**The Newberry Museum**

**Volunteer Training**

1. ***What Is A Museum?***

Museums are generally defined as:

* “A building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited.” -Museum of Modern Art
* An institution “devoted to the procurement, care, study, and display of objects of lasting interest or value.” -American Museum of Natural History

Museums can specialize in showcasing and displaying all sorts of content. They can focus on art, science and technology, natural history, and history, to name a few categories. The Newberry Museum is a local history museum, devoted to displaying the history of Newberry County and interpreting its relevance to the present and future. Topics of interest for this particular history museum include exhibits about wars, Newberry College and other schools, significant events, government, customs, entertainment, and culture.

1. ***Newberry Museum Volunteers - Roles and Goals***

**Mission of the Newberry Museum:** To protect, present, and promote the ongoing history and heritage of Newberry County and College.

Think about museum experiences you have had in the past. What did you like about interactions you have had with museum volunteers and docents? Do any not-so-good interactions stick out in your memory? What was negative about those experiences?

**Goals for Volunteers:**

* To effectively convey the rich, interconnected relationship between County and College to all museum visitors.
* To enhance the museum experience via guided tours, presence of gallery attendants, archives and event help.
* To help the museum establish itself as a destination site which encourages heritage tourism and growth while providing educational and cultural opportunities for individual enrichment and understanding.

The ultimate goal we have for volunteers is to build a workforce who will enable the mission of the Newberry Museum. Below we have provided a comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities. Some jobs require more participation and involvement than others. All tasks require signing up ahead of time in Google Sheets spreadsheet. If you wish to have a consistent shift, that can absolutely be arranged. Alternatively, you can email the Assistant Director at [admin@thenewberrymuseum.com](mailto:admin@thenewberrymuseum.com) or call or text Allison at (803) 351-4479.

**Volunteer Roles:** Descriptions for volunteer roles are as follows.***ALL volunteers must fill out an application, undergo an interview, and be subjected to an SC background check, at the discretion of museum staff.***

**Receptionists**

The role of the receptionist is to man the receptionist’s desk and answer the main line of the museum, answer questions from guests both over the phone and in person, and transfer calls to the appropriate staff. A receptionist “cheat sheet” will be kept at the front desk to help answer questions. Shifts are from 10 am – 1pm, and 1pm-4pm Tuesday through Saturday. Please only sign up if you can commit to an entire shift.

**Requirements:**

* Minimal physical activity
* Pleasant disposition
* Newberry Museum 101 Training

**Gallery Attendants**

The role of a gallery attendant is to maintain a presence in the gallery spaces of the mezzanine, main floor, and basement. This volunteer ensures that these spaces are monitored and is ready to assist museum visitors who may need help finding their way around. A Gallery Attendant’s responsibilities may entail reminding guests not to touch artifacts, providing directions, and answering general questions about the museum and each exhibit space. Shifts are from 10 am – 1pm, and 1pm-4pm Tuesday through Saturday.

**Requirements:**

* Standing and walking for the duration of your shift
* Pleasant disposition
* Newberry Museum 101 Training

**Archives Assistant Volunteers**

The role of an Archives Assistant is to help the Newberry Museum collections manager with archives and collections care at the curator’s request. Responsibilities for this role may include helping to update collections catalogs, transport items, and helping to research provenance for museum artifacts. This position is great for anyone interested in museum studies, public history and archives management. Shifts are determined on an individual basis, at staff discretion.

**Requirements:**

* Possibly requires lifting, stooping, etc.
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Special training in collections care and handling, or previous experience

**Special Events Volunteers**

The role of a Special Events Volunteer is to assist during public programs, receptions, and special events hosted by the Newberry Museum periodically. Responsibilities for these events may include assisting with craft projects, setting up tables and charges in events spaces, serving food and drinks, decorating for events, handing out promotional materials, accommodating guest requests, and cleanup after events. Shifts last as needed for events. Weekend and evening hours are available. This position is great for anyone interested in event planning or museum management.

**Requirements:**

* Moderate to high level of physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Possible special training as needed

**Administrative Assistant Volunteers**

The role of the Administrative Assistant Volunteer is to assist the museum with record keeping and some clerical duties. Responsibilities may include office tasks like stuffing envelopes, making copies, and helping to log visitor numbers and volunteer hours for grant writing and recordkeeping purposes. Shifts are determined on an individual basis, at staff discretion.

**Requirements:**

* Minimal physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Comfortable with Microsoft products, Google products, and working with computers in general.

**Educational Program Volunteers**

The role of an Educational Program Volunteer is to assist teachers and school group docents with educational programs in the museum. Responsibilities may include greeting groups in the museum, organizing school groups into smaller groups for tours, assisting teachers within the museum space, handing out maps to chaperones, and helping to guide school groups to restrooms or other line-up regrouping locations. This role typically takes place on weekday mornings.

**Requirements:**

* Patience
* A pleasant, but firm presence
* Moderate to high levels of physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Possible special childcare training

**Docents**

The role of the Docent is to provide tours to museum guests. Responsibilities include arriving 30 minutes prior to the scheduled tour to be stationed next to the reception desk and providing a captivating tour to the public. Docent shifts last the length of the tour.

