

From: michlib-l-bounces@mcls.org [<mailto:michlib-l-bounces@mcls.org>] On Behalf Of BTPL Careers via Michlib-l
Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 10:26 AM
To: michlib-l@mcls.org
Subject: [Michlib-l] Hiring Pages - How Do You Attract Applicants and Retain Them?

Greetings, All--

We currently have two open Library Page positions. We are having difficulty attracting applicants (and have consistently), and an equally challenging time retaining them. What does your library do to find applicants for the Library Page position? Where do you post for this position? Do you have any methods to help retain them?

Any insights would be appreciated. I have attached the job descriptions for both positions.

Many thanks!

Best Regards,
Linden Godlove

Hi Linden-

We have always encouraged people in our volunteer pool to consider applying for our page positions. We still post the job description in a public area and look at all candidates, but most of our pages (adults and teens) started out volunteering. We don't have a lot of turnover using this strategy because they've already gotten a feel for the environment, the staff and the work. I believe it has become fairly common knowledge in our community that teens who would like to be considered for library positions should apply to volunteer first. The ones that don't last as volunteers, also don't bother to apply for a paying position. The ones that love it, stay long term...we have a couple that started with us when they were teens, are now in their mid-20s and are still with us (one actually has a full-time job elsewhere and still works a couple of short shifts per week paging for us.)

This is especially effective if it's actually the parent's idea for the teen to work at the library. We encourage them to try volunteering first, and often discover that the teen has no interest in volunteering or working here, which saves us the headache in the long run.

Best wishes!

Julie

Julie Meredith
Director
Clarkston Independence District Library
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Dear Linden -

We have a thriving volunteer program at our library, which includes a number of teens. Some of these are homeschoolers, others are exchange students who need volunteer hours, and a few are students at the high school. When we hire a page, it is posted for all to apply, and I make sure the volunteers know about it. Usually they are excited to apply, and often I hire one of them. I am careful to review applications and hold interviews fairly, without giving special treatment to volunteers. However, it is logical that having volunteered at the library, they have experience that other applicants do not.

Hope E. Nobel, M.S.L.S.
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We have had similar problems at times. Some of our problem stems from the fact that we primarily hire high school students as pages, and our local high school discourages students from working part-time. As a result we rely on word or mouth, Facebook postings, and in-house postings for many of our applicants for this job. Many of these are friends or acquaintances of current employees, and we seem to attract a number of homeschool students. Most of our pages leave after high school graduation or because they are offered a better paying job; those who stay generally like their coworkers and the somewhat flexible scheduling (the ability to trade hours with other pages). I would love to know if there is a solution to this problem, too.

Margaret Bentley
Adult Services Librarian
Shiawassee District Library--Owosso

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Dear Linden,

TADL doesn't usually have trouble attracting applicants. We take applications all the time. If there's no likely candidates in the pool, we advertise on our [website](#), and send notices to [selected media](#).

Most Adult pages work 15 hours per week up to 19.75 hpw depending on school, vacation, etc.

Adult schedules are pretty flexible.

There are five pages in Adult Services, three in Youth, three in AV, four in Circ.

Circ has the highest turnover as they have set shifts and "it's like working in a factory" according to one who stayed less than three weeks.

Adult pages have also been trained in Circ and are able to substitute as needed for a total of 39.75 hpw between departments. Pages have first crack at openings in other departments.

We have a mix of college students, adults and retirees as pages. Some have other jobs. Adult will work around school and other employment when we can but not always. One of our long-time (3+ years) pages reluctantly gave her notice (full time college, two jobs, eat, sleep and study time=1 job that pays more to accommodate the rest).

Our dress code is business casual, shorts (not too) and jeans ok for pages.

I don't know if any of this helps.

Do your pages tell you why they are leaving? Hours, not enough or too much? Wages too low? Can't work the set shift? Transportation issues? Boring? Physical issues?

Are they leaving before the 90 days or after?

What kind of "testing" do you do as part of the application process? TADL has a Dewey and ABC test that's given to each applicant as part of the interview. Those that fail don't get hired. Those that pass do. I can send a copy if you're interested. It's a print form with flashcards for those who wish to use them. Back in the Seventies, Flint had similar tests with the addition of a match the author and title section.

Good luck.

Katheryn

Katheryn Carrier
Reference Librarian

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Hi,

We are a small library with a small staff (but in a Class VI community).

Our pages are hired to primarily shelve in the youth area, the rest of the collection is shelved by the circulation assistants in their off-desk time. We have a budget for two page positions, each 10-12 hours. Starting pay is \$9.54 and goes up to \$10.99 after a probationary period. The rates will go up 1.5% in January 2018 to stay ahead of the State of MI minimum wage schedule.

Openings are posted on our Township HR website. We also mention openings to our regular library patrons and teen volunteers who would be a good fit. These have been our best part-time hires.

We seemed to always have one adult who would hold the job for many years and one high school student who would work a year or two before graduating and leaving. When our last student left we took a chance and offered the hours to our remaining page, an outstanding adult who was working an additional part time job. She was thrilled to work one 20 hour/week job for the library and not have to juggle two 10 hour jobs (and I think we paid better than that other retail job). We also offered her a set morning shift, M-F, that fit her needs and matches when the library is least crowded - so she can be most productive. All of our other positions require evening and weekend hours, but the page doesn't work a service desk so scheduling her during the quieter hours made sense. The circulation staff also hate shelving youth books, which they are assigned if she takes a day off, so no one envies her morning schedule.

Good luck,
Catherine

Catherine Schmidt

Assistant Library Director
Shelby Township Library, MI

Newaygo Library looked to the high school for candidates.

Kelly A Tinkham

Jessica Parij [jessica.parij@rhpl.org]

Thursday, August 31, 2017 1:44 PM

Hi Linden,

I sadly don't have any advice for you, I just wanted to say we are having the exact same issue here at Rochester Hills. Our circulation department has insane turnover as well. If you compile responses from this email, I would love to see them if you are willing to share.

Thanks,
Jessica

Hi there,

We work with a neighboring high school student co-op coordinator to fill our page positions. It is nice to have a short, nine month commitment that we can extend, if the student works out. If the student doesn't work out, we end the employment when the school year ends. That student is none the wiser. So far, we've been able to extend employment with all students, except one. No harm done, no hard feelings. Our current page is in his third year of college! He's a keeper :)

I hope this information is helpful. Good luck!

Jeanette Marks, Managing Librarian
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