

2024

Brockville Museum Volunteer Program Guide

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Brockville Museum Volunteer Program

(2024 Update)

Introduction

Background

Volunteers have been integral to the Brockville Museum’s operation since before there was a permanent museum. The Brockville Historical Society (volunteers) collected and exhibited Brockville’s history for decades before the establishment of the museum in 1981. In the over forty years since, volunteers have contributed to every aspect of the museum’s development and operation. Roles and responsibilities have changed over time, but volunteers continue to be essential to the museum’s ability to carry out its mandate.

In response to many changes brought on by the Coronavirus Pandemic, it was necessary to again review and redevelop the museum’s volunteer program in 2022. This redevelopment has included new and updated volunteer roles, the defining of the recruitment, training, and evaluation process, detailed expectations, and the introduction of formalized policies and procedures.

Volunteer Program Vision and Objectives

Museum volunteers contribute their experience, passion, and time to supporting and promoting the museum’s mandate of **preserving and utilizing an evolving collection of objects and stories representing Brockville’s past and present to provide inspiring, inclusive, and collaborative experiences in the service of Brockville’s future.**

Museum volunteers primarily contribute to Education and Outreach activities and Collections-based projects. Task-specific training is provided, but volunteers bring relevant skills and experience to the position. Suitability for a given role is mutually assessed during the application and evaluation process.

Volunteers are valued and integral members of the museum team, contributing over a thousand hours annually, helping to provide meaningful access to Brockville’s history for both area residents and visitors. In turn, the museum provides a rewarding and enriching environment for volunteers to apply their talents, learn new skills, and connect with the community’s past, present, and future.

Recruitment

The Brockville Museum encourages community participation in its activities through the offering of a range of volunteer opportunities that meet the needs of the museum. Current volunteer opportunities and information are publicly posted on the museum’s website. Anyone interested in volunteering with the Brockville Museum is encouraged to review the museum’s mandate, volunteer roles, and volunteer policies and procedures (included in this document) before submitting an application.

Once an application is submitted, the appropriate staff supervisor, in consultation with the museum Curator and the prospective volunteer, will assess the potential volunteer’s suitability for available roles. Interests, skills, and experience will be assessed and matched to an appropriate role, if possible. While every attempt will be made to make a suitable match, it is possible that a

The Brockville Museum is always seeking mature and reliable volunteers with relevant experience to join with us in carrying out our mandate.

potential volunteer's interests, skills, and experience will not match an available opportunity.

Note that available volunteer opportunities are subject to staffing resources, financial resources, and project priorities as identified in the museum's annual work plans and five-year strategic plan.

Evaluation

New volunteers will be subject to a 3-month or 20-hour (whichever comes first) evaluation with their staff supervisor. This evaluation will focus on the volunteer's compliance with the museum's volunteer program policies and procedures and ensure the match between volunteer and role has been successful. The volunteer will have the opportunity to express any concerns, and/or identify any additional training or supports required.

Thereafter, annual two-way evaluations will assess volunteer performance and volunteer experiences with the museum.

Informal evaluation will be ongoing between the volunteer and their staff supervisor.

Should a volunteer resign, they will be asked to complete an exit survey.

Recognition

The Brockville Museum values its volunteers. Staff are encouraged to demonstrate appreciation informally at every opportunity. As an organization, the Brockville Museum holds a volunteer appreciation event annually as an opportunity for active museum volunteers to come together and for staff to formally recognize the contribution of volunteer time and talent. Years of Service Awards are presented annually marking milestone anniversaries, including 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25+ years of service. When possible, such information is shared with municipal, provincial, and federal representatives for recognition.

Time Commitment

Unless otherwise stated, volunteer hours at the Brockville Museum primarily take place weekdays between 10am and 4pm and Saturdays during the summer season.

Required Skills

Every position has different requirements regarding essential and preferred skills, knowledge, and experience. Such requirements are defined, where applicable, within each role description. These requirements are defined in an aim to support informed matching between potential volunteers and museum needs. If a potential volunteer is unsure whether they meet the requirements for a position which interests them, they are encouraged to discuss this with the position's staff supervisor.

