

Vulcan® Park and Museum Volunteer Handbook

Revised 7/27/11



Vulcan® Park and Museum Mission Statement

To preserve and promote Vulcan as the symbol for the Birmingham region, to advance knowledge and understanding of Birmingham's history and culture, and to encourage exploration of the region.

I. About Vulcan Park and Museum

A Place of Community

In addition to its symbolic role as a gateway to the Birmingham region, Vulcan Park and Museum serves as a place for the local community to gather, socialize, and learn about the qualities that make the Birmingham region special. For businesses and individuals considering relocation here, Vulcan Park and Museum showcases the attributes of the region, conveying a “sense of place” and a reason why so many already call Birmingham home.

A Place of Recreation

For both residents and tourists, Vulcan Park and Museum is first and foremost a place for recreation and relaxation. Whether picnicking, taking in the panoramic vistas from the tower, or simply sitting on the grass in quiet contemplation, Vulcan Park and Museum offers a beautiful natural setting with wonderful views to enjoy.

A Place of Historic Importance

In recognition of its landmark significance, Vulcan Park and Museum is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was selected by the White House and the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the Save America’s Treasures millennium initiative.

Vulcan Park and Museum fulfills one of its most important roles by providing the ongoing preservation and interpretation of the Vulcan statue, an enduring symbol of the Birmingham district and its people. The park itself also underwent a preservation effort to ensure a return to the natural landscape character of the era in which it was created and the fine stonework that remains on the site was restored and stabilized.

A Place of Education

As part of their exploration of the history of the Birmingham region and the state of Alabama, school groups find a trip to Vulcan Park and Museum an essential and enriching complement to their studies. Area residents will have the opportunity to learn something new about the history and significance of what has happened in their own “backyard” as well as to discover other resources elsewhere in the region. For tourists, convention delegates, and those considering relocating or establishing business in the area, Vulcan Park and Museum is a way to introduce the region’s rich history as well as its many museums and attractions.

A Place of Pride

Learning again about the legacy of Vulcan, residents are reminded that this local icon embodies a story of national significance and a worthy source of local pride. Looking from the top of the tower at the region unfolding below, area residents are able to see physical reminders of Birmingham’s important stories. From remaining evidence of the extensive iron and steel industries, to the skyscrapers of downtown, to the leading edge of UAB medical complex, to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, to industries that remain prominent today, the cityscape documents the vitality of the Birmingham region in the twenty-first century. The panoramic view embraces a natural as well as an urban vista. Lush gardens, the canopy of wooded ridges, and the moderate climate continue to distinguish the locale from any other.

II. Getting Started in the Volunteer Program

Goal

The goal of a Vulcan Park and Museum Volunteer Program is to provide volunteer support to VPM staff and to ensure that visitors have an enjoyable and safe environment in which to learn the rich heritage of Vulcan and the Birmingham region.

Vulcan Park and Museum Volunteer Benefits

In addition to making new friends and learning new skills, being a volunteer at Vulcan Park and Museum provides other benefits:

1. Job training and experience
2. References
3. Discount in gift shop (20%)

General Requirements

Vulcan Park and Museum accepts volunteers 18 years and older. New volunteers are inducted upon completion of the following:

1. Application and interview
2. Background check
3. Placement ("Volunteer Skills Survey" given at this time)
4. Orientation
5. Job-specific training
6. Completion of six-week probationary period

Time Commitment

A commitment of one year is requested. Volunteers are encouraged to continue beyond the one-year commitment. Volunteers must work a minimum of four hours per month or 48 hours per year.

Application and Interview

Prospective volunteers are required to thoroughly complete the Vulcan Park and Museum Volunteer Application and meet with the Educational Program Coordinator for an initial interview.

Background Check

Vulcan Park and Museum offers a safe learning environment for visitors of all ages. By applying to the Volunteer Program, prospective volunteers agree to a background check.

Placement

The Educational Program Coordinator determines placement in the Vulcan Park and Museum volunteer program. Factors include the prospective volunteer's interests, skills, and availability as indicated in the "Volunteer Skills Survey."

