



# Smithsonian Institution

Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center

Dear Prospective Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a **Smithsonian Volunteer Information Specialist**. Volunteers serving in this capacity provide thousands of visitors with the direction and assistance needed to assure an enjoyable and memorable experience at the Smithsonian, the largest museum complex in the world. The Smithsonian consists of 19 national museums and the National Zoo in the Washington, D.C., area and New York City, and a number of research facilities worldwide. The Smithsonian's 19th museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, will be built on the National Mall.

On the following pages you will find a description of the service areas in which Volunteer Information Specialists work and an application form. If you would like to participate in our next training class, please detach and return your completed application as soon as possible per one of the following submission options:

- Submit form electronically. Access on-line application at [www.smithsonian.org/volunteer/vis-vol.htm](http://www.smithsonian.org/volunteer/vis-vol.htm) and complete form.
- Fax completed application to 202-633-9353.
- Mail completed application, which is preaddressed for your convenience. First-class postage is required.

Upon receiving your application, the training coordinator will contact you to schedule a pretraining orientation/interview.

**Please Note:**

- If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in the interview or training, please identify the specific aids or services on page 2.
- Volunteer appointments for applicants will be subject to successful completion of a background investigation.

Should you have questions about the service areas, class schedules, or application deadlines, please do not hesitate to call 202-633-2987 to speak to the training coordinator.

## Volunteer Information Specialists

**Introduction:** Established in 1970, the Institution's **Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center** (VIARC) is a central organization responsible for providing information on the Smithsonian to the public, Associate members, and Smithsonian staff. Its dedicated corps of **Volunteer Information Specialists** constitute a primary source of support for the Institution and play an active role in its mission to "increase and diffuse knowledge." The two service areas for Volunteer Information Specialists are described below. **Note:** Applicants must be 18 years or older.

- **Museum Information Desk Services**

Volunteer Information Specialists participating in this service area work at an assigned museum information desk where they are on the front lines interacting with visitors of all ages on a daily basis. They not only welcome Smithsonian visitors and Associate members but also provide information and answer questions about the Smithsonian—its exhibitions, activities, and services—and general information about popular visitor attractions in the Washington, D.C. area. Assignments are available at the Smithsonian Information Center and in most Smithsonian museums on and near the National Mall.

- **Telephone Information Services**

Volunteer Information Specialists who have successfully completed the training for the Museum Information Desk Program may request an assignment in this service area; supplemental training specific to telephone operations is provided. Volunteers answer the Smithsonian public inquiry telephone lines Monday through Saturday, answering a range of questions on Smithsonian activities and services, and forwarding calls to the appropriate offices or staff members. Assignments are in the Smithsonian Institution Building (the Castle).

**Pretraining Interview:** To participate in the training program, a pretraining interview is required. Upon receipt of a completed application, the training coordinator will set up a weekday or weekend interview with applicant to discuss volunteer expectations, training parameters and dates, and to confirm availability.

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**Note:** If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in the interview or training, please identify the specific aids or services here:

Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Training: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Training:** Satisfactory completion of all three phases of this training program is required for participation in the service areas referenced:

- The **first phase** involves classroom sessions and museum orientation tours. It acquaints trainees with the history and organization of the Institution, each museum's focus and collections, and the use of information resources. Options are available for weekday or weekend training.
- The **second phase** of the training is a supervised transitional period during which trainees work directly with the public in the Smithsonian Information Center in the Castle. Additional museum tours and self-study exercises may also be included.
- The **last phase** of the training is a one-session orientation to the new volunteer's regular museum information desk assignment.

**Time Commitment:** Weekday Volunteer Information Specialists serve a minimum of 3.75 hours one morning (9:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m.) or afternoon (12:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m.) a week. Evening shifts may be available. Weekend Volunteer Information Specialists serve a minimum of 3.75 hours one morning or afternoon every other week. Weekday and weekend Reynolds Center Volunteer Information Specialists serve a minimum of 2-3.5 hours a week (11 a.m.-2:30 p.m., 2-5:30 p.m., or 5-7 p.m.). A commitment of at least one year is requested of all volunteers who successfully complete the training program.

**Assignment Policy:** While every effort is made to accommodate volunteer preference for day, time, and museum placement, staffing vacancies dictate assignment priorities.

# Volunteer Information Specialists

Visitor Information and Associates' Reception Center  
Smithsonian Institution

## Application

(print clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
First name Middle Initial Last name

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal Skills - Fluency			
Language	exc.	good	fair
Arabic			
Chinese			
French			
German			
Japanese			
Italian			
Korean			
Spanish			
Sign Language			
Other:			

**Recruitment Source** (check  all that apply):

- Behind-the-Scenes Volunteer Program
- Internet:  *City Paper*  Craigslist  
 Smithsonian Web site  
 Volunteer Match
- City Paper*  Penn Quarter Newsletter
- Returning Volunteer
- Smithsonian Associate* (RAP) newsletter
- Special Event (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Walk-in  Word-of-Mouth
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Preference:**  Museum Information Desk Services  
 Telephone Information Services

**Availability:**  Weekday  
 Weekend

**References** (Optional. Please list other than family members. If applicable, include one work reference.):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note: Volunteer appointments for applicants will be subject to successful completion of a federal background investigation. Volunteers may be photographed for educational, archival, and public relations purposes for the Smithsonian and the Volunteer Information Specialist Program.**

I give permission for my name and address to be put on a general mailing list to receive any mailings from other Smithsonian departments. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  I am 18 years of age or older.

From

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Please  
Place  
Stamp  
Here

TRAINING COORDINATOR, VIARC - VIU  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
SI BLDG., RM. 153, MRC 010  
PO BOX 37012  
WASHINGTON, DC 20013-7012



 Smithsonian Institution

Visitor Information and Associates'  
Reception Center

# Visitor Information Unit

 Smithsonian Institution

MRC 010 PO Box 37012  
Washington DC 20013-7012  
Official Business Penalty for Private Use \$300