

Whitman County Historical Society Volunteer Manual



Organized in 1972, the Whitman County Historical Society strives to preserve the history and cultural heritage of our region. To do this the society has developed programs designed to meet a variety of interests in the area. The society owns three museums, four historic buildings, publishes a newsletter and a historical journal, and maintains a growing archival collection. In addition, the Historical Society has a number of on-going projects.

Thank you for offering your services as a volunteer to the Whitman County Historical Society.
We hope that you will find volunteering an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Dear Whitman County Historical Society Volunteer,

I would like to take this moment to welcome you to the Whitman County Historical Society; we are excited to have you join our team. As you may know, the Society's mission is to collect, preserve, promote, and communicate the history of Whitman County. As residents of Whitman County, this is not just the history of a place, but our own history as well. Your generous gift of your time, energy, and special skills to further our mission is greatly appreciated.

Historical societies are a unique community resource available to everyone for information and learning. You are helping us to open our doors wider and extend our services further than we could on our own. Most importantly, we are committed to working with each person on an individual basis. We want to build a mutually beneficial relationship in which you, as a valued volunteer, use your strengths and passions not only to the benefit of the Whitman County Historical Society, but to positively enhance your own life.

Volunteering at the Society shows that you acknowledge the value of our mission. Thank you for your support and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Valoree Gregory
Executive Director

New Volunteer Orientation Checklist

- Tour of the location.
- Meet the Coordinator responsible for the location.
- What does it mean to work in a historical society?
- Manual or procedures for the location. (docent information)
- Recording your volunteer hours

Whitman County Historical Society
PO Box 67
Colfax, WA 99111
509-553-9729

"The only gift is a portion of thyself." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Volunteers make generous contributions to the Historical Society. Without their enthusiasm, hard work, and commitment many services would not be possible. Your time, talents, and energy are valued at the Historical Society.

Volunteer Opportunities:

◆ Location Volunteers

We have the Perkins House, Pullman Depot Heritage Center, Chatters Museum, Holy Trinity Chapel and the Archive for people to volunteer at. They are responsible for giving a history overview of the area to guests. This volunteer helps the coordinators serve patrons who visit each location and give tours. The skills that are needed for this position are as follows: must enjoy meeting and greeting the public, have a willingness to learn information about local history. The Society can never have too many hosts. Each location has different hours and needs. We can help you choose the best fit for you.

◆ Cataloguer

This is a four to eight hour a week volunteer opportunity. This volunteer works directly with the registrar and curator. Once an artifact is accepted into the Society's collection, the Cataloguer is responsible for assigning the artifact an object identification number and marking the number on the artifact. The Cataloguer enters data about the artifact on the computer and creates an accession folder that includes all relevant information about the artifact. This person needs to be a detail oriented, independent and flexible person who is comfortable with computers and possess basic typing skills and neat handwriting. All other training will be provided.

◆ Special Events Volunteer

The Society often needs help with one-time only events. These occasions may require volunteers help with a fundraising activity, painting a building, stuffing envelopes--as well as a variety of other special events. This is the most flexible way to volunteer at the Society. When an event is approaching, you'll receive a message from a Society staff member through your preferred method of contact. You can decide whether or not to volunteer at that time.

Society Volunteers can expect:

- ◆ To be provided with an orientation, training and proper supervision for the job you accept
- ◆ To be treated as a co-worker; to make suggestions and have respect shown for your opinions
- ◆ To be recognized, both formally and informally, for your contributions

Society Volunteers are responsible for:

- ◆ Completing all the necessary training requirements; performing the duties of your job in a positive and professional manner
- ◆ Honoring your time commitment
- ◆ Being considerate and cooperative; complementing the efforts of staff and other volunteers
- ◆ Presenting a positive image as a Society representative

As a volunteer it is your responsibility to:

- ◆ Accept a job position that is worthwhile, challenging and suitable to your skills and ability.
- ◆ Fulfill your time commitment by reporting on time and staying for your scheduled shift.
- ◆ In cases of emergency or illness notify your supervisor and/or Volunteer Coordinator early enough that a substitute can be found if needed.
- ◆ Use time wisely and do not interfere with the performance of others.
- ◆ Dress appropriately and be well groomed.
- ◆ Be considerate and respect the competencies of others in your work with the staff and other volunteers.
- ◆ Sign in and out and accurately record the total hours you have worked on your time sheet.
- ◆ Adhere to facility rules and procedures.
- ◆ Notify the Coordinator if you plan to terminate your duties as a volunteer.
- ◆ Keep busy and show enthusiasm.
- ◆ Perform the duties that have been assigned to you to the best of your abilities.

