

Handbook

For Volunteers



Alabama
Department of
Archives and
History

Welcome to our Volunteer Team!

Established in the 1980s, the volunteer program has assisted the Department of Archives and History for over 30 years. We truly could not provide the quality of service without our volunteers, and we are excited that you have chosen to join our great team! The goal of the ADAH volunteer program is to match each personality and skill set offered by our volunteers with the needs of the department so that your work with us will be mutually rewarding. We hope this handbook will orient you to our volunteer program and help you discover how you fit into our Archives family.

Mission Statement:

To tell the story of the people of Alabama by preserving records and artifacts of historical value and promoting a better understanding of Alabama history.

Hours:

Museum: Monday-Saturday 8:30am-4:30pm

Research Room: Tuesday-Friday and Second Saturday 8:30am-4:30pm

Volunteer Benefits:

- 10% discount on all Museum Store purchases
- Service hours provided upon request
- Special parking
- Volunteer break area stocked with coffee, drinks & snacks
- Volunteer enrichment activities
- Opportunity to attend ADAH events
- First-hand look at what goes on behind the scenes of the Archives

Requirements

We depend on our volunteers to maintain the quality of service we provide. Below are the qualities we are looking for in a volunteer.

- **Dedication:** Your service is your greatest gift to us and we consider it a valuable resource. We prefer a regular and consistent contribution of time.
- **Dependability:** The job you do is important to us and our daily operations. Please notify us promptly if illness, vacation, family or other commitments will affect your schedule.
- **Commitment:** Many of our volunteers have been with us for over 10 years. Even though the job is voluntary we ask for a sincere commitment.
- **Attitude:** Volunteers should be open-minded and willing to be trained in their service area. We respect our volunteers and ask the same of you towards supervisors, employees, and other volunteers. We love to see enthusiastic smiling faces.

Application process

Initial volunteer paperwork includes:

- Volunteer Application
- ADAH Volunteer Policies & Procedures
- Medical Release form
- Computer Usage form
- Consent to background check
- Parental/Guardian Release (Student Volunteers)
- Volunteer Contract (Student Volunteers)

Volunteer Coordinator Interview:

Each volunteer will be individually interviewed by the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer's interests and abilities will be discussed and appropriate placement will be agreed upon. The volunteer coordinator will provide a tour of the volunteer area and provide the following material:

- Building brochure
- Volgistics (sign in/out) instructions
- Name tag (upon assignment)

Department Liaison:

The area liaison will further discuss specific job duties, scheduling, and department policies and procedures. The liaison will also provide orientation of work space and building. Liaisons will provide all training and materials required for volunteers to be successful.

Volunteer Positions

The following is a list of volunteer positions at the Archives. Which positions are being filled at any given time depends on current needs. Job descriptions are detailed on the following pages.

- Museum Guide / Docent
- Front Desk Reception
- Museum Store Attendant
- Research Room Reception
- Hands-On Gallery Assistant
- Digitization Aide
- Archival Processing Aide
- Preservation Aide
- Reference Aide
- Special Projects Volunteer
- Student Volunteers

Museum Guide / Docent

Job description

This position involves extensive contact with the public in the museum galleries of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. The volunteer is responsible for guiding visitors through the museum and for providing basic information about museum exhibits and the history of Alabama. Volunteers will be trained to lead First Alabamians and History Highlights tours for school and adult groups.

Qualifications

- Ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with staff of the Education Division
- Ability to express ideas and to speak to and communicate well with individuals and small groups, children and adults
- Ability to convey accurate information in an appropriate and uncontroversial manner
- Ability to learn and absorb new information and take instruction well
- Ability to work independently after the training period
- Must be flexible and able to “think on your feet”
- Must be punctual and time conscious
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude for public contact work
- Some knowledge of Alabama history and American history (training provided)

Location: Second floor galleries

Preferred Time Commitment:

- Flexible/prearranged schedule
- Required to conduct at least 6 tours monthly during tour seasons

Front Desk Reception

Job description

This position requires extensive contact with the public. This volunteer is responsible for greeting visitors and providing orientation to our building and services. In addition, the receptionist provides useful handouts for museum visitors. The volunteer must be able to give directions to and descriptions of areas of interest within the building. The volunteer must be familiar with and give directions to other attractions in Montgomery. During the school tour season, this volunteer will work closely with museum docents the education staff to insure the orderly flow of visiting groups, and maintain an accurate visitors' register for record keeping.

