Project Title: Librarians Build Communities

Project Description:
Librarians Build Communities is an exciting new program that builds and strengthens communities by connecting librarians and library staff who want to volunteer with organizations in need of their skill sets. The program provides librarians the opportunity to give back to and expand their patron base, while at the same time increasing awareness of the specialized skills and knowledge that librarians possess.
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Executive Summary

Group G of the 2012 ALA Emerging Leaders has been working over the past five months on the Librarians Build Communities initiative, begun by Group F in 2011. The main goal was to create a website with templates and guidelines for any state or chapter to implement their own Librarians Build Communities program. Group G consisted of the following members: Ingrid Abrams, Eboni Dickerson, Erin Davis, Jeffery Loo, and Coral Sheldon-Hess.

Group G originally met at the 2012 ALA Midwinter Conference on January 20th in Dallas, Texas. Over the next five months the group met every other week for a total of eight virtual meetings.

The Group created the following: a website, a public relations plan, press releases for distribution to ALA chapters, and postings on ALA blogs. The website includes a toolkit for hosting a volunteer day and a blog for librarians to share their volunteer success stories.

The group will present their progress report at the poster session with the rest of the 2012 Emerging Leaders Class on Friday, June 22, 2012, at 3:00pm. In addition to the poster session, the group will present to the Chapter Relations Committee on Saturday, June 23, 2012, at 1:30pm, and at the ALA Advocacy Corner on Sunday, June 24, 2012, at 1:00pm.

While the 2012 group believes that they have accomplished a great deal, there is still more work to be done before this project is complete. The 2012 group is recommending a 2013 Emerging Leaders group continue to work on this project.

All meeting notes, agendas, and email correspondences are available upon request.
**Expected Goals & Outcomes**

The 2012 Emerging Leaders group built on the work started by Project F. The projected outcomes for this past year were the following:

1. Utilize or modify methods (local, state, national) compiled or suggested by Project F to extend and implement Librarians Build Communities in pilots within group members’ states.

2. Create a resource for libraries and organizations with libraries to find and obtain specialized volunteer assistance, whenever and wherever it is needed. For example, one or more online resources (e.g., a website or web page, such as a clearinghouse; a blog; a Facebook presence; volunteer management tools) will be designed and created to connect librarians with volunteer opportunities.

3. Implement a public relations plan to advertise and promote the program to librarian volunteers and to library and non-profit organizations around the country. This could include a series of articles in journals, blogs, etc. The media exposure will not only highlight the importance of supporting libraries, but also demonstrate the importance of librarians in communities across the country. It is recommended that feedback is collected on pilots or proposed models if possible. This information will help the program develop.

4. Explore partnerships with professional library organizations (such as local library chapters and associations) and/or develop a taskforce to help support and manage the program.

5. Develop budget plan(s), as necessary, for the pilots utilizing the financial implications researched by Project F.
Progress on Goals & Outcomes

Group G has worked over the last six months further defining and developing the Librarians Build Communities (LBC) program, and has made progress on several fronts: creating a website, establishing a social media presence, facilitating design of a logo, writing and implementing a public relations plan, identifying a second state to host an LBC day, and developing a plan for a group of 2013 Emerging Leaders to continue this project. These initiatives are described in more detail below.

Before these outcomes could be achieved, Group G came to an agreement about the current scope of LBC. The 2011 Emerging Leaders group, Group F, shared a vision that encompassed several possibilities for the program, from single volunteer days at individual libraries to an ongoing program with as-needed volunteer matching between librarian volunteers and organizations needing their skills. Given the short time frame, the need to make the program both achievable and attractive to volunteer-run organizations at the state level, and the program’s history, Group G decided to focus on single volunteer days with the recommendation that they be held in conjunction with a chapter, state, or regional library association’s annual conference.

Additionally, Group G wished to strengthen the program’s focus on advocacy through skills-based volunteering. Although there is room within LBC for librarians volunteering in libraries, the LBC website emphasizes volunteering in community organizations outside of libraries, to build a better understanding of librarians’ and library workers’ skills by our communities.

The sections below highlight Group G’s progress on each of the project’s goals/outcomes.

