

ABERDEEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

18 Howard Street
Aberdeen, MD 21001
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Volunteer Handbook



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ABERDEEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Volunteer Handbook

I. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer at the Aberdeen Historical Museum (AHM)! The Museum depends on the work of volunteers just like you. We appreciate the time and gifts that you have to share with the Museum, and we hope that you enjoy the time that you spend here.

The Aberdeen Historical Museum is a small 501(c)(3) non-profit museum serving the Aberdeen, MD community and beyond. The Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, and share historical archives and artifacts that tell the story of the greater Aberdeen area and inspire new perspectives on the present. We seek to be a vibrant center of local history and culture in the city of Aberdeen.

II. What We Do

The Aberdeen Historical Museum, officially incorporated as the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, Inc., has been serving the Aberdeen community for over 30 years. As a Museum, it collects, preserves, stores, and exhibits artifacts relating to local history. The Museum also houses archival and genealogical research collections that include publications, papers, books, images, and ephemera that tell the story of Aberdeen and its past residents. The Museum is a place for casual visitors and serious researchers alike to learn about the history of Aberdeen. We do this by:

- keeping regular open hours to make these resources accessible.
- conducting research and creating exhibits, content, and programs to share these resources.
- organizing, housing, and safeguarding these resources to preserve them for future generations.

III. Becoming a Volunteer

To become a volunteer, please contact the Museum at info@aberdeenmuseum.org or go to <https://www.aberdeenmuseum.org/index.php/volunteer/> to complete the online volunteer application, or complete and return the paper volunteer application at the end of this handbook. We will get in touch with you to set up an informal interview.

Once accepted, all new volunteers will be assigned a designated supervisor by Museum Leadership (Executive Director and Board Officers). Only a staff member or senior volunteer (as designated by Museum Leadership) may serve as a supervisor. Please exchange contact information with your supervisor right away.

All new volunteers will undergo a Trial and Training Period. The typical duration of this period is the volunteer's first 30 hours of service, though this may vary depending on a volunteer's experience or assignment. During this time, the volunteer will receive orientation and training and work directly with their supervisor.

IV. Overview of Volunteer Job Descriptions

A. Volunteer Tasks and Categories

Volunteers may specialize in a particular task or may be trained in multiple categories, depending on individual interests and abilities. General volunteer categories and sample tasks may include (but not limited to):

1. Research

- Research and write newsletter articles
- Research for exhibits
- Assist guests with research

2. Collections

- Object cataloging
- Library cataloging

3. Graphic Design

- Print media design
- Exhibit design

4. Administration

- Grant writing
- Volunteer coordination
- Filing

5. Outreach

- Social media
- Community networking (schools, businesses, other museums)

6. Technology

- Website development
- IT

B. Time Commitment

Volunteers will work with their Supervisor to set their schedule.

1. During the Trial and Training Period, volunteer hours must be scheduled when the Supervisor is able to work directly with the Volunteer.
2. After the Trial and Training Period, volunteers may work as much or as little as they choose during the Museum's open hours (Tuesdays 10 AM - 1 PM, Thursdays 10 AM - 1 PM, and Saturdays 11 AM - 2 PM), provided their designated Supervisor is on site. Other times may be added depending on the volunteer task and Volunteer and Supervisor availability. Some tasks may allow for remote volunteer hours.

C. Expectations

No experience is required to become a volunteer at AHM. However, we expect that you:

- have a positive attitude,
- are willing to learn,
- are able to work well with others and receive instruction,
- maintain confidentiality surrounding any Museum administrative and financial information you may learn while at the Museum,
- do not receive or expect to receive compensation for volunteer services rendered,
- contribute to a professional workplace environment.

D. Professionalism

All volunteers are expected to maintain a high standard of professionalism while at the Museum and while representing the Museum. This includes demonstrating respect for museum property, visitors, and other volunteers. Failure to abide by Volunteer Guidelines and Policies (*see Section V. below*) may be grounds for dismissal from volunteer services, at the discretion of Museum Leadership.