Qualifications:

- Ability to establish and maintain relationships with the staff of the Alabama Department of Archives and History
- Ability to work independently and make decisions
- Ability to express ideas and to communicate well with individuals and groups, children and adults
- Ability to learn and absorb new information
- Must be pleasant, patient, and helpful
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude for public contact work

Location:

- Front lobby at the information desk

Preferred Time Commitment:

- Flexible/prearranged schedule

Museum Store Attendant

The Museum Store is operated by the Friends of the Alabama Archives and serves visitors to the Archives.

Job description

This position involves extensive contact with the public. Volunteers will be responsible for selling museum-related items to school children, tourists, and visitors to the building. This includes counting money, making change, and operating a credit card machine. Other duties include preparing merchandise for sale, assembling kits and crafts, conducting inventory, and restocking merchandise.

Qualifications

- Ability to interact with public in a positive and helpful manner
- Ability to work independently after training
- Responsibility
- Knowledge of computer operations and credit card processing
- No knowledge of history necessary
- Willingness to assist with tedious tasks
- Patience
- Ability to “think on your feet” and make decisions
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude for public contact work

Location

- Museum Store – (First Floor)

Preferred Time Commitment

- Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Digitization Aide

Job Description

The Digital Assets section at the Alabama Archives is responsible for making many of the department's rich collections available online. Volunteer duties in this section may include scanning historical resources, typing descriptive information using established templates, and preparing files to be added to the ADAH digital collections. Training will be provided for all equipment and software. No prior experience is necessary.

Qualifications

- Attention to detail and ability to carefully handle materials that may be of historical value
- Ability to perform repetitive tasks
- Competency in typing
- Preferred but not required: experience with scanning, Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat, and Excel

Location

- Digital Assets (basement)

Preferred Time Commitment:

- Flexible/prearranged schedule

Hands-On Gallery Assistant

The Hands-On Gallery is a museum learning gallery where children and parents can interact creatively. Through play in Grandma's Attic and exploration of Discovery Boxes, visitors learn about Alabama history.

Job description

This position requires good interpersonal relationship skills with children and parents. The volunteer acts primarily as a facilitator of creativity between the child and the museum environment. The volunteer will guide the parent/guardian of the children in a successful, mutually enjoyable learning experience. This position also includes conducting tours/programs that take place in the gallery. This includes providing introduction and instruction, facilitating activities, reading a story, interpreting artifacts, and playing games. Volunteer also helps maintain the gallery, by performing routine duties, such as disinfecting surfaces, tidying Grandma's Attic, dusting, and replenishing supplies, such as activity sheets and quilt squares.

Qualifications

- Ability to interact with public and staff
- Ability to express ideas and communicate information well with both adult and children's groups concerning the galleries.
- Ability to learn and absorb new information
- An artistic or creative personality a plus
- Neat personal appearance and pleasant attitude
- Must be patient and flexible
- Enjoy an active working environment
- Willingness to occasionally perform tedious tasks
- Some knowledge of Alabama history and American history

Location

- Museum Division (Second floor Hands-On Gallery)

Preferred Time Commitment

- Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Student Volunteers

Student volunteers are generally high school students between the ages of 15 and 18. They are typically assigned to the Hands-On Gallery or Museum Store, but may also work in other areas. Student Volunteers acquire practical work experience and community service hours, and are also able to explore various career fields in history.

Qualifications

- Must be able to learn and absorb new information
- Must be responsible and follow instructions
- Must have a highly developed sense of responsibility towards one's position
- Must have a neat appearance and a positive attitude for public contact work
- Must have some knowledge of Alabama history and American history
- Must have written approval of parent, guardian, or school sponsor

Location

Museum Division (1st and 2nd floor)

Preferred Time Commitment

Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Special Projects Volunteer

Job description

This position involves completion of various tasks within the department. These opportunities include special event assistance, such as serving as a host/hostess at lectures, or clerical assistance, such as special mailings, photocopying, folding building guides, creating files, etc. Other special tasks may include sewing, cutting, or laminating. This is an extra job possibility for those who are already assigned to another position.

