

## **Division of Education Volunteer Guidelines National Gallery of Art**

The Adult Program Docents, School Program Docents, and Art Information Volunteers in the Division of Education (volunteers) provide an essential service by furthering the educational mission of the National Gallery of Art.

**As members of the Division of Education, all volunteers aim to support and promote the Division's mission, which is to engage diverse audiences through a variety of educational experiences to foster understanding of and connections with art. In collaboration with colleagues across the Gallery, we create an environment that encourages visitors to have personally meaningful experiences, look carefully, think critically and take multiple perspectives, explore art as historical document and cultural expression, and reflect on the creative process.**

The following policies and structures have been put into place to support the important work of volunteers and to promote an effective and collegial environment where learning and service thrive.

Our volunteer community is currently comprised of the following groups:

- Art Information Volunteers
- Adult Weekday Docents
- Adult Weekend Docents
- Foreign-Language Docents
- District of Columbia and Maryland School Docents
- Virginia School Docents

The specific roles and responsibilities of each group—Art information Volunteers, Adult Weekday Docents, Adult Weekend Docents, Foreign-Language Docents, and School Docents—have been articulated in separate documents. Each group openly selects a leadership team to coordinate activities and to liaise with staff. The guidelines for leadership selection are specific to each group and have been articulated in those separate documents. Facilitating communication between staff and group members is the primary function of the leadership team. The leadership team may also work in an advisory capacity with staff on programs and policies.

The following applies to all groups:

There are four categories of participation:

- **Active volunteers** have successfully completed all education and certification requirements. They must attend all required education sessions and meetings and are encouraged to become involved in leadership roles and other ad hoc committees.

- **Reserve volunteers** have requested and been granted a leave of absence from two months to two years after completion of two years of service. While in reserve status, docents and volunteers are encouraged to attend education sessions, as available, and may fill-in for colleagues as substitutes are needed. Before returning to active status from a period of being on Reserve, staff will determine the appropriate extent of retraining.
- **Emeritus volunteers** are those who have retired after a minimum of ten years of service (including candidacy years). Emeriti may continue to participate in selected education sessions, attend social events, and will receive an emeritus Gallery badge, upon return of the active badge.
- During the periods of education and training of new volunteers, novice docents and art information volunteers are referred to as **Candidates**. Candidates must meet the Gallery's requirements to be certified and achieve active status.

#### Education

- All active volunteers are required to participate in continuing education sessions, as provided by the Gallery and stated in each group's Education Calendar.

#### Evaluation

- Volunteer performance and programs are evaluated on a regular basis, both formally and informally, with the aim of serving the Gallery's public at the highest possible standards of art museum education.

#### Communication

- Clear, consistent and frequent communication is essential to our operations.
- Email is the primary form of communication.
- Important information may be shared at meetings and education sessions.
- Communication must be professional and collegial at all times.
- Please consult Education staff before contacting curatorial departments.

A joint committee with representatives from each volunteer group, known as the Council, meets at least twice each academic year to discuss issues related to all volunteer groups, offer suggestions to staff, and to facilitate communication among the groups. Additional meetings may be scheduled, as needed. At least one but not more than two members of each group's leadership team will serve as representatives to the Council, as well as key staff members from the division of education. Council leadership rotates among the volunteer groups from year to year on a published pre-determined schedule.

The volunteer guidelines, handbook, and other guiding documents are reviewed annually to ensure that they reflect current practice and operations.