1. State LBC Days

The Alaska Library Association will host an LBC day at their 2013 annual conference in Valdez. One member from Group G will serve as a liaison between the state and national committees, suggesting content to be added and refinements to be made to librariansbuildcommunities.org based on experiences at the state level. The liaison will maintain contact with the 2013 group of Emerging Leaders taking on this project.
The Wisconsin Library Association is also planning a volunteer day during their annual conference in LaCrosse, from October 23-26. It coincides nicely with their theme, "Libraries for the Common Good."

2. Librarians Build Communities Website and Social Media

The group gave high priority to establishing a website, to allow regional, state, and local library associations to access the resources created by Group G.

The bulk of the LBC website consists of a “Primer,” written in the same style as the Library Snapshot Day Primer. The Primer provides a step-by-step guide to the implementation of an LBC volunteer day in any region, state, or city. It also includes templates for flyers, press releases, and letters to external organizations and to potential librarian volunteers. Like the Snapshot Day Primer, the LBC Primer is written to be reassuringly simple and to provide links to in-depth materials, such as a state-level wiki and research on the benefits of volunteerism.

The website also contains a blog to highlight librarian volunteers and to showcase the value, both to the individual and to the community, of skills-based volunteering by librarians. The blog will serve as an advocacy tool to make librarians’ skills more visible outside of the library profession; it may also serve as enticement to librarians who are thinking of volunteering by offering them a chance to get credit and visibility for their hard work.

Of course, the website also contains core program information including a description of LBC, its history, and the benefits of skills-based volunteering, along with links to news about the program.

Group G believes that a social media presence will help in promoting LBC and, therefore, created a Twitter account, @LibrariansBuild. Group members take turn participating in #libchat, a weekly discussion held via Twitter, using the LBC Twitter account. It also auto-tweets every post to the LBC Blog.

3. Public Relations Plan and Logo

The Public Relations Plan is included in the Appendices. It covers PR at the national level, to publicize LBC and encourage chapters/states/cities interested in participating. The plan is also designed to help chapters generate interest at the state and local level.
Group G has made progress on several of the identified steps for LBC at the national level: in April, the group wrote a press release about the LBC initiative to get the word out to the state chapters. Don Wood, ALA Staff Liaison, distributed it to the ALA Chapter Leaders listserv and the student blog. The coverage was publicized via Facebook, Twitter, and *American Libraries Direct*. The *AL Direct* article was sent to all ALA members.

Group G felt that a logo showcasing a librarian in a “Rosie the Riveter” pose would be a good symbol for the program, to increase visibility and develop a brand within the library community. Eric Conrad, a friend of one of the group members, agreed to design the logo and created a series of web- and print-friendly versions at different sizes and resolutions. He granted permission for free use of the images in any LBC material.

4. Task Force
The group researched the procedures for initiating an ALA task force for LBC. After discussion with several ALA members, it was decided that this was not the appropriate route for LBC, because a task force usually has a designated end date. LBC, on the other hand, may continue indefinitely.

The group decided that this initiative would work best if it could “live” at ALA and be readily adopted by the state chapter associations.

5. Budget
Group G did not explore the issue of budgeting; it was deemed unnecessary at this point in time.
Appendix A: 2013 Emerging Leaders Proposal Draft

Project Description

Librarians Build Communities is an exciting new program that builds and strengthens communities by connecting librarians and library staff who want to volunteer with organizations in need of their skill sets. The program provides librarians the opportunity to give back to and expand their patron base while at the same time increasing awareness of the specialized skills and knowledge that librarians possess.

Program History

Librarians Build Communities began (originally under the name "Libraries Build Communities") in New Orleans during the 2006 ALA Annual Conference when ALA member volunteers helped with projects related to the damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. In 2007, Libraries Build Communities assisted school and public libraries in Washington, D.C.; in 2008, Anaheim, CA; in 2009, Chicago, IL; in 2010, Washington, D.C.; and in 2011, New Orleans. Through the efforts of the ALA Chapter Relations Committee and two previous Emerging Leaders groups, 2011's Group F and 2012's Group G, the program has changed focus, from a primarily library-centric volunteer effort at a national conference once a year, to a program that promotes advocacy through skills-based volunteering external to libraries, and that can be run at the regional, state, or city level.