V. Volunteer Guidelines and Policies

These guidelines and policies are in place to keep the Aberdeen Historical Museum a welcoming and safe environment for all while safeguarding the Museum's collections, property, and reputation. *By signing the Volunteer Registration Form, you agree that you have read these guidelines and policies and agree to abide by them.*

A. Contact and Schedule

1. Please record your hours (to the nearest half-hour) on the Volunteer Hours Sheet in the Volunteer Binder located in the office area.
2. Volunteers should keep their contact information current. Contact your supervisor with any changes to your information.
3. If you cannot come to the Museum at your scheduled time, please contact your supervisor as soon as possible via email or phone.
4. In the event of inclement weather, closings are posted on Facebook soon after they are made available. Please contact your supervisor if the Museum remains open but you are unable or feel uncomfortable coming in due to the weather.

B. Emergency

1. **Serious medical emergency:** Call 911.
2. **Fire:** Evacuate the building via the nearest exit and meet in the parking lot. Call 911.
3. Volunteers will be informed of exits, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and telephone locations on their first day. If you have any questions, contact your Supervisor.

C. Work Environment

1. **Attire:** Volunteers should dress in neat and modest attire to present a positive image for the Museum. During Museum open hours, business casual attire is preferred. For cleaning/heavy work, presentable work clothes are acceptable.
2. **Restroom:** We do not have a professional cleaning service to clean our restroom; it is up to us to clean it. Therefore, we ask that you tidy up after yourself.
3. **Copier:** When using the copier, if you are copying or printing something that is in color but only a black and white copy is needed, please change the “color” setting to “black and white.” This saves us money!
 - You may use the copier for occasional personal use if:
 - a. You don’t make a lot of copies, and
 - b. You contribute to the Donation Box from time to time.
4. **Socializing:** You may chat with other volunteers, as long as it does not interfere with work.
5. **Collections Handling:** Please do not handle historical collections objects or archival materials until cleared to do so by your Supervisor.

D. Food and Drink Policy

The Museum is a small space filled with historical objects. It is important that we are mindful of where and when we consume food and drink to minimize damage to collections and to prevent pests from taking up residence in our building.

1. Volunteers may use the refrigerator and microwave to store and warm up lunches. All food trash and food wrappers must be either disposed of in the public trash can on the sidewalk outside the Museum or taken home with you.
2. Volunteers must clear their workspace of all collections materials prior to consuming any food or drink. No food or drink may be consumed in the exhibition area or near collections.
3. After eating, volunteers must wash their hands and wipe down their workspace/the table prior to handling any collections objects or archival materials.

4. Drinks must be kept in a sealed bottle. Drinks are not permitted on the table while working with collections. You are welcome to take breaks to go get a drink or a snack.

E. Authority

Volunteers are granted no authority to commit the Museum to anything without prior consultation with, and permission from, the officers of the Museum. This includes:

- Attending or committing to attend outside meetings as a representative of the Museum
- Purchasing items for the Museum
- Promising an outside source to create or to host for them a Museum activity
- Promising to provide Museum literature and/or Museum materials to an outside source
- Or, any other such conduct or actions

G. Drug and Behavior Policy

1. Smoking is not permitted at the Aberdeen Historical Museum.
2. The use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, and/or sale of illegal drugs, alcohol, or any controlled substance at the Aberdeen Historical Museum or at any off-site Aberdeen Historical Museum program is prohibited.
3. No volunteer may be under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, medical marijuana, or any controlled substance while at or while representing the Aberdeen Historical Museum.
4. No form of harassment, bullying, violence, or threatening behavior is tolerated at AHM.
5. No foul language or swearing is permitted at AHM.
6. No gambling is permitted at AHM.
7. Volunteers may not remove any Museum property from the Museum building, including but not limited to: artifacts, archives, computers and IT equipment, books, non-collections objects, files, exhibition supplies and materials, or office supplies. If extenuating circumstances require a volunteer to access Museum property from home, speak to the Executive Director.

***Violation of any of these policies
may be grounds for dismissal from volunteer duties at AHM.***

Please don't be afraid to ask questions, make comments, or offer suggestions!
We're all in this together, trying to better the Museum and benefit the community.
Welcome to our team!