As a volunteer it is your right to:

- ◆ Be provided with orientation, training and coordination for the job you accept, and to know why you are being asked to do a particular task.
- ◆ Expect that your time will not be wasted by lack of planning or coordination.
- ◆ Know whether your work is effective and how it can be improved.
- ◆ Be given appropriate recognition of your contributions.

The Society has the responsibility to:

- ◆ Use volunteers to extend services so more can be done without displacing paid workers.
- ◆ Define jobs that are meaningful to you and commensurate with your abilities.
- ◆ Give you the same careful attention as a paid employee and assign you a staff coordinator.
- ◆ Provide orientation and training to increase your skills.
- ◆ Give volunteers the same courtesy as other staff members.
- ◆ Provide appropriate informational updates on new procedures.

The Society has the right to:

- ◆ Decline acceptance of a prospective volunteer if the person seems unsuitable for the position, and to refer him/her to alternative volunteer opportunities with other institutions.
- ◆ Know that you will fulfill your assignment as agreed upon or you will notify staff in advance that you cannot.
- ◆ Expect you to ask for a change in job position if your work is too demanding or not meeting your expectations.
- ◆ Release a volunteer who is unacceptable or whose skills do not fill a need.

Equal Opportunity

The Historical Society Volunteer Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, ancestry, marital status, medical condition, or other non-merit factors. Volunteers have equal access to available positions and are limited only by the ability to do the job. Due to the importance of communication, Society volunteers are required to have a phone number and address where they can be reached.

Sexual Harassment

There shall be no sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual or demeaning nature.

In addition to being responsible for their own conduct, directors and supervisors must ensure that their employees and volunteers contribute to a work environment that is free of sexual harassment. It is, therefore, extremely important that any volunteer who believes sexual harassment has occurred report it immediately to their direct supervisor or Coordinator so it can be dealt with appropriately.

Drug-Free Workplace

Use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace is prohibited, as is the abuse of any drug or alcohol, or reporting for duty under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Confidentiality

All transactions between facility users and staff or volunteers are strictly confidential. Volunteers are required to uphold this policy. This includes any information about materials a patron has looked at, asked for, requested or reviewed as well as reference questions asked by library users.

Volunteers under the age of 18

The Society encourages the participation of youth in their community and in their facility. Young people aged 14 and over may apply to volunteer for the library in positions for which they are qualified, if they have written parental/guardian permission. Young volunteers are expected to abide by all volunteer program policies and procedures.

Public Image

Volunteers are ambassadors for the WCHS and need to present a positive image to the public. Public image plays an important role in developing and maintaining support for the library. In order to maintain a public image consistent with a professional organization, it is expected that each volunteer's dress and grooming will be appropriate for a business environment and in keeping with his or her work

assignment. Clothing and accessories must be neat and clean, and should not draw inappropriate or disruptive attention to the individual. Volunteers working with the public should be dressed for a business setting. Volunteers who shelve materials, work outdoors, or whose work is confined to the back office area may dress more casually. We ask that you not wear flip-flops (sandals are ok), sweat pants, short shorts, cutoffs, bare midriff tops, halters, spaghetti strap tops, tube tops, beachwear, or jeans that are tattered or holey. T-shirts or other attire that promote political causes, campaigns, or issues may not be worn. If a volunteer is dressed in an inappropriate manner, he/she may be asked to change before working a shift. Remember, you represent the facility and in the eyes of the patrons you are considered staff. Obscenities and foul language are also not permitted.

Perfumes and Colognes

We ask that you avoid wearing perfumes or colognes as a courtesy to our patrons, staff members, or other volunteers who have allergies.

Entrance to the Facility

Please use the front door when the Society is open. You may receive a code to enter one of the facilities.

Sign In and Out

Accurate records of time and attendance must be kept for all volunteers. All volunteers are required to sign in upon arrival to the Society, and to sign out at the end of their shift each day. This helps staff locate on-duty volunteers quickly in case of an emergency, and it serves as a temporary record of your attendance.

Telephone Use

If you need to make a telephone call, please contact your supervisor who will direct you to an available phone. Please remember that the Society is a place of business and your volunteer work is a job. We request that you keep your phone conversations brief and all calls quiet.

Health and Safety

Because safety is everyone's job, volunteers are asked to be alert at all times to safety hazards. Unsafe acts or conditions should be reported to your supervisor rather than being handled by volunteers. Please notify your supervisor of any assignment which causes physical discomfort or which could lead to personal injury, so that the situation can be rectified or the volunteer can be transferred to a more suitable assignment. All injuries, whether minor or serious, are to be reported directly to your supervisor or Coordinator immediately.

