

Professional Development Policy

Purpose:

The mission of the Avon Free Public Library (the "Library") is to provide an array of outstanding resources and services to our community. Crucial to achieving that are skilled, confident people—staff, management, Directors—who engage in on-going professional development that enhances their knowledge and performance.

Driven by a strategic plan that commits to “recruit, develop and retain a highly trained staff, and build team and organizational capabilities” this policy establishes guidelines for the participation in professional development activities and reimbursement of expenses related to those activities.

Key Definitions:

Professional development is the process of improving and increasing capabilities of Library staff and Directors through access and participation in educational and training opportunities in the workplace, through outside organizations, or through coaching, mentoring and observing others perform the job. Examples include in-person training classes and workshops, webinars, membership and participation in professional associations, and attendance at conferences, in person or virtually.

Professional staff includes librarians, managers, and the library director. Para-professional staff includes library specialists, library technical assistants, and library technicians. Support staff includes library assistants, library pages, and the library secretary. Core staff is defined as those working 15 hours or more per week on a regular basis.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Library employees and members of the Library’s Board of Directors. Targeted minimum thresholds of professional development activities apply to core staff only.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Library Director is responsible for guiding the development planning process for the Library and for securing and managing adequate funding for professional development activities.

In general individuals, with input from their manager or supervisor, are responsible for identifying appropriate professional development opportunities. They are responsible for obtaining prior approval to participate if they occur during work time or if reimbursement for costs is expected.

While not mandated by personnel rules or dictated by job description, the Library has established targeted minimum standards of participation in professional development activities for each class of core employees.

1. Full-time professional staff: 15 - 30 hours per year.
2. Full-time support staff, and part-time professional and para-professional staff: 7 - 15 hours per year.
3. Part-time support staff: 3 -7 hours per year.

Managers are responsible for documenting the time spent and the professional development activities participated in by their staff each year.

Before participation in a professional development activity is approved, managers or supervisors are responsible for ensuring that such participation will not have an adverse impact on Library service, and that the activity relates directly or indirectly to the employee's role at the Library.

Staff members are responsible for keeping accurate records of professional development-related expenditures and mileage, and for submitting timely requests for reimbursement.

Occasionally, a manager or supervisor may suggest or assign a specific professional development activity to an employee to correct a deficiency or develop or enhance a job-related skill.

The Board of Directors, with input from the Library Director, is responsible for identifying appropriate enrichment and development opportunities for its members.

Procedures:

1. **Schedule Approval:** Time away from the library or away from normally assigned tasks must be approved in advance by a supervisor before committing to any professional development opportunities.
2. **Expense Reimbursement:** Costs for registration, transportation to and from the professional development activity, including mileage and parking if using a personally owned vehicle, and any required lodging will be paid for or reimbursed by the Library for approved professional development opportunities. Generally, meals are not paid for unless included as part of registration costs and not billed separately.
3. **Membership Fees:** Membership fees for state and national-level professional organizations for full-time professional staff will be paid for or reimbursed by the Library. For part-time staff, only state membership fees will be paid for or reimbursed.

Location:

This policy is housed on the Avon Free Public Library website:

<https://www.avonctlibrary.info/policies/>

A copy is maintained in the Administration Office.

Adopted: October 20, 2020