

Conducting Volunteer Reference Checks

Conduct reference checks with open-ended questions - Leave the door open for more informative answers.

Open-ended questions should begin with words such as "why" and "how" or phrases such as "What do you think about . . ." Open-ended questions should lead references to think analytically and critically.

Some examples –

So and so has asked to volunteer at the Library and listed you as a reference. What can you tell me about so and so?

What kinds of activities do you feel so and so would enjoy doing?

How would you describe so and so?

What else do you think I should know about so and so?

What do you think about his/her ability to help in the Library?

More questions:

Conducting a Volunteer Interview

Interview – set at a time the person is interested in volunteering – pay attention to tardiness and/or re-scheduling at this point.

- Prior to the interview, prepare some general questions, i.e. why would you like to volunteer; what are you interested in doing?
- Take time to think about what tasks are available for the volunteer and how you will use an additional volunteer.
- Welcome the volunteer warmly and put him or her at ease. You'll get more honest answers if the applicant is relaxed.
- Introduce the potential volunteer to staff members you encounter.
- Ask each question clearly and give your candidate time to answer completely.
- Tell your candidate what the next step will be. Remember how it feels to be left hanging.

Tips:

- Be kind to the candidate -- you may be working with this person some day.
- Remember that the applicant is trying to benefit the community by serving at the Library. Make a good impression on the Library's behalf.

If you encounter a volunteer that you cannot use please feel free to refer him/her to the Volunteer Services Office for placement with another organization.