

**Subject:** Volunteers  
**Effective:** September 1999  
**Revised:** August 2023

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

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This policy defines the role of volunteers within New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS), suitable assignments for volunteers, and standards for volunteer management.

Best practices and recommended reading with regards to developing and managing a volunteer program can be found in the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*.

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## 2.0 APPLICATION

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This policy replaces NBPLS Policy 203 – Volunteers.

This policy applies to:

- volunteers in libraries, regional offices and the provincial office;
- public library trustees when they choose to volunteer at the library (i.e. not serving as a library trustee), under the management of library staff;
- previous employees of NBPLS when they choose to volunteer.

This policy does not apply to:

- library guest speakers;
  - individuals who are in the library to deliver a program as part of a partnership between the library and an organization.
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## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

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**Duty of care** means the obligation of volunteers and staff to exercise reasonable care with respect to the interest of others, in particular, vulnerable people. This obligation includes protection from harm and is supported by the Province of New Brunswick by detecting and screening out sources of foreseeable harm through criminal record checks.

**Employee in charge** means a Library Manager/Director or Head of Unit.

**Level of risk** as it relates to NBPLS duty of care, means the exercise of reviewing, assessing and thinking through volunteer assignments that have a higher risk than others based on the participant(s), the setting, the nature of the activity, the level of supervision and the nature of the relationship with the participant(s).

**Volunteer** means a person who is directly supervised by NBPLS staff to perform tasks without wages, benefits or any form of compensation. A volunteer may be a current NBPLS employee using their personal time (outside of their working hours), a previous NBPLS employee or a retired NBPLS employee. A volunteer does not refer to library guest speakers or individuals with an organization (e.g. early literacy educators) who partner with the library to provide a program in the library.

Within the scope of this policy, a volunteer does not refer to a public library trustee in their duties as a trustee.

**Vulnerable person** as defined by Volunteer Canada, means a person who has difficulty protecting him/herself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or situation.

**Youth volunteer** means minors that are 12 years old, up to and including 18 years old. Some exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Regional Director when considering a student for the work experience program under the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [Policy 307 - Work Education](#).

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#### **4.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY**

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##### [The New Brunswick Public Libraries Act](#)

##### [The New Brunswick Employment Standards Act](#)

This Act does not set out a minimum age for youth in work environments. However, it does place some restrictions on the employment of persons who are under the age of 16 years with regards to the number of hours they can work. See section 6.6 for more information.

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## **5.0 GOALS AND PRINCIPLES**

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NBPLS values the contributions of its volunteers who bring expertise, knowledge and a willingness to donate time and effort to our organization.

A volunteer program offers opportunities for individuals to perform a valuable service for the community, to gain skills and to experience library culture.

In order to respond to the needs of New Brunswickers, NBPLS is resourceful in the use of its assets and of those located in the community.

To this end, NBPLS uses volunteers to promote, expand and enhance library services and programs, and to assist staff. Volunteers complement staff in meeting the needs of the public.

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## **6.0 REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS**

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### **6.1 Role and Responsibilities**

NBPLS Staff:

- ✓ Ensure that operational requirements are met, and that the vision, mission and goals are achieved.
- ✓ Administer services, programs and resources, as well as support the delivery of innovative and responsive services and programs that facilitate the use of the library as a community resource and a place for reading and lifelong learning.
- ✓ Use external resources and external expertise as needed to help meet operational requirements, the vision, mission and goals for the provision of library services and programs.

Employee in Charge:

- ✓ Recruit and manage volunteers.
- ✓ Oversee training, supervision and evaluation of volunteers, and provide formal and informal recognition of volunteers in a fair and equitable manner.

Library Assistants:

- ✓ Train, supervise, and delegate tasks to volunteers on a daily basis as assigned by the Employee in Charge.

- ✓ Assist the Employee in Charge in assessing the contribution of volunteers.

Library Boards:

- ✓ May assist with the recruitment of volunteers who act under the supervision of library management.

Volunteers:

- ✓ Follow the direction of the Employee in Charge.
- ✓ Follow through on their commitments to NBPLS.

## 6.2 Use of Volunteers

- ✓ The use of volunteers will not result in the displacement, transfer, reassignment, or layoff of any staff member, to a reduction in their hours, or to the elimination of paid positions. Volunteers will not be used to:
  - sustain or extend library hours;
  - serve the public at the circulation desk (with the exception of library school (college or university) co-operative students and interns);
  - provide information services to the public (reader's advisory, reference services);
  - use the staff interface of the automated library system ((with the exception of library school (college or university) co-operative students and interns).
- ✓ Volunteers will be used to help promote, expand and enhance library services and programs in the community through their knowledge, skills, expertise and willingness to donate time.
- ✓ Volunteers are supervised by NBPLS staff. When volunteers are assigned tasks in libraries, library staff are in attendance at all times.
- ✓ While every effort will be made to accommodate volunteers and match volunteer abilities with available opportunities, the NBPLS vision, mission, and goals take precedence. To this end, NBPLS reserves the right to decline an offer to volunteer if the involvement of the individual will not result in a benefit to NBPLS.