The previous groups' efforts have focused primarily on defining the program and creating tools to make it possible for library associations of any size to run Librarians Build Communities volunteer days of their own. There is a primer available at librariansbuildcommunities.org with information and templates; there is a blog to celebrate librarian volunteers and to share volunteering stories; and there is a public relations plan for promoting the program within ALA and beyond. Two states are holding their own Librarians Build Communities volunteer days in 2013 (Alaska and Wisconsin).

Expected Goals and Outcomes

The 2013 Emerging Leaders group will build on the work done by Projects F and G and will implement the program in their home states. Some members of Project G from 2012 will serve as project advisors to ensure a seamless transition from one group to the next.

Projected outcomes for Librarians Build Communities include the following:
1. Move the content from librariansbuildcommunities.org into ALA web space.
2. Get more states involved and track the progress of states who are participating. Support their efforts and make changes to the primer based on the best practices identified.
3. Grow the blog, and grow the blog's readership.
4. Determine whether further development is needed for LBC’s social media (e.g. ALA Connect, Facebook). Create a plan for maintaining an LBC social media presence in a sustainable way over time.
5. Investigate the feasibility of expanding LBC from its current single-day focus into an all-year ongoing program. Should there be a database of librarian volunteers, a database of volunteer opportunities, or some other mechanism for pairing organizations with volunteers on an ongoing basis?
6. Create a downloadable, short, concise checklist for sites/states that want to host an LBC Day.

A report should be written describing the progress on these outcomes (research results, resources designed, and the overall growth of the program). Outcomes should be showcased at the poster session.

**Key Contacts**

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Appendix B: Public Relations Plan

Situation/overview
- Librarians Build Communities (LBC) is a relatively new initiative with the potential to transform communities and librarians. We need to promote awareness of LBC to gain support and to help our initiative grow.
- Librarians may be uncertain of why they might volunteer and how they could begin. We could direct librarians to helpful resources and share others’ experiences in order to motivate and inspire volunteerism.
- There is a lack of understanding, outside of the library profession, of the kind of work librarians do and the value of our skills.
- Although offering one day of service in one city is certainly worthwhile, it is time to explore ways to extend the spirit of volunteerism and collegiality demonstrated in the LBC project.

Target audiences
- While there are many target audiences we could address, a focused approach to start may help us hone and cultivate our message and operations.
- Initially, we could target:
  - State library association staff
  - Readers of ALA media
  - ALA attendees
  - Library school students
  - ALA administration
  - Librarians who work in one type of library, but have interest in working at a different type of library (e.g. an academic librarian who has always wished to work with children’s libraries)
  - Librarians who are in-between jobs or unemployed (volunteer experiences can be a resume builder)
- Potentially later, we could target:
  - Sponsors
  - Non-profit groups
  - Volunteer agencies (community, state, and nationwide)

Strategies
- Develop a campaign package - that consists of facts, talking points, evidence/statistics, and anecdotal experiences – to share with organizations and librarians to inform them of LBC and volunteerism.
• This campaign package may also serve as a guide/template for writing news stories, general interest pieces, profiles, and other promotional items for online and print media.

Goals/Objectives
• Prepare a campaign package (i.e., “press kit”) with messages and talking points that will guide future PR efforts
• Promote awareness of LBC and garner support through profiles in news stories, general interest pieces, and social media sites
• Share librarian volunteer experiences to inspire and motivate other librarians to volunteer in their communities

Tactics
• Write a campaign package that addresses the following points. (See the list of Talking Points below.)
  ○ Benefits of volunteerism
    ■ Personal, organizational, and social value
    ■ Responses to concerns against volunteering (i.e., great for networking)
  ○ Anecdotes/Experiences/Stories
    ■ How/why have librarians volunteered?
    ■ How did they do it?
    ■ What was the impact of these contributions?
  ○ Who is LBC?
    ■ LBC is an exciting new program that builds and strengthens communities by making it easier for librarians to connect with community organizations and put their librarian skills to use by volunteering for a good cause. The program is an expansion of the ALA’s annual volunteer service day.

