

Staffing Best Practices: The Circulation Assistant Sub Pool at Kent district Library

In 2008, the Kent District Library sought to ease the challenges of natural turnover with the establishment of an efficient staffing solution. Solutions to a single business challenge oftentimes bring ancillary benefits by surprise. Through the use of the CA Sub Pool, newly hired subs receive on-the-job training and observations from a variety of branch managers who report both performance successes and concerns to the Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development (HR/OD). This reporting allows for frequent coaching and correction of problem behaviors, encouraging employees to perform at high levels consistent with expectations, or to be removed prior to placement in the system. Accordingly, the process, serves to further screen those job applicants who are effective at interviewing but who are not consistent with their performance, resulting in a workforce that takes pride in having common expectations for work ethic and service to its customers. Over time, the CA Sub Pool has been recognized as a staffing best practice, being adopted by several libraries throughout the State of Michigan and other states.

At KDL alone, it has been estimated that this process has

- Reduced the total number of interview sessions by 25-30 per year,
- Reduce the total time managers spent in interviews by over 250 hours per year,
- Shortened staff-to-fill of vacancies by an average of 50 days per vacancy, and,
- Ensured a high quality of staff placement by monitoring and coaching those who are interested in regular employment prior to making an employment commitment.

Process Defined:

Step 1 HIRING: Group hiring will occur on an as-needed basis to maintain a pool of Substitutes interested to assume regular CA roles. Hiring groups of individuals recognizes that oftentimes multiple people will interview for the same job with many qualified candidates being rejected in favor of a single candidate to fill a single job. By conducting multiple interviews in a single day, then offering jobs to each qualified candidate (i.e., as many as ten from a single day of interviewing) the organization leverages its ability to place well qualified people in the future without the time and attention required of multiple postings, interview dates, and orientations.

Postings will describe the Sub CA pool as a means for regular CA employment (for those who seek regular part-time hours as a CA). Applicants shall be selected using input and feedback from a variety of Circulation and Branch Managers through group ranking methods. Interviews for the Sub CA pool will follow established interview procedures. CA Subs shall be considered at-will, casual employees.

Step 2 ORIENTATION: Substitute CAs will participate in a new-hire group orientation followed by training on the use of the integrated library system to learn circulation procedures. If a CA Sub is unable to demonstrate technical proficiency while in class, they are offered the ability to re-train at a future date or are removed from the pool.

Step 3 IN-BRANCH TRAINING: The Sub CA will be scheduled for twenty-hours of in-branch training where they are actively observed and coached by members of branch management with support from branch staff. Upon completion, managers submit a report to the HR Director acknowledging the CA Sub is ready to begin working shifts in the branch, or, is in need of additional training. If a CA Sub is not ready to provide adequate public service, feedback is shared accordingly, additional training is provided or, they are removed from the pool to ensure both the workforce and customers are supported with uncompromised high quality service.

Step 4 SCHEDULING SHIFTS: Sub CAs will be notified of vacant shifts (i.e., due to staff sick days, planned vacations, or general vacancies) through e-mail notification. In these instances, managers will list the date, location, and hours of the vacant shift. No minimum number of hours of work will be offered or required. However, if a Sub is habitually non-responsive to requests for staffing assistance, they may be removed from the Sub CA pool recognizing they are not using the skills taught in training and therefore would be ill-prepared if called upon in the future.

Step 5 OBSERVATION: Throughout a sub's tenure in the sub pool, their accuracy, professionalism, attitude, and reliability, are all being observed by managers. Occasionally, concerns are reported and the sub is referred for further training or is removed from the pool. Typically, they perform well and are approved for future placement once a vacancy occurs. It's important to note that despite multiple manager's observations, the subs formally report to the HR Director who is responsible for providing feedback and managing performance. This arrangement is in place as an internal customer service initiative to better serve the manager. As such, managers can share performance feedback of subs through the HR Director without the social and emotional challenges of providing feedback to a new employee, or potentially waiting for the sub to return for another shift. This helps provide for an

environment where staff performance is managed actively for the betterment of all.

