

MISSISSIPPI Department of
MDAH
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

Volunteer Handbook

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www.mdah.ms.gov

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A Message from the Director

Dear Volunteer:

Welcome to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH). Founded in 1902, we are the second-oldest state archives in the United States. Volunteers serve in a variety of roles throughout the department—primarily helping provide public access to our resources and supporting the preservation of Mississippi’s historic treasures. Speaking of treasures, we consider our volunteers to be the true treasures of MDAH. It is because of the caliber of our volunteers that we are able to offer such a variety of outstanding services to the public.

The Board of Trustees and staff of MDAH are honored to have you as our partners in our mission: *By preserving Mississippi’s diverse historic resources, and sharing them with people around the world, MDAH inspires discovery of stories that connect our lives and shape our future.*

Sincerely,

Katie Blount

Greetings from Volunteer Services

Congratulations on being accepted as an MDAH volunteer! This handbook is given to all MDAH volunteers. At some sites, you will be given an additional site-specific volunteer handbook.

Please do not hesitate to ask your immediate supervisor if you have any questions regarding your volunteer service. If you have any questions about the many volunteer opportunities within our organization, please feel free to contact me at 601.576.6985 or ecoleman@mdah.ms.gov.

We look forward to our partnership with you and hope you will enjoy learning more about our department — its history, its holdings, and its offerings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth N. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth Coleman, CVA
Director of Volunteer Services
601.576.6985
ecoleman@mdah.ms.gov

About MDAH

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History was founded in 1902. It is the second-oldest state department of archives and history in the country. The department comprises five divisions—Administration, Archives and Records Services, Historic Preservation, Museum, and Programs and Communication. The department is headquartered in the state-of-the-art William F. Winter Archives and History Building, located at North and Amite streets in downtown Jackson. To learn more about the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, please follow this link: www.mdah.ms.gov

Vision: Empowering people through Mississippi’s many stories

Mission Statement: By preserving Mississippi’s diverse historic resources, and sharing them with people around the world, MDAH inspires discovery of stories that connect our lives and shape our future.

Core Values: Volunteers and employees should exhibit passion, integrity, excellence, and respect in all interactions with the public and each other.

MDAH Volunteer Services: Statement of Purpose

Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) volunteers shall partner with MDAH employees to further the mission of the department. Volunteers and employees shall work together to enrich the visitor/client experience and provide visitor/client services vital to the operation of the department. MDAH volunteers are a diverse, knowledgeable, talented, and skilled resource highly valued and appreciated by MDAH staff and the community they serve.

Volunteer Services Policies

Age requirements: Volunteers must be eighteen years of age. MDAH does not have a junior volunteer program. Exceptions may be granted for youth service groups whose members are fifteen to seventeen years of age. Youth service groups (*i.e.* Boy Scouts, local school group) must be accompanied by adult supervisors.

Active status: Volunteers must serve a minimum of twenty hours per calendar year to remain on active status. Some volunteer positions are continuous service assignments, requiring a set number of hours or scheduled days to fill the volunteer obligation.

Badges: Volunteers must wear badges at all times while performing work for MDAH. Volunteer badges must remain on MDAH property when not in use.

Tracking service hours: Volunteer hours will be tracked by MDAH employees. This information is needed for accreditation, grant proposals, recognition of volunteers, summary of service letters for work or school, and letters of recommendation.

Volunteer appreciation activities: Active volunteers may participate in MDAH volunteer appreciation activities. MDAH employees who work with volunteers must report each volunteer's annual total hours of service to Volunteer Services at the end of the calendar year. The deadline to report these hours is January 15 of the following year.

Volunteer-Agency Agreement: All MDAH volunteers must sign the MDAH Volunteer-Agency Agreement. Volunteers who serve in highly sensitive areas may be asked to sign a specific confidentiality agreement related to their assignment.

Evaluation: Periodic review and feedback between MDAH employees and volunteers will be conducted to maintain a successful volunteer program.

Dismissal: If a volunteer violates MDAH policies repeatedly, or fails to represent MDAH in a professional manner, he or she may be dismissed. Other reasons for dismissal may be determined at the discretion of the MDAH director and/or division directors.