Opportunities for Volunteer Service

There are six roles in which volunteers may serve:

1. **Visitor Services.** Duties include greeting visitors and introducing and directing visitors to Vulcan Center Museum.
2. **Docent.** Duties include interpreting outdoor information stations and Vulcan Center Museum exhibits. Docents lead school groups on tours and must go through specialized training.
3. **Special Events.** Duties include providing support to VPM event staff, to ensure that patrons of special functions will have a safe and enjoyable environment.
4. **Administrative/Staff Support.** Duties include assisting VPM staff with office-related tasks.
5. **Archival Assistant.** Help document and maintain records of collections, as well as organizing and preserving items in the collection.
6. **Landscaping Support.** Seasonally plants and maintains designated flowerbeds within the park.

Orientation

During orientation, volunteers meet with the Educational Program Coordinator, the volunteer's direct supervisor, and Vulcan Park and Museum departmental directors, who provide the following information in verbal and/or written form:

1. History of Vulcan Park and Museum
2. Organization structure of Vulcan Park and Museum
3. Specific work standards and procedures
4. Reporting Relationships
5. Work processing requests and timeliness
6. Acceptable dress and appearance
7. Safety Regulations (if applicable)
8. Evaluation Procedures

Training

Volunteers must undergo on-the-job training led by his or her supervisor.

Specialized training for docents

Docents at Vulcan Park and Museum are expected to especially knowledgeable of regional history and in proper techniques for leading groups of students of all ages. Docents-in-training are required to:

1. Thoroughly read and complete the "Docent Workbook"
2. Observe three tours led by Vulcan Park and Museum Education Department staff
3. Lead two tours under the observation of Vulcan Park and Museum Education Department staff
4. Complete any additional worksheets and tests

Throughout the training period, docents-in-training evaluate their progress and receive constructive feedback. After completing their training, docents participate in ongoing enrichment and evaluation opportunities.

Probationary Period

After placement, there is a probationary period of six weeks. At the end of the probationary period, the Educational Program Coordinator meets with the prospective volunteer and his or her supervisor to discuss final placement. Placement can change during the year at the Educational Program Coordinator's discretion.

High School and College Interns

Vulcan Park and Museum is pleased to help area high school and college students complete paid and unpaid internships at Vulcan in areas that interest them and further their academic and career goals. Vulcan Park and Museum will review any applicant that meets the requirements of his/her internship individual program. Additionally, interns must follow the same general requirements as volunteers (see General Requirements, above). However, time commitments may be adjusted to fit the student's academic calendar, school schedule, and the scope of their internship as determined by their school.

Application Procedures for Interns

Prospective interns must submit a Vulcan Park and Museum Internship Application, an unofficial transcript, and one written recommendation from his or her academic supervisor.

Employees as Volunteers

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, Vulcan Park and Museum, as a non-profit organization, allows its employees to volunteer their time under the following stipulations:

1. The services are entirely voluntary, with no coercion by the employer, no promise of advancement, and no penalty for not volunteering.
2. The activities are predominately for the employee's own benefit.
3. The employee does not replace another employee or impair the employment opportunities of others by performing work which would otherwise be performed by regular employees.
4. The employee serves without contemplation of pay.
5. The activity does not take place during the employee's regular working hours or scheduled overtime hours.
6. The volunteer time is insubstantial in relation to the employee's regular hours.
7. The employee offers their uncompensated services in activities distinct from their normal employment duties.

Volunteer Recognition

After their first year of service, volunteers receive a one-year pin in recognition of their dedication to Vulcan Park and Museum. Volunteers receive a five-year pin for every five years of active service. Volunteers with hours recorded during the previous year will receive a Certificate of Appreciation at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. At that event, Vulcan Park and Museum will recognize the volunteer who contributed the most hours and the docent who guided the most tours.

III. On the Job

Volunteer Attire

The appearance of Vulcan Park and Museum volunteers reflects VPM as a whole. The VPM “look” is clean, polished, in good repair, and professionally casual. Shoes should be comfortable and should not detract from the overall appearance. Sports shoes or tennis shoes are acceptable. All volunteers must wear a lanyard while on duty. Additionally, volunteers working with visitors (primarily Docents and Visitors Services and Special Events volunteers) should wear a VPM shirt.