Qualifications

- Ability to learn and absorb new information
- Ability to understand and follow directions
- Capability to carry a project through to completion without close supervision
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude for public contact work
- Poise and a highly developed sense of responsibility towards one's job

Location

"Floating" position

Preferred Time Commitment

Flexible

Archival Processing Aide

Job description

The Alabama Department of Archives and History has extensive holdings of both government and private records. The department is responsible for inventorying, preserving, and cataloging those collections of state and local archival records (records of the Secretary of State, Governor, county probate officials, etc.) and private collections (individual and family papers, church records, and organization and business records). Many government and private record collections contain special format materials such as maps, photographs, broadsides, and more. The staff, with a corps of trained volunteers, organize and preserve these records. The volunteer will be assigned to work with a specific staff member and will be responsible primarily for putting records in proper order and/or preparing records for processing (arrangement and description) and placing them in archival folders and boxes. This will often include unfolding paper; removing paper clips, rubber bands, and staples; refiling papers in acid-free folders; and creating boxes and folder lids, etc.

Qualifications

- Interest in and ability to review and understand historical records (it is helpful to be able to read and understand old handwriting)
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, and to work closely with a staff member
- Ability to think logically and to organize papers
- Dependability and respect for the preservation and confidentiality of materials
- Willingness to assist with tedious assignments

Location: Archival Collections Division (3rd floor)

Preferred Time Commitment: Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Preservation Aide

Job description

The Alabama Department of Archives and History has a wide variety of special materials, ranging from manuscripts, and photos, maps, rare books, architectural drawings and blueprints, to portraits and artifacts in the museum collection. These materials require special care and handling. Volunteer duties in preserving these materials may include flattening and encapsulating materials in polyester film, mending maps and other torn documents, or assisting with artifact conservation and preparation.

Qualifications

- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and to work closely with a staff member
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude
- Ability to work neatly and accurately with hands (good hand-eye coordination ability)
- Dependability and respect for historical and esthetic value of the materials
- Interest in historical materials
- Interest in learning and utilizing conservation skills
- Willingness to assist with tedious assignments

Location

- Archives Division (Second and Third floor)

Preferred Time Commitment

- Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Research Room Aide

Job description

This is paraprofessional library work in which the volunteer assists in routine Research Room operations. The volunteer performs duties, which include registering researchers; answering research room phones; assisting patrons in the use of library materials and microfilm readers; refiling boxes of microfilm; re-shelving books in the open stack area; assisting in copying materials for patrons; and performing other duties as assigned. Additional service may include assisting with research requests by conducting research and addressing inquiries.

Qualifications

- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff and patrons in the Research Room
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude
- Interest in and knowledge of family history, genealogy, and/or Alabama history Maturity, which includes a measure of poise, tact, and diplomacy, especially in dealing with patrons
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision after training Ability to communicate effectively with public
- Knowledge of computer operations helpful

Location

- Research Room (First floor)

Preferred Time Commitment

- Minimum of 4 hours in one block or two blocks of 2 hours per week

Research Room Reception

Job description

This position involves extensive contact with patrons of the Department of Archives and History. The volunteer is responsible for greeting patrons of the Research Room, instructing them on policies and procedures, and assisting them in the sign-in process. The volunteer is also responsible for answering the main telephone line and for assisting callers, answering questions, taking information, and for directing patrons to appropriate division &/or staff of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Qualifications

- Ability to establish and maintain relationships with the staff of the ADAH
- Ability to work independently and make decisions
- Ability to provide information and communicate well with individuals, both in person and on the phone
- Ability to speak clearly, correctly, and audibly
- Ability to transcribe information with accuracy
- Ability to learn and absorb new information
- Must be pleasant, patient, and helpful
- Neat personal appearance and positive attitude for public contact work

Location

Research Room Lobby Desk

Preferred Time Commitment:

Flexible/prearranged schedule