

VOLUNTEER DOCENT PROGRAM APPLICATION

Date _____

Last name _____ First name _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____

E-mail address _____

Telephone number (day) _____ (evening) _____

Age Group: () 16-24 () 25-54 () 55+

Museum contact or other reference _____

Name _____ Relationship to you _____

Telephone number _____

Your professional background (or, if you prefer, attach a resume)

Occupation _____

Employer's name _____

Employer's address _____

Other volunteer experience

Organization _____ Dates _____

Duties _____

Reference _____

Organization _____ Dates _____

Duties _____

Reference _____

Tell us more

What other languages do you speak fluently?

Which location are you interested in?

- () National Mall, Washington, DC
- () Udvar-Hazy Center, Chantilly, VA

When would you like to volunteer?

- () Weekdays
- () Weekends

Check the days and tell us the times you are available:

Days and Times available to work

_____ Monday

_____ Tuesday

_____ Wednesday

_____ Thursday

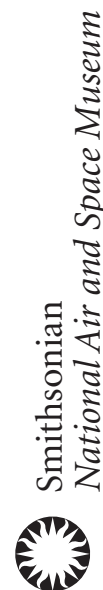
_____ Friday

_____ Saturday

_____ Sunday

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper, and include it with your application:

1. Why do you wish to become a volunteer docent?
2. List any skills that you will bring to the program.



Educational Services, MRC 305
 Washington DC 20560
 Official Business
 Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Address Correction Requested

The Docent Program

National Air and Space Museum One Museum, Two Locations



We're expecting a few guests...

With 23 galleries and an average of more than 8.5 million visitors a year, the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum on the National Mall in Washington has been the most visited museum in the world since the building opened in 1976. The Museum opened its companion facility in 2003—the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center—near Washington Dulles International Airport in northern Virginia. The Udvar-Hazy Center will eventually house some 200 aircraft and more than 120 space artifacts, along with thousands of smaller artifacts from the Museum's collections. The National Air and Space Museum has the largest and most complete collection of air and space artifacts and the largest complex devoted to the display of these historic artifacts in the world.

Frankly, we could use your help.

The National Air and Space Museum is recruiting volunteer docents to conduct weekday and weekend tours of the Museum's collections, both on the National Mall and at the Udvar-Hazy Center. Docents are museum interpreters trained to relate, in an exciting and meaningful way, the inspiring stories of aviation and space exploration to museum visitors.

REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING

The National Air and Space Museum asks that docent candidates:

- ★ Give a two-year commitment to the program, serving at least four hours each week
- ★ Maintain a regular tour schedule
- ★ Complete the docent training program
- ★ Comply with all Smithsonian Institution policies, standards, and procedures
- ★ Continue independent study of the Museum's collection

New docents learn about the Museum's artifacts, exhibitions and research through a combination of classroom sessions and "in-the-gallery" instruction. They also perform extended apprenticeships alongside experienced docents, who share their techniques for conducting effective tours.

Says one docent, "We get our information from the Museum's curators who are the very best experts in their fields. And the nice thing is this—they recognize us as the daily 'information conduits' between them and the public."

The National Air and Space Museum welcomes docents from all ethnic backgrounds and those who are multilingual.

Many docents have a background in aeronautics or space exploration. Those who initially do not have such experience generally are "inclined to fall in love with the subject," says one volunteer. Docents like to read about science, technology and history. They visit other museums, and they're always asking questions. They never stop learning. "Sometimes I think I'm just a big pest around here with all the questions I'm



APPLYING TO BE A DOCENT

To be considered for a position as a National Air and Space Museum docent, please complete the attached Volunteer Docent Program Application and send it to:

**Docent Program,
Education Division**
Smithsonian Institution
National Air and
Space Museum
PO Box 37012 NASM
P-700 MRC 0305
Washington, DC 20013-7012

After we receive your completed application, we will invite you to an orientation for prospective docents. For information about the program on the National Mall, please call (202) 633-2548. For specific information about the Udvar-Hazy Center docent program, call (703) 572-4070.

asking," laughs a docent of 26 years. "We talk about artifacts over lunch," adds another, "we'll have discussions over whether something is this way or that way... and the majority doesn't win. Someone usually does research and brings the right answer back to us."

The Museum's volunteer docents lead tours for thousands of people who visit the Museum each day. They must be flexible enough to adapt their tours to visitors' needs and interests.

"A group full of World War II vets will completely alter the kind of presentation you give," says one volunteer, "or they could be families of astronauts, naval officers, or school children from abroad. And sometimes they're just totally bored, and you have to try something new!"

Good docents are committed to upholding the Museum's reputation for excellent customer service. They appreciate the importance of the Museum's artifacts. "It isn't just a museum about machines; we want to teach our visitors about the accomplishments behind the machines, and those who made those accomplishments possible."

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Docent Candidates:

- ★ Are outgoing, enthusiastic communicators (for tours lasting up to two hours)
- ★ Are willing to learn detailed information about the Museum's artifacts that will enable them to tell the stories of aviation and space exploration
- ★ Can work with the Museum's diverse audience, encompassing children and adults of all nationalities and educational backgrounds
- ★ Are comfortable speaking to groups of up to 60 visitors
- ★ Are organized, flexible, problem-solvers
- ★ Are lifelong learners, willing to examine, assess and adopt new information into their tours



"We all love the Museum," one docent says, "and most of us are aware that with the right kind of presentation, we can really make these objects come alive."

