

The Volunteer

A Look at What the Austin Public Library

By Lisa Miller-Gray

The handbook is used at orientation, my time with individual volunteers. It consists of a folder with a pocket on each side for various materials of different sizes. I use this format rather than a printed book or handbook so that I can quickly update it, use current information and make it specialized for special groups.

A lot of the information on the left side is current information about the library and the events that are taking place. These pamphlets and flyers give the volunteer good information about the library and advertise the library and the broad scope of activities and programs we have. Many times volunteers will pass some of the information on to others, and you can bet they will be asked all sorts of general questions about the library because they volunteer there.

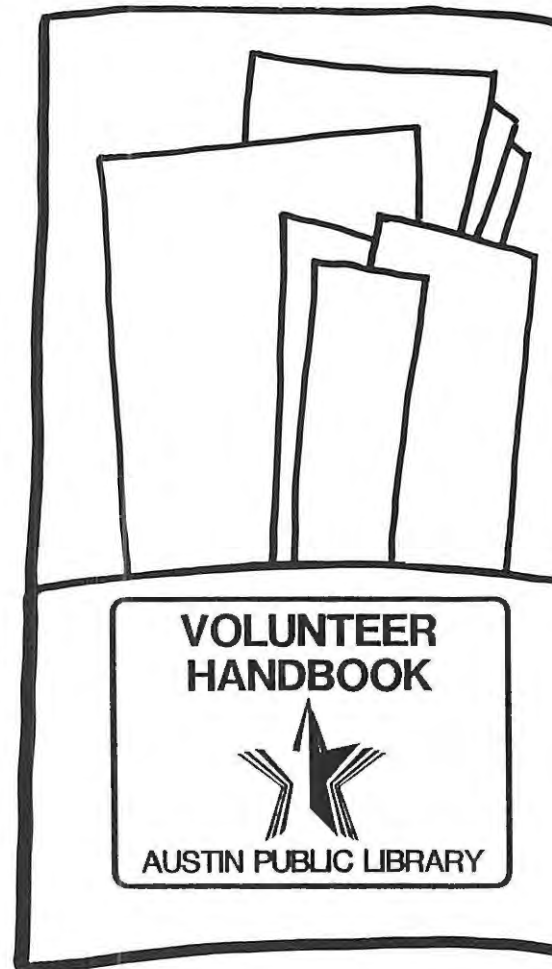
The business plan presents our golden objectives—the library's dreams about what we want to accomplish. It shows volunteers that they are so important in the larger scheme of things that they are included in the annual business plan that is shared with the city council.

The policy statement (Welcome to the Austin Public Library) tells volunteers

Lisa Miller-Gray, volunteer services coordinator at the Austin, Texas, Public Library, oversees the efforts of more than 700 volunteers who contributed 20,000 hours to the library last year. She says she often conducts four or five orientation sessions a day.

Left Pocket (General Information):