• Based on the above campaign messages, write promotional materials for the following media outlets
  ○ Listservs -- including library schools, public libraries, NMRT members, and others
  ○ ALA publications, such as American Libraries magazine, Library Journal, PLA blog, online library newsletters, conference seminars, conference newsletters, presentations, local newspapers, posters
  ○ Social media outlets: blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.
  ○ Video stories of volunteer experiences, such as: http://www.serve.gov/myamericanstory.asp

• Assess our public relations efforts for reach and efficacy
  ○ Survey people who participate in librarian volunteer programs on their awareness of our initiative and how they heard about it & what could be improved.
Budget
- Currently, there is no budget. PR will need to rely on volunteers.
- Perhaps at a later stage, we could request funding from ALA or other potential sponsors, like the ALA Library Champions.

PR Talking Points

Benefits of volunteerism
Whether you’re seeking career exploration, professional development, personal growth, health promotion, or a social outlet, there’s a benefit to volunteering for you.

- **Career benefits**
  - Build your resume by volunteering in a new field to broaden your professional experience
  - Gain valuable experience in your current field, especially if you are a student or in between jobs
  - Volunteering provides opportunities for learning and growth that may help you develop new skills and hone existing skills
  - Explore different fields and professional paths by seeking out volunteer opportunities in your community
  - Network with other professionals in your community for a chance to collaborate on different community issues or join forces with other groups in your area

- **Social benefits**
  - Enhance your self-esteem by being part of a group, which may help you meet new people and find like-minded individuals who share your interests in service

- **Personal benefits**
  - Find a sense of pride, satisfaction, and accomplishment by improving lives, solving problems, and strengthening your community
  - "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve." —Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - Learn something new and gain experience in something different
  - Express your passion for a cause
  - Pursue new interests and hobbies
  - Build confidence and develop leadership skills
• **Health benefits**
  ○ Research shows that volunteers may experience higher levels of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life, and physical health (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007, [http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/benefits.asp](http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/benefits.asp))

• **Organizational benefits**
  ○ Volunteering may serve as a retention tool, leadership development opportunity, and strategic business initiative (learn more)

More resources on the benefits of volunteering

• [http://timebank.org.uk/why-volunteer](http://timebank.org.uk/why-volunteer)
• [http://www.umsl.edu/services/volunteer/about/whyvolunteer.html](http://www.umsl.edu/services/volunteer/about/whyvolunteer.html)
• [http://timebank.org.uk/why-volunteer](http://timebank.org.uk/why-volunteer)
• [http://www.idealist.org/info/Volunteer](http://www.idealist.org/info/Volunteer)

**Questions and issues**

_Acknowledging the challenge of busy schedules_

• Interested in volunteering but finding it difficult to carve out the time for it in your busy schedule?
  ○ There are a variety of ways to volunteer. If you have limited time, lack transportation, or experience other restrictions that make volunteering at a physical site difficult, consider volunteering virtually – where you perform volunteer work over the computer or online at home.
  ○ Consider adding a public service element to one of your existing work projects

**What is the current state of volunteering in America? Who volunteers?**

• The Volunteering In America website is a great source of national statistics and information on volunteering and civic engagement, [http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/)
  ○ For example, you can find interesting numbers like this one: “In 2010, 26.3 percent of Americans volunteered, serving a total of 8.2 million hours (approximately 935 years).”

**What are LBC’s goals?**

• We’re librarians who are working to connect librarians with meaningful volunteer opportunities at community organizations who need skilled volunteers.
This program fosters opportunities for librarians to give back to their community and to interact with their patrons and future patrons outside of library spaces - while at the same time increasing awareness of the specialized skills and knowledge that librarians possess. Hopefully, our volunteer efforts will expand the community who supports and advocates for librarians and libraries. (What better way to be known in your community then to share what you can do with those who don’t already know!)

What is our approach to volunteer service?
- Librarians and library workers, by training and education, are flexible in their strengths and experience, and they have a wealth of abilities and interests to offer.
- Our approach to volunteerism is skills-based volunteering, which aims to leverage an individual’s skills and experience to help service organizations build and sustain their capacity to bring real solutions to our most pressing social problems (from the Corporation for National & Community Service).

