLUNTEEN GUIDELINES



ORIENTATION

Orientation is led by staff at each branch and covers duties, requirements, expectations, and library-specific issues.

RESIGNATION

Notify the VolunTeen Coordinator if you wish to resign or cannot fulfill your hours. While we understand emergencies happen, frequent cancellations may lead to reevaluation of your VolunTeen position at the Library.

SERVICE HOUR APPROVAL

Service hours require approval from the VolunTeen Coordinator and must be logged on the volunteer sign-in form. Requests for approval will be based on branch-specific guidelines. Hours may be denied if library time was not used appropriately, as determined by the overseeing individual.

RECOGNITION

Each branch will provide recognition opportunities during Volunteer Appreciation Month.

ATTENDANCE

VolunTeens must complete at least 40 hours during the School Year session and 20 hours during the Summer session. This averages out to about two hours a week.

Teens are responsible for attending scheduled programs and community service as scheduled. Hours cannot be completed in a shorter timeframe.

Adherence to schedules and notifying supervisors of changes is required. Advance notice for vacations and absences is expected.

REFUSAL AND DISMISSAL

Dismissal of VolunTeens is at the discretion of the Volunteer Supervisor, Branch/Department Manager, or VolunTeen Coordinator.

VolunTeens will be discharged from the program after three strikes, with written notifications provided for each strike.

THREE STRIKE RULE

Strikes may occur for reasons such as:

- No-show for a VolunTeen shift without prior notice (24 hours required).
- Habitual absenteeism or cancellations of VolunTeen shifts.
- Inappropriate attire.
- Unsatisfactory performance of duties.
- Non-compliance and or violation of the Library and Volunteer Guidelines.

Note: Missed events due to emergencies or illness do not count as strikes.



VOLUNTEEN GUIDELINES

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

VolunTeens, just like library staff, must present a professional appearance to the public.

- Appropriate attire includes a t-shirt, pants/jeans, and closed-toe shoes.
- A VolunTeen t-shirt will be given to you during orientation.
- During shifts, no shirts with unsuitable messages, revealing garments, or torn clothing are allowed.
- Sleep and lounge wear are not allowed.
- For safety, slippers and sandals/flip-flops are not allowed.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

There are times when a library may be closed due to inclement weather or an emergency. Please call your location if there are any questions about hours.

The inclement weather line is **704-416-0191**.

The number for general information is **704-416-1000**.

SAFETY, ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Your safety is a priority. If you feel unsafe while volunteering, inform library staff ASAP.

VolunTeens should share safety ideas or concerns with the VolunTeen Coordinator at their location.

Injuries to volunteers or staff must be reported immediately to a staff member, who will complete an Accident Report Form.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In emergencies like power failure, gas odors, explosions, water damage, or fire, do not use the elevator. Report to staff immediately and exit the building via the nearest exit.

VOLUNTEEN RIGHTS

As a VolunTeen, you should:

- Get a clear job description.
- Be interviewed and assigned appropriately.
- Receive training.
- Engage in meaningful work.
- Have support in your role.
- Ensure safety on the job.
- Get feedback on your performance.
- Receive recognition for your contributions.

VOLUNTEEN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Check in with staff upon arrival to plan the shift. Notify staff before leaving early.
- Store personal items in designated places.
- Record activities and tasks completed in the VolunTeen binder.
- Wear the assigned nametag during the shift.
- Assist library staff with projects and ask questions as needed.
- Avoid eating/drinking in public areas (water bottles allowed).
- Refrain from using devices for gaming, music, or messaging unless permitted. Check with the VolunTeen Coordinator on guidelines for cell phone use during shifts.
- Keep conversations short and politely inform friends that volunteering takes priority.
- We encourage teens to work together and have friendly conversations in teen spaces when appropriate.
- Avoid staff-only work spaces and other assigned areas unless directed.
- Keep track of your volunteer hours.
- VolunTeens should reflect the mission and vision of the Library.



TEEN VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

As a Teen Volunteer at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, I, _____, agree to the following:

1. I will arrive on time, sign in, and notify a staff member that I am here. If I am unable to do this, I will email the volunteer supervisor, giving 24 hours' notice when possible.
2. I will remain on task until my time slot has ended (except for restroom breaks) unless a staff member has asked me to do another task, and I will notify a staff member when I am taking any sort of break or leaving for the day.
3. I will speak with the VolunTeen Coordinator at the branch if I need to make changes to the schedule.
4. I will perform my duties as assigned in a pleasant manner. If I have any questions about what I am to do, I will ask a staff member.
5. I will refer customers to the staff members on duty when questions arise that are not directly related to my job.
6. I will be courteous and respectful to library customers, staff, and other volunteers at all times.
7. I will use the phone only with the permission of a staff member.
8. I will wear a volunteer nametag when I am working.
9. I will wear appropriate attire to the library and present a professional appearance (see *Professional Appearance* for more details).
10. I will limit cell phone use to permitted times and circumstances.
11. I understand that any use of drugs, alcohol, weapons, or any form of theft, violence, or bullying are a violation of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Customer Code of Conduct and are grounds for immediate termination and/or prosecution.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE & PARTICIPATION FORM

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I, _____,
[parent/guardian of _____],
on my behalf and/or the behalf of my child, do hereby grant to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library unlimited right to use and/or reproduce my photographs, videos, likenesses or voice of me/my child in any legal manner for the internal or external activities of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. I grant permission to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to use, reprint and publish these photos/videos for promotional purposes in print and online.