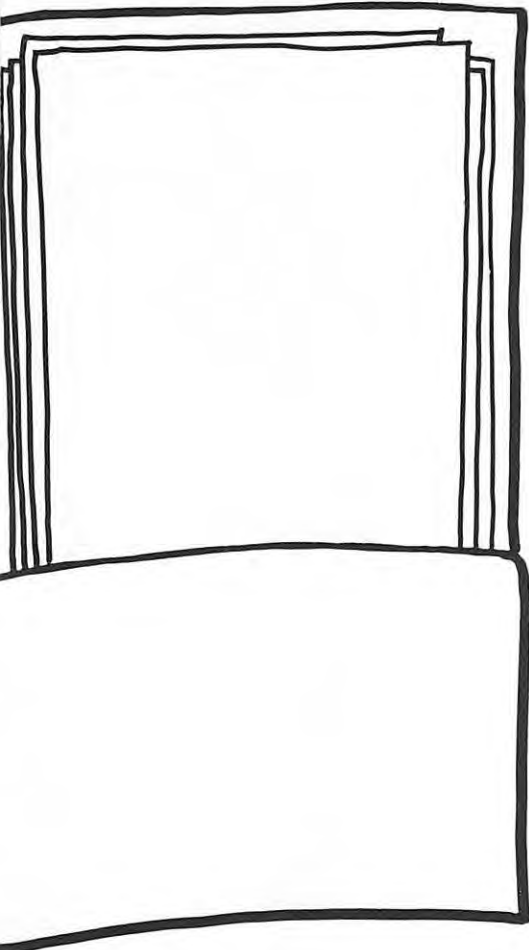
1. Austin Public Library: A Great Place to Volunteer! brochure
2. Some Information about The Austin Public Library info card
3. From A to Z: The Austin Public Library System brochure
4. The Austin History Center brochure
5. Information by Phone—Austin Public Library info card
6. Invest in Austin Gold... The Austin Public Library Gold Card info card
7. What Are Friends For?—Friends of the Austin Public Library brochure
8. Parking Options Around the Central Library info card
9. Central Library Directory (floor by floor) info sheet
10. 1992 Holiday Schedule info sheet
11. Austin Public Library 1991-92 Business Plan
12. Calendar of Events for current month
13. Friends of the Austin Public Library bookmark
14. National Volunteer Appreciation Week bookmark
15. Volunteer Services Coordinator's business card



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er Handbook

ic Library Gives Its Volunteers



Right Pocket (Volunteer Forms):

1. Welcome to the Austin Public Library! (policy statement)
2. Volunteer Opportunities at the Austin Public Library (descriptive list)
3. Volunteer Application
4. Volunteer Reference Form
5. Volunteer Interest and Hobby Checklist
6. Volunteer Placement Form
7. Volunteer Monthly Timesheet
8. Volunteer Badge

what's expected of them. I have the volunteers read this before anything else and tell them if they have problems with any of it, we need to talk about it right away. They need to know what the library expects and to be comfortable with this.

I use the interest and hobby list to educate the volunteer to what sorts of programs we have and to find out what the volunteer does not want to do. And I always respect those preferences. If you put someone with children, and they have said they don't want to work with children, you will lose them very quickly. In all of these forms, I try to both educate the volunteer and to gain information that will help in good placement. This is another tool to understand their motivation for volunteering.

After they fill out the application, I ask them to read and sign the waiver form. Volunteers will have access to confidential information and they need to anticipate this and respect that confidentiality. I once had a 12-year-old who was working in the data systems, cleaning up some records. We found he was making a list of names. When he was asked why, he said he had written a novel and he knew these patrons like to read so he was going to send them copies of his novel. Volunteers need to be aware that some of the information they see will be confidential.

I like to take this opportunity to give people examples of what they may be doing and how that fits into the total picture of the library. I talk about liability issues and what types of things might be unpleasant or painful in the future. For instance, those working at the information desks may

**orientation, my time with
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ups."**

have to enforce a policy we have of charging a non-resident fee for users who live outside the city. It's better that they know about this and can anticipate the complaints ahead of time.

Together we fill out the volunteer placement form. We agree on what the volunteer wants to do, how many hours a week they will be working, and other important details of their job. Then they are scheduled for a training session.

I use the monthly time sheet as a prop to orient volunteers about the importance of time sheets. I tell them these forms are used to gather statistics that may be crucial in getting additional funding and grants. I tell them the time sheets also will help them because they can get letters of reference after 30 hours of work. I also use these forms to talk about our recognition program and to get a sense for whether volunteers are interested in recognition programs. After 50 hours they get a certificate; after certain requirements a plaque. This helps me understand how the volunteer is motivated.

I tell my volunteers that they will be expected to wear their badges. We have security all over the building, and volunteers will often be going into staff-only areas. And I tell people at every interview that they are a walking commercial for volunteer programs.

All of this may seem like a lot of work, but the orientation system is key to a strong and dynamic volunteer program. People know what's expected of them, what they will get in return, and what types of things they will not be asked to do. They see that the volunteer program is organized and efficient, that they are needed and that there is a certain stature to their position.