Step 6: PLACEMENT: Following a one-week posting period for internal candidates, those subs who've expressed interest are considered with placement occurring immediately upon the close of the position posting. Through the placement of these individuals the library is supporting goals for efficient staffing with highly qualified employees who are culturally orientated and supportive of the high expectations that are in place, contributing to and supporting the kind of culture that our organization seeks to promote. Put differently, we don't wonder if they will work out, we already know they do.

JOB DESCRIPTION



Position: Outreach Specialist
Range: 5 (Non-Exempt) (Union)
Reports to: Manager of Community Engagement
Supervises: None

JOB SUMMARY

Under the general direction of the Manager of Community Engagement, the Outreach Specialist initiates, coordinates and supports opportunities to bring library services to the community through innovative approaches.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Identifies and facilitates the deployment of outreach efforts by coordinating staff, activities and materials through different channels (mobile, online, offsite and other).
2. Suggests new community-based programs, partnerships and other engagement initiatives. Continually identifies innovative ideas and opportunities for outreach while improving upon past events.
3. Develops and evaluates community engagement activities that promote library resources and services (print, web and other media) in the community.
4. Works with staff throughout KDL in planning and implementing outreach programs and services, supporting outreach branch initiatives.
5. Provides training and mentoring to library staff and community volunteers to deliver effective community engagement by expanding KDL's reach and bridging community services for patrons.
6. Works with community groups and agencies to represent KDL during outreach events.
7. Identifies, initiates, and deepens relationships with various community stakeholders who work with or represent underserved populations.
8. Finds ways to add value to new and existing partnerships by continually communicating current library services and resources.
9. Aids in providing a full array of bookmobile services as needed.
10. Maintains departmental files, records, and statistical data. Performs other clerical duties as necessary.

11. Solicits vendor bids, purchases, prepares, and distributes materials as needed from the Outreach and Marketing budget. This may include, but it is not limited to: events equipment, craft supplies and other promotional materials.
12. Uses and interprets data to document the effectiveness of KDL's efforts to provide recognized, highly valued community engagement services and materials to our constituents
13. Supports reservations and maintains inventory of outreach materials and equipment (e.g. Storytime tubs, Katie L. costume, etc.).
14. Serves as a member of appropriate Library work groups.
15. Performs other duties as assigned.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

1. The job requires a Bachelor's degree in education, business, or relevant field of study.
2. One to two years of progressive work experience while demonstrating an aptitude and knowledge of customer service as a champion of library services.
3. Ability to travel between work locations and related places of business as needed.
4. Bilingual (English/Spanish) preferred.
5. Knowledge of office practices and procedures.
6. Ability to perform work under general supervision with latitude in exercising judgment in determining work methods and results.
7. Computer skills to effectively utilize e-mail, word processing and spreadsheets, databases and Library related software.
8. Effective interpersonal communication skills involving enunciation and articulation and performance ability to present prepared material to various audiences.
9. Ability to work in situations with multiple deadlines and work under pressure.
10. Ability to work with accuracy and attention to detail.
11. Hearing ability to answer telephone inquiries.
12. Ability to operate a variety of office equipment including a personal computer, copy machine, Ellison machine and fax machine.

13. Physical ability to lift/carry materials weighing up to 40 pounds, as well as physical ability to perform programs.

WORKING CONDITIONS

1. Generally will work within a normal office environment, with minimal discomfort due to extreme temperatures, dust, and noise.
2. Requires occasional travel between KDL locations, and may include out of county travel for meetings and conferences.
3. Work hours may be varied, including evenings and weekend hours.
4. Frequent sitting/standing in one position for extended periods of time.

The library employment environment typically requires extensive computer keyboard and mouse activity, in-person, electronic and telephone communication skills. Meeting attendance at various branch and service center locations is expected; self-identified mode of transportation is required. The preparation, loading and carrying or moving of materials is commonly required for all KDL positions. Reasonable accommodations are available for individuals with disabilities.

This job description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by a person assigned to this job. They are not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all job duties that may be performed by a person so classified.