**Requirements:**

* Patience
* Ability to work with the general public
* Good communication skills
* Knowledge of the museum
* Moderate to high levels of physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Docent Training

**School Group Docents**

The role of the School Group Docent is to provide various museum tours and lessons to school groups.Responsibilities include providing a captivating educational tour, arriving 30 minutes prior to the scheduled tour or lesson, answering questions, and guiding the school group through the museum space. School groups sign up for these tours or lessons that are offered during weekdays throughout the school year. Docents may select the tours/lessons they wish to facilitate.

**Requirements:**

* Patience and flexibility
* A pleasant but firm presence
* Ability to work with teachers and students
* Good communication skills
* Knowledge of the museum
* Moderate to high levels of physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Docent Training

**Costumed Interpreters**

The role of the Costumed Interpreter is to provide short lessons in historically appropriate clothing. This can occur either within the museum space, or offsite, like at participating schools.Responsibilities include providing a dynamic educational lesson, being fully dressed in costume, and arriving 30 minutes before the scheduled shift. Shifts are determined as needed. Weekend, evening, and weekday hours are available.

**Requirements:**

* Patience and flexibility
* A pleasant but firm presence
* Ability to work with teachers and students
* Ability to work with the general public
* Good communication skills
* Knowledge of the museum
* Knowledge of historical clothing
* Moderate to high levels of physical activity
* Newberry Museum 101 Training
* Docent Training

1. ***Keeping Visitors Safe***

You should **CALL 911** if a guest has a life-threatening emergency or a natural/human disaster has occurred impacting the museum. Call 911 first, then alert the Director.

Then please refer to the emergency plan in the volunteer binder at the reception desk for next steps

Call the Director in the event:

* A guest has an illness or injury;
* A guest is disorderly;
* You discover a fire or flood, spill, leak, or broken glass;
* You discover uninvited animals, birds, or rodents in the museum;
* You cannot evacuate guests in your care during a fire drill or evacuation;
* You discover a break-in or vandalism;
* You encounter hazardous conditions or health hazards;
* You are approached about/by a lost child

1. ***“What Would You Do?” Volunteer Behavior***

**Interacting with Guests:** As the face of the Newberry Museum, it is essential that volunteers provide good customer service. The list below serves as a reminder of ways to enhance guests’ experience.

* Be respectful to all guests at all times and in all ways;
* Interact with guests in a friendly, approachable, and appropriate manner;
* Stay alert to the needs of guests and respond proactively;
* Respond to questions and concerns by addressing them or finding appropriate assistance to address concerns;
* Ask if the guest has any further questions;
* Inquire about guests’ experience at the Newberry Museum;
* Thank guests for visiting the Newberry Museum

**Interacting with Upset Guests:** In the event that a volunteer is approached by an upset visitor, the volunteer can do the following to try and alleviate the problem:

* Give a warm smile;
* Actively listen to the guest as they express their issue or concern;
* Remain calm and have open body language;
* Be empathetic, and respond with meaningful comments

**Examples of this:**

* “I can appreciate where you are coming from…”
* “I understand that you would like to bring food/drink into the museum space, but for safety and cleanliness reasons, we do not permit…”
* “Let’s see what we can do to solve the problem.”

**If the above fails to solve the issue, feel free to let the guest speak with staff.**

1. ***Dress Code***

The Museum is a public service organization delivering service to a diverse population. The Museum expects all volunteers to present a positive, professional image demonstrating pride of appearance and approachability by all patrons at all times. However, the museum recognizes differences in style preferences, and we respect volunteer judgement in their clothing choices.

Generally permitted clothing guidelines:

* Long or short-sleeved t-shirts
* Jeans that are free of stains, tears, holes, and are otherwise in good condition
* Shorts or skirts
* Sneakers, work boots, sandals
* Clothes that cover your stomach, upper arms, and chest
* Tights, yoga pants, etc. with a top that covers your midriff

Clothing not permitted:

* No “see through” material
* Sleeveless shirts, low neck blouses, halter tops, bare midriffs, tube tops, or crop tops
* Clothing with provocative or controversial slogans, signs, logos, artwork, etc., identified at the discretion of staff
* No excessively short shorts or skirts, identified at the discretion of staff
* Jewelry posing a safety hazard

Additional dress code restrictions may be enforced based on volunteer tasks, for example, no open toed shoes while working with the collections, or specific attire for events or programs. Please contact staff members if you have a question about the dress code.

1. ***Genealogical Requests***

Members of the public frequently call requesting assistance with genealogical research. The museum is not set up to do this research in house, but we have a list of resources we can provide to people. Please see the genealogical resource document in the volunteer binder, or the handout at the desk for more information.

1. ***Staff Contact Information***

Office phone: (803) 597-5215.

Director:

Assistant Director: (803) 351-4479, admin@thenewberrymuseum.com

1. ***Signing Up for Volunteer Slots***

To sign-up for a volunteer slot, please use the Google spreadsheet to sign up for reception and gallery attendant slots. Contact the Assistant Director at [admin@thenewberrymuseum.com](mailto:admin@thenewberrymuseum.com), (803) 597-5215, or (803) 351-4479 to get access to the sign-up sheet, **OR** to sign up for a time without accessing the Google spreadsheet.

For questions or concerns about anything mentioned in volunteer training, contact us at (803) 597-5215.