Tips and Gratuities: Volunteers serving at sites under MDAH purview are not to accept tips and/or gratuities; however, donors may be encouraged to contribute to the site's donation box/fund— funds are earmarked for preservation or education activities.

Important Information for Volunteers

Handicap accessibility: When possible, MDAH facilities are handicapped-accessible. Service animals are always welcome at MDAH facilities.

Note: NEVER ask why a visitor/client has a service animal (some people with hidden disabilities utilize service animals). Service animals are working and need to concentrate, so do not handle or engage them in any way.

Smoke Free Policy: MDAH facilities are smoke-free—including artificial smoking devices such as e-cigarettes (vaping).

Food/Drink: Be mindful of areas designated for eating and drinking. Many of our buildings are under strict guidelines that prohibit food and drink of any kind.

Undesirable visitors: If you see visitors who are panhandling, threatening, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, alert an MDAH staff member or Capitol Police.

Accidents: If you witness an accident involving a visitor, notify an MDAH staff member immediately.

State property usage: Office equipment (copiers, computers, printers, etc.) is the property of the State of Mississippi and is not available for use by organizations outside MDAH.

Best Practices for Volunteers

Sign in and Sign out: Volunteers will sign in and out on the Volunteer Register. It is important that arrival and departure times be recorded. Some sites may utilize the VicTouch electronic sign in/sign out method.

Unable to serve: Volunteers should notify their supervisors in a timely manner if they are unable to work their assigned shift.

Badges: Volunteers must wear volunteer badges at all times while performing work for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Volunteer badges must remain on MDAH property when not in use.

Personal property: Purses and personal property should be placed in a secure area designated for volunteers.

Dress code: Volunteers should dress appropriately for the job to which they are assigned. Professional dress (business casual) is preferred for volunteers who will deal with the public; however, those volunteers who will be working behind the scenes or with special events may need to wear more casual dress (check with supervisor). Volunteer Ambassadors who serve at the Two Mississippi Museums are required to wear black or black and white, business casual dress.

Remain neutral: Always keep in mind that we are on state property and that we must remain neutral at all times concerning “hot topic” issues such as politics, religion, current events, etc.

Cell phone use: Place all communication devices on silent when volunteering for MDAH. If it is necessary to use your communication device while volunteering, please inform your supervisor that you need a break to make your call or text. Exceptions include using your cell phone to communicate with staff or emergency personnel when conducting a tour or any other volunteer activity.

Emergencies

- If severe weather/power outage occurs in your area, immediately notify the site director or their designee, Capitol Police, or security officer assigned to the site. Follow the

Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to a designated safe area.

- In case of fire, immediately notify State Capitol Police or law enforcement assigned to the site, then call the site director or designee, and follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to the designated safe place.
- If you are staffing an MDAH phone and receive a bomb threat, immediately notify State Capitol Police or law enforcement assigned to the site, then call the site director or designee, and follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to the designated safe area.

How Do I Get Started As a Volunteer?

Volunteer candidates are required to complete an application and interview, followed by orientation, training, and placement. When a match is made between the volunteer and the department, the volunteer may be given additional training or asked to complete additional paperwork.

Rewards and Benefits

- As a volunteer, you will serve as an ambassador for the Department of Archives and History and represent the state of Mississippi to people from many cultures.
- You will have the opportunity to attend volunteer enrichment presentations, workshops, lectures, etc.
- MDAH will document your service and provide this information at your request.
- Active volunteers will be included in volunteer appreciation activities and will receive the quarterly electronic newsletter.
- Volunteers will receive a 15% discount on most merchandise at the stores located at the Old Capitol Museum, the Eudora Welty House and Garden, Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, and the Two Mississippi Museums—Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum.

Evaluation

Ongoing communication is a major component to a successful volunteer program. Periodically, you will be asked to provide information to us with the purpose of enhancing volunteer training

and assessing your satisfaction as a volunteer. You may be asked to evaluate your own work. Later, your supervisor may conduct an evaluation so that our volunteer program can better meet needs and challenges as they occur.

