

## Volunteer Opportunity Description

**Project Title:** *Gallery Interpreter*

**Supervisor:** Volunteer and Intern Coordinator

**Objective:** To lead engaging, enlightening, and interesting gallery activities for visitors, including student groups, families, individual visitors, and adult groups in our permanent exhibitions *Chicago: Crossroads of America*.

**Responsibilities:**

Gallery interpreters help educate visitors of all ages by leading these activities:

◆ *Gallery Activity Carts* (“*History a la Cart*”) – Activity carts are stationed throughout the Museum’s galleries. At the carts, gallery interpreters encourage younger visitors to become active participants in their Museum visits by prompting curiosity, play, imagination, and reflection. The carts also provide activities to support teachers and chaperones accompanying school groups during field trip visits, and parents and caregivers during family visits. Activity cart topics include the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Chicago bridges, Chicago architecture, the early Illinois landscape, and more.

◆ *Tours* – Gallery interpreters can also lead engaging tours for public and private groups. Gallery interpreters conduct 50 minute tours of the permanent exhibition, *Chicago: Crossroads of America*.

Note: All gallery interpreters are required to learn to staff the History a la Cart Activity Carts. Learning to give guided tours of the *Chicago: Crossroads of America* exhibition is optional for trainees.

Training Course

*Activity Carts*--Specific training dates are still being determined, but our next gallery interpreter training course will likely occur on select afternoons during January and February 2013. Training sessions will consist of discussions on activity cart topics led by Museum staff as well as gallery workshops on cart facilitation and interaction with visitors.

*Guided Tours*—A two-day workshop for trainees who wish to learn to lead tours of *Chicago: Crossroads of America* will be scheduled on two consecutive Saturdays during spring 2012.

*Course Fee:* We request volunteer trainees issue the Museum a check in the amount of \$50.00 (made payable to the Chicago Historical Society) at the first session of the seminar. If the trainee chooses *not* to follow through with the commitment of volunteering, we will consider the check a fee for the course. *If the trainee completes the entire training process and earnestly commits to a schedule of volunteering, we will offer a refund to the trainee.*

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## **Qualifications:**

1. Docent and/or teaching experience preferred, but not essential
2. Applicants must have a commitment to making history relevant to a diverse audience through use of
  - engaging, inquiry-based, conversational techniques
  - innovative programming
3. Must possess strong public speaking skills and be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of situations and with a variety of audiences of all ages (children and adults).
4. Additionally, potential volunteer gallery interpreters must possess good listening skills.
5. Potential volunteers must be friendly and enjoy interaction with people; they must have and maintain a positive attitude
6. Potential volunteers must be capable of working in a high-energy environment.
7. Experience working with the public is a plus.
8. Potential volunteers should have a predictable schedule; they must be reliable.
9. Applicants should be readily available during the spring months, the Museum's busiest season.
10. Potential volunteers must be able to stand on their feet for up to two hours.
11. Volunteer Gallery Interpreters must be able to acceptably remember material learned at training and relay appropriate amounts to visitors.
12. Volunteer Gallery Interpreters will be asked to attend 2 – 3 mandatory meetings each year.

**Final Product:** Informative, engaging, and meaningful experiences for our visitors that provide new and surprising ways to think about our city's history.

**Time commitment:** In addition to attending the required training sessions, gallery interpreters typically volunteer one weekday/week for 2 – 4 hours; in light of all the training involved, we request a one year commitment, at least.

**Application Deadline:** Applications for this volunteer opportunity will be accepted until mid December 2012.