### 6.3 Volunteer Assignments

Volunteer assignments must adhere to the standards set in section 6.2 of this policy and must be approved by the Regional Director. For a list of assignments suitable for volunteers, see Appendix A – List of Approved Assignments for NBPLS Volunteers.

In the event that an Employee in Charge wants to assign a task to a volunteer that is not included in Appendix A, he/she must submit a summary of the volunteer assignment (see Appendix B for examples) to the Regional Director for approval by the NBPLS Provincial Management Team. The summary of the volunteer assignment will explain the responsibilities, skills needed, and time required.

The Employee in Charge is responsible for providing volunteers with the summary of the volunteer assignment (see Appendix B) prior to starting.

### 6.4 Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment messages must indicate the type of tasks to be performed, the time commitment, and screening procedures. For strategies on how to recruit volunteers, see the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*.

### 6.5 Special Case Volunteers

In addition to regular volunteers, NBPLS may accept as volunteers:

- Students participating in a work experience / co-operative program as an educational requirement;
- Individuals participating in work programs provided by community health and social services agencies; or

In each case, the Employee in Charge will determine whether to offer a volunteer placement based on the following criteria:

- Staff have time to train and supervise the individual;
- There are suitable tasks that will benefit NBPLS and the individual;
- The participating organization and the Employee in Charge meet to reach a mutual understanding of the goals, mission, and commitment of each organization, including screening requirements for the assignment;

- The participating organization provides adequate oversight into the placement;
- The placement will not create a risk for vulnerable people.

NBPLS will consider individuals seeking to provide community service under alternative sentencing orders for volunteer placement, provided their criminal record check is acceptable under NBPLS Policy 1024 - Screening of Employees and Volunteers.

## 6.6 Youth Volunteers

Youth volunteers (see definition in section 3.0) that are under the age of 16 years old must have written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering.

All youth volunteers are required to sign the Affirmation/Oath of Office for Volunteers, and will be given a clear explanation of what it means.

In keeping with the New Brunswick [Employment Standards Act](#), NBPLS will not ask a youth under the age of 16 years old to volunteer:

- for more than six hours in any day;
- for more than three hours on any school day;
- on any day for a period which, when added to the time required for attendance at school on that day, would require the person to spend more than a total of eight hours attending school and volunteering.

## 6.7 Screening

The following process will be followed when screening volunteers:

- a) The potential volunteer completes an application form. See Appendix C – Sample Library Volunteer Application Form.
- b) The Employee in Charge and the potential volunteer discuss the application form (e.g. their interests, skills), expectations, volunteer opportunities and screening procedures that may apply. Based on the level of risk associated with the volunteer assignment, an interview may be conducted by the Employee in Charge. For more information on interviewing, see NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*.

- c) As stipulated in NBPLS Policy 1024 – Screening of Employees and Volunteers, a **criminal record check** will be required for all volunteers aged 18 and older:
- who are assigned tasks in a library; or
  - will be in regular and direct contact with vulnerable people (e.g. children, persons with disabilities, elderly); or
  - may have the opportunity to be in contact with vulnerable people as part of their volunteer assignment(s).

Exceptions to requiring a criminal record check may apply in the case of volunteers needed for one-time or special library events if the level of risk is determined to be minimal and it has been approved by the Regional Director (see section 3 for definition and NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*).

Criminal record checks will not be requested until the volunteer has been offered the assignment, with the condition that their criminal record check is acceptable as per the standards set in NBPLS Policy 1024 – Screening of Employees and Volunteers.

Where costs apply, criminal record checks will be paid for by the volunteer, who may request a reimbursement from the local library board (where feasible) after three months of volunteer service.

A criminal record check must be an original copy and must not be more than 12 months old when submitted.

- d) **Two references** will be required for all volunteers whose assignments will require them to have regular or direct contact with vulnerable people or may have the opportunity to be in contact with vulnerable people due to the situation. This includes youth volunteers, in consideration of the fact that records of criminal offences for these individuals are unavailable. References may be character or employment based. See the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook* for more information.
- e) Based on the level of risk associated with a volunteer assignment, random spot checks of volunteers may be done by NBPLS staff and/or feedback from library or program participants may be obtained as deemed appropriate.

## 6.8 Orientation

Orientation will provide new volunteers with information regarding:

- The vision, mission, and goals of NBPLS and how their contribution assists in meeting these goals;
- Policies and practices;
- Confidentiality and privacy;
- Volunteer conduct (see section 6.12 *Volunteer Conduct*); and
- Government/departmental code of conduct applicable to NBPLS.

During their orientation, volunteers will be:

- Provided with the NBPLS document: *Orientation Handbook for Volunteers*;
- Required to sign the Affirmation/Oath of Office for Volunteers (See NBPLS Policy 1060 – Confidentiality of Personal Information about Patrons). This includes volunteers under the age of 19;
- Required to sign a volunteer agreement (see Appendix D – Volunteer Agreement).

In the case of **public-school library volunteers**, they are required to read and understand the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) [Policy 701: Policy for the Protection of Pupils](#) and complete the [Validation Questionnaire](#).