How can you contribute to LBC?
- Help us spread the word about LBC. Discuss it with other librarians, and bring it to the attention of your library association.
- Begin volunteering yourself!
- Develop a volunteer program at your library or library association.
Appendix C: Selected Screenshots from the Website

The homepage:
The primer:

A Primer for Holding a Librarians Build Communities Day in Your State or Locality

This program bolsters opportunities for librarians to give back to their communities and to interact with their patrons and future patrons outside the library space — while also increasing awareness of the specialized skills and knowledge that librarians possess. Hopefully, these volunteer efforts will expand the community who supports and advocates for librarians and libraries. (What better way to be known in your community than to share what you can do with those who don’t already know?)

This primer was written by Group G of the 2013 Emerging Leaders, borrowing heavily from ALA’s Library Snapshot Day Primer, by Peggy Cadigan.

CONTENTS
1. Why host LBC in your state?
2. How does LBC work?
3. LBC Committee
4. Getting buy-in from librarians
5. Reaching out to community organizations
6. Creating the website
7. Choosing a date

The blog:

This post was written by Menciso Galeote, an Archivist at the UAA/AFU Consortium Library in Anchorage, Alaska.

Matulay ang wellas, palibhasa’y magdasibog. — A broom is sturdy because its straws are tightly bound.

When I moved to Anchorage, my mother came along to help me get settled. I was moving far away from home into the wilds of Alaska, and my mom was worried. Expecting floods, moose running about, and bears attacking defenseless young women, she was happy to see that Anchorage had the civilized amenities of the lower 48: roads, sunlight, electricity, running water, McDonald’s, and a Walmart. But there was one thing that Alaska does not have that that my mother, father, siblings, aunts, and uncles worry about: family. Family is important. It is where we draw our strength, security, and love. Family is who we are. Having just spent 2 years away from my family while attending graduate school in Boston, I realized that family comes in a variety of shapes and dimensions. Sometimes, you do not live under the same roof as your family. Maybe your family is in your neighborhood, a group of people who share your interests, or share your cultural background. Sometimes a community can be your family. In recognition of this, I became involved with the Filipino Community of Anchorage Alaska, Inc. (FCAA, Inc.).

Ang maligay ang gurmanangan, kung pinalalalangin. — A heavy burden is lighterened if everyone participates in carrying it.

As with any family, there are always chores to be done and days to celebrate and appreciate each
Appendix D: Volunteer Toolkit

Group G believes this toolkit may be of use to the 2013 Emerging Leaders group working on this project to grow LBC from one-day events into an ongoing initiative.

Background Checks

- **True Hire for Volunteers**: “True Hire sets the standard for providing high quality background checks for nonprofits, empowering them with the answers and tools for a safer community.” “Basic package is $9.99, with a no-cost option to donate the fee to the organization in question. True Hire promises to turn around all information about volunteers in 72 hours.”
- **Privacy Rights Clearinghouse: Volunteer Screening**: Provides information on why and how volunteers are screened, tips for volunteers, and tips for organizations.
- **National Association of Professional Background Screeners**: Their directory finds accredited firms. Firms can be searched for by name and location.
Volunteer Applications

- Phoenix Public Library
- Brooklyn Public Library

Providing and Creating a Positive/Efficacious Work Environment


  “Hackman and Lawler (1971) identified three ‘critical psychological states’ that a job should enhance if it is to be internally motivating. They are the experienced meaningfulness of the work, the experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and the knowledge of results. Hackman and Oldham (1975) worked backward to identify five job characteristics that would increase the experience of the three psychological states: (1) **skill variety**, the degree to which a job requires a variety of activities in carrying out the work; (2) **task identity**, the degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work; (3) **task significance**, the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of other people; (4) **autonomy**, the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion; and (5) **feedback from the job**, the degree to which carrying out the work activities provides direct and clear information about performance effectiveness.”