VOLUNTEER INTEREST AND HOBBY CHECKLIST

This information will be used to assist the Volunteer Services Coordinator in placing volunteers.

	No.	I have done this.	I would like to do this.	I might like to do this.
Conducting tours				
Speaking to groups				
Printing (handwriting/calligraphy)				
Taking responsibility				
Meeting new people				
Stuffing envelopes				
Using math				
Typing				
Making flannelgraphs for storyhours				
Artwork (posters, displays, exhibits)				
Teaching others (tutoring)				
Scriptwriting				
Role-playing (acting)				
Storytelling from memory				
Reading stories aloud				
Puppeteering (performance, production)				
Working with machines (film, slide projectors, etc.)				
Data entry				
Working with children				
Assisting with craft programs				
Organizing a meeting/workshop				
Playing an instrument for a group				
Participating in group activities (decorating, cleanup, etc.)				
Filing/general clerical duties				
Shelving books or				
Writing reports, sp				
Dusting, cleaning				
Custodial work				
Job with public co				
Helping others (o				
Repairing books				
Receptionist				
Fund-raising/grat				
Sewing				
Tape production				
Research				
Working with arc				

Volunteer Opportunities at the Austin Public Library

PAGE VOLUNTEER

Duties include shelving Library materials in order (using Dewey Decimal alphabeticization), shelf-reading to check proper order of books and reading magazines and newspaper area, and cleaning records. Training is offered every **Tuesday** from 9 a.m.-12 noon. *Wednesday*

SECURITY DESK ATTENDANT VOLUNTEER

Duties include staffing the security desk at the Central Library; volunteers to deal with the public. A one-hour training session is required and is held one week at the convenience of the volunteer.

TUTOR VOLUNTEER

Tutor programs for elementary age children on a limited basis during the summer months at various Branches. Sessions at Carver Branch and the Oak Springs Branch on Tuesday evenings are on an individual basis and take place during the school year, at the convenience of the volunteer.

ENTER VOL

requires assistance in processing collections. An orientation session is required.

BOOKS VOL

Library materials to help with the program. Training is required and is held during a group training session. Participation is strongly encouraged. For more information call 454-7293.

GRAMMING ASSIS

to assist in the creation of a Community Service Center. Experience and artistic ability are required. Work schedule will be Monday through Friday.

Information by Phone

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Telephone Information Center

499-7599

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

City of Austin

from

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

to

VOLUNTEER

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY



Date: _____

Austin Public Library VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone number: Home _____ Work _____

Day (optional): _____

Preferred Library location: _____

Preferred work schedule: Day(s) _____ Hours _____

Education: _____

Employment experience (briefly describe): _____

Person to contact in case of emergency: _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Have you done volunteer work before? _____ If yes, what type? _____

How did you hear about the Library's volunteer program? _____

skills/experience:

any work
processing

foreign language:
name(s)? _____

is required and w
y.



City of Austin

Founded by Congress, Republic of Texas, 1839
Austin Public Library, 800 Guadalupe, P.O. Box 2287, Austin, TX 78768
Telephone 512 499-7300

WELCOME TO THE AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY!

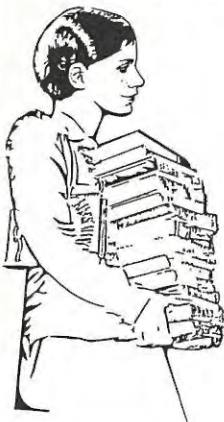
The staff of the Austin Public Library is excited about you and your commitment to help us serve the citizens of Austin. We want you to become a member of our team, sharing not only in our work but in our friendship. In this spirit of partnership, we ask you to observe these policies.