Volunteer Opportunities

Please visit www.volunteermatch.org or <https://centralmshub.galaxydigital.com/> to see our current volunteer opportunities.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History Volunteer-Agency Agreement

The work of volunteers is critical to the Department of Archives and History. It is essential for volunteers and staff to clearly understand each other's roles in order to effectively conduct the work of the Department. *This agreement, to be signed by the volunteer and an agency representative, spells out the responsibilities of each party.*

AGENCY:

We, the _____ Section/Division of MDAH, agree to accept the services of _____ beginning

_____, with the following understanding:

- Staff will provide the necessary information, training, and assistance for the volunteer to meet the responsibilities of the position.
- Staff will provide supervisory support and feedback (evaluation) on the volunteer's performance, as needed.
- Staff will acknowledge the individual skills and knowledge of each volunteer and adjust the requirements, within reasonable parameters as deemed by staff, and as time allows.
- Staff will accept the volunteer's wish not to fulfill a volunteer assignment that the volunteer feels may be inappropriate, unsafe, or unacceptable.
- Staff will recognize the partnership with the volunteer as one that helps fulfill the mission of MDAH.

VOLUNTEER:

I, _____ (please print) agree to serve as a volunteer and commit to the following:

- To perform my volunteer duties to the best of my abilities (as detailed by the volunteer job description to which I have been assigned).
- To meet the time requirements —always providing adequate notice when unable to make assignment.
- To accept supervision, abide by MDAH policies and procedures, participate in record-keeping requirements, and respect confidentiality rules governing my volunteer assignment.
- To seek help in a timely manner when problems arise that need staff assistance.
- To attend agency-supplied training that staff deems necessary.
- To act at all times as a conscientious member of the team.

- To understand that when using my personal vehicle for MDAH volunteer service, I must have a valid driver’s license and proof of personal automobile liability insurance. I understand that MDAH will not be held responsible or liable for any traffic violations or accidents while on MDAH volunteer-related tasks.
- To serve a minimum of twenty hours per calendar year in order to remain on active status.

AGREED to:

*Volunteer: _____ Agency Representative: _____

*Signature acknowledges receipt of Volunteer Handbook by volunteer

Date: _____

Date: _____

**Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Contact Information**

mdah.ms.gov

Visit our website to learn about the archives library, tour information, calendar of events, and other MDAH resources that are available to you. **Outreach services** can be accessed by clicking on the “Learn” tab of the website and includes classroom materials and other resources for teachers, history resources, publications, scheduling a speaker, and traveling exhibits.

Administration, Archives and Records Services Division, and Programs and Communication Divisions

Physical address:
200 North Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-576-6850

Mailing address:
P. O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205

Historic Preservation Division

Charlotte Capers Building
100 South State Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-576-6940

Museum Division

Two Mississippi Museums
222 North Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-576-6800

Sites:

Eudora Welty House and Garden

1119 Pinehurst Street
Jackson, MS 39202
601-353-7762

Governor’s Mansion

300 East Capitol Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-359-6421

Grand Village of the Natchez Indians

400 Jefferson Davis Blvd.
Natchez, MS 39120
601-446-6502

Museum of Mississippi History

222 North Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-576-6800

Mississippi Civil Rights Museum

222 North Street
Natchez, MS 39120
601.576-6800

Winterville Mounds Archaeological Park

2415 Highway 1 North
Greenville, MS 38703
662-334-4684

Old Capitol Museum

100 South State Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-576-6920

Related organizations:

Eudora Welty Foundation

P. O. Box 55685
Jackson, MS 39296-5685
<https://eudorawelty.org/the-foundation/>

Mississippi Heritage Trust

P. O. Box 577
Jackson, MS 39205
601.354.0200
<http://www.mississippiheritage.com/>

Foundation for Mississippi History

P. O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39295
601-576-6855
<http://www.mshistory.net>

Mississippi Historical Society

P. O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205
601.576.6936
<http://www.mississippihistory.org/>

Foundation of Mississippi Civil Rights Museum

P. O. Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205
601.576.6936
<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/government/foundation-for-the-mississippi-civil-rights-museum/>