## 6.9 Training

Volunteers will be provided with sufficient training to allow them to complete their assigned tasks. To facilitate training, volunteers will be provided with a written summary of the volunteer assignment (see Appendix B for examples), which should be supplemented by a verbal explanation.

If a trial or probationary period is used, volunteers will be advised of how this will work and when the period is over. A recommended probationary period is 3 months.

## 6.10 Volunteer Schedule

The Employee in Charge and the volunteer will agree on a regular schedule as deemed appropriate for the assignment.



For more information on scheduling, see the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*.

### **6.11 Supervision**

NBPLS (i.e. libraries, regional and provincial offices) reserve the right to limit the number of volunteer placements at any time in order to provide proper instruction and supervision.

All volunteer assignments will be performed under the supervision of NBPLS staff. Each volunteer will have a specific staff member to whom he or she reports and with whom to discuss problems. Volunteers will receive a level of supervision appropriate to their assigned tasks (and the level of risk associated with the assignment) and will be provided with regular opportunities to give and receive feedback.

### **6.12 Volunteer Conduct**

Volunteers must adhere to NBPLS policies and procedures and any government/departmental code of conduct applicable to NBPLS. Volunteers must follow health and safety precautions when completing their assignments.

When volunteering with NBPLS, volunteers are prohibited from:

- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Stealing or damaging property;
- Misusing funds, equipment and materials;
- Committing illegal, violent or unsafe acts;
- Abusing or mistreating library patrons, staff or other volunteers; and
- Engaging in behaviour that is disruptive to others.

The Employee in Charge is responsible for giving volunteers copies of relevant NBPLS policies and procedures and code of conduct applicable to NBPLS.

If a volunteer does not adhere to NBPLS policies and procedures and the code of conduct applicable to NBPLS, or fails to satisfactorily meet the expectations of his or her volunteer assignment, the Employee in Charge may terminate the individual's volunteer placement.

### 6.13 Assessment

The impact and contribution of volunteers and the volunteer program will be continually assessed by the Employee in Charge to ensure NBPLS needs are being met in fulfilling its vision, mission, and goals.

### 6.14 Recognition

Volunteer contributions will be consistently acknowledged by the Employee in Charge with formal and informal methods of recognition in an appropriate and ongoing manner. Library boards may assist with recognition efforts. See the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook* for more information on volunteer recognition.

### 6.15 Confidentiality

Volunteers must respect the privacy of all patrons and the confidentiality of information they receive about NBPLS operations while fulfilling their volunteer duties, and are required to sign an Affirmation/Oath of Office as a condition of their volunteer placement. See NBPLS Policy 1060 – Confidentiality of Personal Information about Patrons.

### 6.16 Record Keeping

The Employee in Charge will maintain records on all volunteers, allowing for proper planning and management. Records on volunteers will be kept at the local level (e.g. the library, regional office or provincial office depending on the volunteer's assigned location) and will be kept for the length of the volunteer's term plus 10 years. Volunteer records will be considered confidential, and will be kept in a secure location.

Volunteer personnel records will contain:

- The completed application form;
- The signed Affirmation/Oath of Office for Volunteers;
- Criminal record check if applicable;
- References if applicable;
- Address and personal contact information;
- Interview notes if applicable;
- The signed volunteer agreement;
- Assessments;
- Records of rewards;
- Time and attendance records;

- Summary of volunteer assignments; and
- Emergency contact information.

### 6.17 Personal Liability and Insurance Coverage

Volunteers providing service under the direction of NBPLS staff are covered by the Personal Liability Protection Policy of the Province of New Brunswick.

Volunteers are not covered under the Workers' Compensation Act.

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## 7.0 GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Employees in Charge are encouraged to use the NBPLS document: *Volunteer Management Sourcebook*.

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## 8.0 REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

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None.

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## 9.0 REFERENCES

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Education and Early Childhood Development. Policy 701 – Policy for the Protection of Pupils.  
(<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/policies.html>).

Education and Early Childhood Development. Policy 307 – Work Education  
(<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/policies.html>).

Education and Early Childhood Development. Policy 701 – Policy for the Protection of Pupils: Validation Questionnaire.  
(<http://701.nbed.nb.ca/questionnaire-e.asp>).

New Brunswick Employment Standards Act. (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

New Brunswick Public Libraries Act. (<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>).

New Brunswick Public Library Service. Orientation Handbook for Volunteers.

New Brunswick Public Library Service. Policy 1024 – Screening of Employees and Volunteers

New Brunswick Public Library Service. Policy 1060 – Confidentiality of Personal Information about Patrons

New Brunswick Public Library Service. Volunteer Management Sourcebook.

Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.  
(<http://laws.gnb.ca/en/BrowseTitle>)

Volunteer Canada. ([www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)).

***Related GNB policies:***

Administration Manual System Policy (AD-3108) – Compensation and Employee Benefits: Personal Liability Protection. (<http://intranet.gnb.ca/intellinet/adminman/>).

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**10.0 CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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NBPLS Provincial Office, (506) 453-2354