  “To have intention to remain during the early months it is necessary to experience high doses of satisfaction with the activity in which one is involved and its context. Satisfaction will be the best predictor of intention to remain in the short term. H3b: To have intention to remain during the subsequent months, in the second stage (in which the costs involved in volunteer work become evident) it is necessary to generate an affective link with the organization. Organizational commitment will therefore be the best predictor of intention to remain in the medium term (1 year). H3c: A prolonged period of commitment to an organization contributes to generating the volunteer role identity, that is, the person succeeds in incorporating this
characteristic into his or her self-concept. Role identity will therefore be the best predictor of intention to remain in the long term.” (p. 632)

“1. If an organization is interested in knowing how long volunteers are going to remain on their programs, the best solution is to ask them directly, since they themselves have the best knowledge of their personal, employment and family circumstances, which means they can make the most reliable estimate in this regard. Moreover, a tacit commitment would thus be established with the organization, which volunteers would most probably attempt to honor.2. If an organization wishes to increase service duration, strategies focused on increasing volunteers’ satisfaction will have a significant impact in the short term, and will quite probably contribute in the longer term to creating commitment to the organization and volunteer role identity.” (p. 640)
Dealing with Work Problems

*Code of Conduct for Brooklyn Public Library Volunteers*

Thank you for your cooperation in respecting the following important guidelines:

I. As a volunteer, your role and responsibilities in the library are unique.
   1. Understand that your role is a supportive one. Library employees oversee all library programs and supervise volunteer activities. You should not be left in charge of a section in the library.
   2. Remember BPL volunteers are only permitted to work with customers on library property and under the supervision of library staff.
   3. Maintain confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single employee, volunteer, customer or involves overall BPL business.
   4. Use good judgment and avoid any compromising situations: work in an area with other people at all times, especially when working with children.
   5. Speak on behalf of BPL in a public forum only if specifically authorized to so by BPL.
   6. Follow BPL policies and guidelines. These policies include, but are not limited to, Volunteer Policy Manual (Public #7), Custodianship of Library Materials Policy (Organization #12), Anti-Harassment Policy (HR #08), Dress Code Policy (HR #09), Drug and Alcohol Policy (HR #21), and Workplace Violence Policy (HR #24).

II. Take Pride in Being Professional.
   1. Maintain a constructive attitude, high standards of ethical conduct and integrity, and avoid the appearance of or actual conflicts of interest.
   2. Be prompt and consistent in your attendance. Librarians depend on volunteers and plan their work accordingly. Customers depend on volunteers even more.
   3. Notify your library supervisor as soon as possible if you must be late, or absent.
   4. Keep an accurate record of your attendance by signing in and out each day you volunteer.
   5. Establish and maintain good and frequent communication with your library supervisor.
6. Present a good image to library customers. Volunteers shall
dress appropriately for the performance of their duties and in
accordance with the Dress Code Policy.
7. Do not lend money, contribute or solicit money for outside
organizations while you are on library property.

III. Health and Safety Are Always Important.
1. Alert staff immediately if anyone has an accident while working
with you.
2. Refer any customer in need of first aid or any type of medication
to BPL staff.
3. Notify staff of any accident you have on library property.
4. Ask BPL staff for assistance with problematic behavior.

BPL policies and guidelines are available for volunteers upon request.
BPL reserves the right to discontinue your volunteer service at anytime
for whatever reason.

Print Name____________________________________
Signature______________________________________
Date____________
Your signature indicates that you understand and agree to comply with
all BPL policies and meet BPL customer service expectations. In
addition, your signature indicates that there is no
compensation for volunteer service at Brooklyn Public Library.

Time Sheets
*Example Monthly Volunteer Time Sheet*

Volunteer___________________________
Location__________________________
Volunteer Assignment________________
Supervisor__________________________
Month ________________________________ 201___
Number of Patrons Served
Date  Time In  Time Out  Daily Total

Evaluations/Exit Questions Examples
- VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK
  We want to hear from you! Suggestions or comments on your
  experience as a volunteer are appreciated. What do you like the most?
The least? What have you learned from your volunteer experience?
Thank you!
  Supervisor’s Signature ______________________________
Norfolk Public Library: “How would you improve volunteer orientation and/or training?” “Do you feel that NPL staff used your volunteer time wisely?

National Service Resources

Volunteer Handbooks

- Mesa County Libraries
- Wolfner Library, Missouri, Volunteer Handbook
- Fairfield County District Library
- San Bernardino County Library
- Sample Handbook from 501 Commons (non-profit resources), starter template

Print Resources