Daily Routine

While tasks vary according to assignment, all volunteers should carry out the following routine:

1. Arrive in the building 15 minutes before the shift or assignment begins.
2. Sign in. Be mindful of other volunteers needing to do the same.
3. Put on an ID badge or lanyard.
4. Report to the appropriate area and meet with volunteers or staff in the prior shift (if applicable) to insure a smooth shift change.
5. Carry out assignments and follow the schedule.
6. Hang up ID badge/lanyard upon completion of shift.
7. Sign out.

Tracking Volunteer Hours

Volunteers should always sign in and out. Signing in and out is extremely important in order to keep accurate records that are useful for tax benefits, recognition awards, and grants.

On-the-job Policies

1. Eating and drinking are only allowed in the staff break room or outside during a break. Eating or drinking in public areas of Vulcan Center is not allowed.
2. Smoking is not permitted at Vulcan Park and Museum.
3. Family and friends are welcome to visit Vulcan Center, but they are not allowed on duty with volunteers. Family and friends are not allowed in non-public areas.
4. When the function room is occupied, volunteers should not walk through the room or go onto the adjacent patio.

Leaving the Station Early

Volunteers who need to leave the assigned area before the end of a shift or who need clarification while on the job should consult the Educational Program Coordinator.

Leaving the Shift

Fifteen minutes prior to leaving the shift, volunteers should make sure the work area is clean and prepare for arriving volunteers or staff, if applicable.

Evaluating Volunteer Performance

Vulcan Park and Museum’s effectiveness is tied to volunteer performance. Volunteers are routinely evaluated and constructive feedback is offered to improve performance. Methods of evaluating volunteer performance include visitor response, routine observations by supervisory staff, and self evaluation. Methods of feedback include one-on-one discussions and reviewing visitor evaluations. Vulcan Park and Museum routinely offers opportunities for volunteers to hone their skills.

Evaluating Staff Performance

A box will be left by the sign-in station for volunteers to voice their questions, comments, and concerns anonymously. This box will be emptied and its contents reviewed at the end of every week. Vulcan Park and Museum encourages constructive feedback and will take all information in this box into consideration.

Unsatisfactory Performance

If a supervisor determines that an assigned volunteer is unable to fulfill current duties adequately, the supervisor will notify the Educational Program Coordinator, who will then attempt to find the volunteer a new position. The volunteer who disputes this decision has the option of going through the Dispute Resolution Procedure if he or she has been in that position for more than three months.

IV. Expected Behaviors and Conflict Resolution

Alcohol and Drug Policy

The manufacture, possession, distribution, transfer, sale, or use of illegal drugs while on volunteer duty - including while operating a vehicle or equipment owned or leased by VPM - is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. VPM also prohibits the possession, consumption, and/or distribution of alcohol while on duty. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in immediate termination.

Volunteers may use physician-prescribed medications provided that the use of such drugs does not adversely affect performance or compromise the safety of volunteers, staff members, or visitors.

Media Policy

In order to ensure a consistent message about Vulcan Park and Museum, media interviews and articles about VPM must be approved by the Director of Public Relations and Marketing. Volunteers who are contacted by local media for an interview about VPM, or who wish to contact the media about VPM, should notify the Educational Program Coordinator, who will obtain authorization from the Director of Public Relations and Marketing.

Harassment Policy

Vulcan Park and Museum accepts and promotes the belief that all persons, though having different roles and functions with VPM, have an equal right to respect, courtesy, and enjoyment of their work and the social and physical environment. This policy is therefore designed to protect all who legally enter the grounds and premises of VPM, whether employees, volunteer workers, or visitors and applies to all who use the grounds for any purpose. Harassment occurs whenever another person is repeatedly and deliberately embarrassed, upset, physically hurt or molested by someone else. It includes:

1. Bullying

Physical - punching, hitting, spitting, damaging or destroying property.

Verbal - name calling, ridicule, threats, rumor-spreading, writing derogatory comments, belittling.

Non-verbal - extortion, intimidation, threatening, ostracism.

2. **Racism** - comments, gestures, ostracism on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, or ancestry.
3. **Religious Discrimination** - ridiculing religious beliefs and practice.
4. **Sexual Harassment** - deliberate, uninvited, unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature.