- As a representative of the Library, you should always be polite to both Library users and staff.
- Please dress neatly and cleanly.
- Discourage friends or relatives from visiting while you are working.
- Discourage personal phone calls. However, if someone must reach you while you are on duty, have her/him contact you through the Volunteer Coordinator's office (473-4243).
- Staff lounge facilities are available for your breaks while you are on duty. Food and drink is permitted only in those areas. Smoking is not permitted in any Library facility.
- Volunteers are permitted in the Library at 8:45 a.m. and can work in non-public areas unsupervised until 6:00 p.m. After 6:00 p.m., a volunteer cannot remain in a non-public area unless a supervisor is present.
- For security reasons, volunteers must wear identification badges while on duty. Also, for security purposes volunteers should not handle keys and/or money.

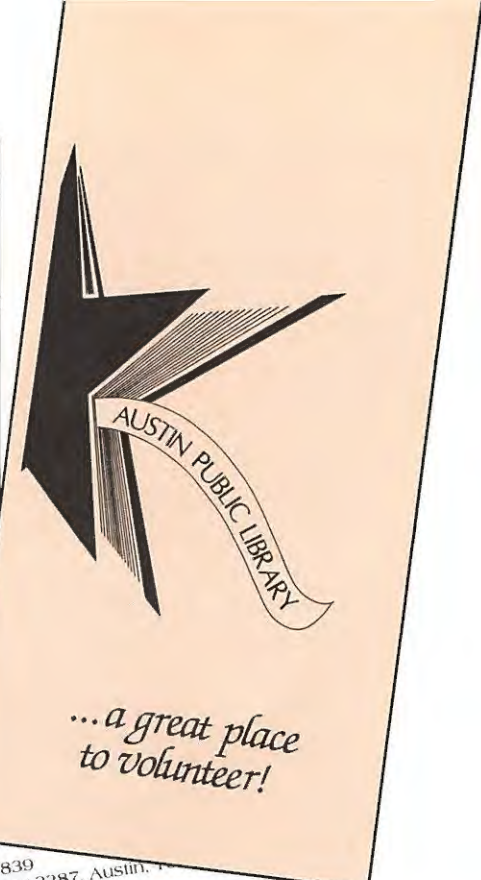
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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK

April 26 - May 2, 1992



AUSTIN
PUBLIC
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APPRECIATES
ITS
VOLUNTEERS



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AUSTIN
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LIBRARY



What Makes A Good Volunteer?

The following list appears in the Hampton (Va.) Department of Social Services' "Volunteer Supervision Handbook," which was developed by David McMullen, author and volunteer.

The qualities the volunteer interviewer should look for—the attributes of a desirable volunteer—are:

1. *Availability and transportation*—Is the candidate available when the job needs to be done, and can he or she get to and from the job?
2. *Dependability and commitment to the job*—Past paid and volunteer employment and personal references may help indicate whether these qualities are present.
3. *Respect for the principle of confidentiality*—Does the applicant fully understand and accept the requirement of confidentiality?
4. *Willingness to learn and to accept supervision*—It is difficult and may be impossible to supervise a volunteer who does not have these qualities.
5. *A reasonable degree of self-confidence*—Lack of self-confidence may be due to understandable reasons, such as lack of experience, and may be overcome, but volunteers who are not self-confident will require more of their supervisor's time and energy.
6. *Absence of bigotry, moralizing and judgmental attitudes toward others*—These attributes cause friction, arguments and resentment. People who have them may be unwilling or unable to overcome them and therefore would be unsuitable as volunteers.
7. *Previous arrest record*—An arrest and conviction record does not automatically disqualify an applicant from volunteering. However, the nature of the offense(s), date(s) of conviction, and any pattern of offenses should be considered carefully before accepting the individual.

When the Person Is Right for the Job:

If you believe the candidate is right for the job, make certain that you and the applicant are in agreement on any decisions that have been made. Tell the new volunteer what the next steps are, such as orientation or training, and where and when to report. Immediately after the interview, write up any necessary notes or reminders.

When the Person Is Not Right for the Job

If an assignment cannot be offered to the applicant, tell her as graciously as possible. Always leave the applicant with an alternative plan—let him know that other volunteer opportunities exist and how to go about investigating them. Thank him for his time and interest in the department.