In case of an emergency that requires evacuation of the building, you will be notified by facility staff to exit the building. We will use the log in sheet to take roll in the event of an emergency that requires immediate evacuation of the building. Practice evacuation drills are held periodically.

Please be aware of patrons and what is going on around you while volunteering. Volunteers are encouraged to leave valuables at home and urged to be cautious about leaving personal belongings unattended. If you notice a security problem or an issue you think needs attention, please notify a staff member as soon as possible.

Attendance

Volunteers are expected to report for duty on time and complete their entire shift unless prevented from doing so by an unexpected illness or family emergency. We encourage you to keep your time commitments. The facility needs you and the staff is counting on your support and participation. If you are sick or unable to volunteer due to a planned vacation, please notify your immediate supervisor or the Coordinator as soon as possible.

If you are sick, we recommend you stay home and not spread your germs around the Society. One person out ill is better than the whole office out sick.

Supervision

Each volunteer will have an on-site contact and is expected to follow the procedures established by that staff member. Your job description identifies your supervisor, who is responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of your work, and will be available for consultation and assistance according to their schedule. Your supervisor will provide on-going feedback. Please feel free to ask any questions of this person or report any problems or concerns you have about your assignment. If you are not able to speak to your supervisor or the Coordinator in person, please leave a note for either one and that person will respond by calling you. Disagreements with staff should never be discussed in public; they should be resolved in private between the two

individuals. Unresolved disputes should be referred to the Coordinator for final action.

Disciplinary Procedures

Volunteers, in their capacity as unpaid staff, are expected to meet the same standards of professionalism required of the staff. Because an unsatisfactory volunteer is an unfair burden upon fellow volunteers and employees, those who fail to meet the requirements of their job descriptions or violate the policies established in this handbook, are subject to dismissal. Efforts to correct problems of this nature will be discussed by the volunteer and a Society staff member. Staff must report serious disciplinary issues to the Coordinator as soon as possible. Unresolved situations are referred to the Coordinator for review and final decision.

Resignation

When you have decided to end your volunteer experience with us, we ask that you notify your designated supervisor and the Coordinator, two weeks in advance so that there is time to fill the pending vacancy. You will be considered an inactive volunteer if you have been absent for three months unless you have notified us in advance of a break in your scheduled duties.

Letters of Recommendation

We are happy to provide a letter of recommendation to those volunteers who have satisfactorily served the facility. After three months of service to the facility you may request a letter from your supervisor or the Coordinator. Please give us at least two weeks notice.

Have Fun!

The satisfaction of our volunteers is important to us. Volunteers are encouraged to contact the Coordinator with any suggestions, comments, or questions of concern to them. Please feel free to let your supervisor or the Coordinator know if you are having any difficulties.

WHITMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

As a new volunteer to the Historical Society or as a parent/guardian of a volunteer under the age of 18 years old, I (We) understand and agree to the following:

- ◆ I have read and understand the information in the Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in it.
- ◆ I certify that I am capable of performing the duties set forth in my job description and know of no condition which would preclude my performance of those duties.
- ◆ I will maintain my commitment for at least six months of service as a Historical Society volunteer (unless an exception has been made in advance).
- ◆ I will participate in orientation, training and evaluation activities, perform my duties as specified by my supervisor and adhere to the work schedule agreed upon with my supervisor.
- ◆ I will demonstrate professional behavior while volunteering and refer questions from the public to facility staff.
- ◆ I will maintain frequent communication with my supervisor and notify my supervisor of any expected absence.
- ◆ I understand that failure to meet any of the responsibilities listed above may be cause for dismissal.
- ◆ I give the Historical Society permission to use, re-use, publish, and re-publish any picture taken of me while volunteering or in attendance at promotional events, for any purpose whatsoever without restriction as to alternation, and to use my name in connection therewith. I release the photographer and Historical Society from any and all claims or demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the photographs, including without limitation any and all claims for libel or invasion of privacy.
 Yes No
- ◆ As a parent of a volunteer who is under the age of 18 year old, I understand that once the facility closes in the evening, staff will not be available and the volunteer must leave the building. I understand that the safety of my child is my responsibility and release the library of any liability for a child left unattended.

I have read, understand, and agree to the above release, authorization and agreement.

Date _____ Volunteer Signature _____

Printed Name _____

For volunteers under the age of 18 years old:

Date _____ Parent Signature _____