Volunteers should report incidences of harassment to the Educational Program Coordinator immediately.

Grievance Procedure

Vulcan Park and Museum strives to create a positive environment in which volunteers thrive personally and professionally. If a grievance against an individual or group prevents a positive work environment, volunteers are encouraged to first attempt to handle the situation directly with the individual against whom he or she has a complaint or concern. If a grievance cannot be handled directly, the aggrieved volunteer should discuss the matter with the Educational Program Coordinator or other appropriate VPM staff member. The Educational Program Coordinator or other appropriate staff member will discuss the grievance with involved parties and all sides of the story will be shared. After listening carefully to all the details, the Educational Program Coordinator or other staff member will make a recommendation for resolving the grievance.

Inappropriate Behavior and Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers are expected to act in an appropriate manner at all times. VPM maintains a positive and safe work environment and expects volunteers to uphold these standards.

Volunteers are to be treated with the same respect as paid staff and the policy for terminating the involvement of volunteers is the same. The following procedures shall apply with respect to counseling and termination for unsatisfactory voluntary work performance:

1. On the first occasion, the volunteer shall be notified verbally of the problem, and a note will be made in the volunteer personnel file.
2. If the problem continues, the matter will be discussed with the volunteer. The volunteer will be advised in writing of the need to improve work performance and that a further period of review has been set.
3. If the problem continues, the volunteer will be interviewed by the Educational Program Coordinator and a final written warning will be issued.
4. In the event of the problem recurring after a final warning, the volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering for VPM.
5. If a volunteer behaves in a manner that is dangerous, harmful, contrary to VPM's policies, or otherwise inappropriate, dismissal may take place immediately.

V. Volunteer and Guest Safety

General Safety Guidelines

To be generally prepared for safety, volunteers should follow arrive to work well rested and fed. While on duty, volunteers should be proactive instead of reactive. Volunteers should:

1. Use their eyes, ears, smell and touch to detect safety hazards.
2. Be the first to stop danger or to alert others to danger.
3. Observe all posted signs.
4. Respond to incidents swiftly, not frantically.
5. Model safe behavior.

Finally, volunteers should know their limitations.

Personal Injury

Volunteers should report personal injuries immediately to a staff member who should then refer the matter to the Educational Program Coordinator and/or CEO. Volunteers who have been injured on the job should fill out an Incident Report should and give it to the Educational Program Coordinator or CEO. The Incident Report can be found at the Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau desk in the Vulcan Center lobby.

Emergency Evacuations

In the event of emergency evacuations, volunteers should:

1. Remain calm.
2. Walk, don't run.
3. Exit the building using the closest evacuation route.

As volunteers exit the building, they should direct visitors to follow them out, taking as many people with them as possible as they exit.

Intruder Plan

Inform individual(s) of the admission charge to Vulcan Center and tower. If it is obvious that someone is non-compliant or unruly, inform a staff person.

Lost Guest Procedures

When a parent has lost a child, the volunteer who is on the scene should notify a staff member with the following information:

1. Name of Child
2. Age, height, gender of child
3. Hair color, eye color of child
4. Clothing child is wearing, color, symbols, tennis shoes
5. Last known location of child

When a child has lost a parent, notify a staff member that a person is lost.

Vulcan Confidentiality Agreement:

While performing volunteer services for Vulcan Park and Museum, I am bound by laws and policies which protect the privacy of donor/patron information I am given access to. I agree to keep this information in the strictest confidence and the failure to do so may result in my being denied the opportunity to volunteer.

Signature_____Date_____

Volunteer Handbook Agreement:

I have read in full the Vulcan Park and Museum Manual and understand and will comply with the regulations set forth by the foundation for the safety and protection of each employee, volunteer and visitor to Vulcan Park.

Signature_____Date_____

Permission for Background Check

Date: _____

I hereby authorize the Vulcan Park and Museum to conduct a background screening check with law enforcement, previous employers and any other persons. I understand that this permission is part of my application for a volunteer position with Vulcan Park and Museum. I further understand that the information released is for official use by Vulcan Park and Museum

Name _____

Address _____

Social Security Number _____

Date of Birth _____

Signature _____