I also agree to allow myself and/or child to be interviewed, recorded, videoed and/or photographed by representatives of the external news media in relation to any and all coverage of Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the activity in which the Library is involved.

I further understand that by signing the release, I waive any and all rights, claims, demands or actions I or my child may have against the Library arising out of its use of the above material, including any right to present or future compensation or any right of privacy.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Street address)

(City/State/ZIP)

(Signature of witness)

LIBRARY VOLUNTEEN FAQ

WHAT IS THE VOLUNTEEN PROGRAM?

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is looking for responsible and motivated teens who enjoy working with the public, helping others, and giving back to their community. If selected, VolunTeens will assist staff with the day-to-day duties of a library branch.

WHEN AND HOW CAN I APPLY?

The library invites teens (ages 13-18) to apply for volunteer positions twice a year. Applications open on April 15th at 3pm for the Summer session (June through August), and on August 15th at 9am for the School Year session (September through May). Applications are accepted starting on these dates and they will close at the end of the month or until capacity is reached.

WHO SHOULD REGISTER AND FILL OUT THE APPLICATION ONLINE?

Teens (ages 13-18) should register and apply online. If you are 12, you must turn 13 by the time the session begins. Please note that 18-year-olds must be high school students, otherwise you need to apply to be an adult volunteer. If a parent/guardian would like their teen to apply, please encourage them to do so, and do not fill anything out on their behalf. This is an opportunity for teens to learn real-world career development skills.

WHAT IF I DON'T SEE THE LIBRARY LOCATION I'M INTERESTED IN?

If your preferred location does not have a posted VolunTeen opportunity, it is no longer available, and you'll need to apply elsewhere. You may only apply to one location per session. If there is space at a nearby location, you will learn about that during or after your interview.

IF I APPLY, DOES THAT MEAN I WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM?

Applying does not guarantee acceptance into the program. If qualified, a library staff member will contact you for an interview and inform you about your application status. For inquiries, please follow up with the branch where you applied.

IF I WAS A VOLUNTEEN IN A PREVIOUS SESSION, DO I HAVE TO REAPPLY?

Yes, you must apply each session to be a VolunTeen, regardless of whether it's at the same library or a new one. This process enhances job readiness skills and ensures equal opportunities for all applicants in the program.

WHAT DO VOLUNTEENS ASSIST WITH?

VolunTeens have a variety of opportunities available, dependent upon the location. Some examples are shelving materials, creating book displays or booklists, helping with program prep, assisting with programs, homework help, tech tutoring, or special projects. Locations will include specific details and preferred skills based on their community needs in their individual posting.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR VOLUNTEERING?

VolunTeens are expected to earn at least 20 hours in the Summer and 40 hours in the School Year, which is equivalent to about a 2-hour shift once a week. Teens are committing to the full session. While vacations and other time off are allowed with advance notice, it is not permissible to earn all the hours in a shorter period of time.

LIBRARY VOLUNTEEN FAQ

CONTINUED

CAN I WORK DIFFERENT DAYS AND TIMES EACH WEEK?

The Library relies on VolunTeens to commit to being available on a regular basis. We want to be prepared for you and we find that coming in weekly helps you retain what you have learned. Please check with your parent/ guardian when applying to ensure that the availability you are providing is accurate. This helps library staff determine if you are a good fit for their location. If you are accepted into the program, you will discuss your schedule further with a library staff member from that location.

WILL THE LIBRARY GIVE ME CREDIT FOR VOLUNTEERING?

Yes, we will offer a certificate of completion at the end of your VolunTeen session. In addition, library staff are more than willing to sign off on community service hours that were earned at the library. It is your responsibility to provide library staff with enough time and notice to complete these verifications for you.

I'M READY TO SIGN UP, NOW WHAT?

We will be using a new system to recruit all of our volunteers this year that will be launching on April 15th. We will have a guide available for teens to use to help them sign up and apply for VolunTeen opportunities using Get Connected. All of these resources are available on our [Teen Services page](#).



ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO EARN COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS AT THE LIBRARY FOR TEENS?

Yes, there are two other ways that you can earn community service hours aside from our VolunTeen program. One is by participating in a library program such as a Community Service Project or Teen Advisory Council that can be searched on our [online calendar](#). The second is by participating in our virtual volunteering opportunity to create digital content for our CMLibrary Teens Instagram. This allows teens to earn up to 10 hours. More details about available projects are accessible on our [form](#).

VOLUNTEER SERVICES TEAM

Chauna Wall - Volunteer Coordinator
(for adults 18 and over)
cwall@cmlibrary.org 704-416-0711

Holly Summers-Gil - Senior Program Manager, Teen Services (for teens ages 13-18)
hsummers@cmlibrary.org 704-416-4661

Contact volunteer services Monday-Friday with general questions about volunteering.

For a list of library locations seeking volunteers, visit www.cmlibrary.org/volunteer