General Expectations

All Museum Volunteers:

- are committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and safe space for all
- value the role museums play in communities
- are enthusiastic, willing to learn, reliable, punctual, relate well to others, and bring relevant skills and experience to provide a competent level of job performance
- support the museum, its mandate, and its activities
- are interested in Brockville's history
- follow museum and City of Brockville policies and procedures
- participate in training sessions when offered
- adhere to health and safety policies and procedures

Volunteer Roles

Collections

Collection volunteers have strong attention to detail, are comfortable using a computer, and can work independently. Collection volunteers must be able to demonstrate that they can safely handle artifacts and archival documents. Knowledge of Brockville history is an asset, though not required.

Staff Supervisor: Collections Coordinator

Category: Behind-the-scenes

Open Drawer Project – Data Technician

Data-entry role. Enter information about artifacts and archival documents into the museum's cloud-based collection database. May include composing text to describe an object, transcribing and/or scanning documents, attaching a digital image to a virtual catalogue record, and proofreading/editing records.

Goal:

Ensure the museum's collection is appropriately catalogued and made accessible online.

Essential Skills:

- Attention to detail
- Problem solving
- Comfortable using a computer

Preferred Skills:

- Strong spelling and grammar (English)
- Ability to read cursive writing

Preferred Experience:

- Collection handling/cataloguing experience
- Experience using a computerized database
- Experience scanning documents

Training:

Training will be provided in the use of the museum's database program, MINISIS, and the basics of proper collection handling.

Time Commitment:

Two hours weekly, scheduled in advance

Open Drawer Project - Digital Photographer

Photograph the museum's collection of objects in a photo studio format and upload them to the museum's online database.

NOTE: This position is only suitable for an experienced digital photographer with experience handling museum artefacts.

Goal:

Create a visual record of the museum's collection for preservation purposes and for public access online.

Training:

Training will be provided in the use of the museum's database program, MINISIS.

Time Commitment:

Variable, scheduled in advance

Collection Committee

Help make informed decisions about acquisitions and deaccessions. Evaluate incoming potential object donations against the museum's Collection Policy and Collecting Priorities.

NOTE: The Collection Committee is a sub-committee of the Museum Advisory Committee, as such, appointments are made by this advisory body. Also note that Collection Committee volunteers cannot be active collectors of material similar in theme or scope as the Brockville Museum as this would be a conflict of interest.

Goal:

Ensure that the museum is collecting responsibly and transparently and in a way that represents the community.

Essential Skills:

- Critical thinking
- Ability to understand and apply policy to situations
- Ability to maintain confidentiality

Preferred Knowledge:

- Knowledge of Brockville history

Policies guiding the make-up of the Collection Committee (as per the museum Collection Policy):

- The Collection Committee is composed of a minimum of four and maximum of six volunteers appointed by the Advisory Committee in addition to a representative from the Advisory Committee and a museum staff member (the Curator or designate). Collection Committee membership is reviewed annually by the Advisory Committee (in January). Staff members may participate in meeting discussions but will not vote. The Advisory Committee representative will be considered an equal Collection Committee member with voting privileges.
- In order to constructively contribute to discussions, committee members should bring either: 1. a knowledge of Brockville history; OR 2. a familiarity with the museum's collection; OR 3. experience working in museum collection development.
- Prior to serving as a volunteer committee member, committee members are required to register as a Brockville Museum volunteer, including completing all necessary paperwork, signing the museum's "Confidentiality Form", and obtaining a satisfactory Criminal Record Check.
- A committee member is required to abstain from any discussion and/or vote related to artifact(s) that he/she has offered or previously donated to the Brockville Museum.

Training:

Volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Collection Policy in advance of their first meeting and will be provided with information about the format of meetings. May use the occasion of their first meeting to observe only, if desired.

Time Commitment:

3-4 hours, 2-4 times per year. Meetings set at least three weeks in advance, typically for 10am-noon on a weekday.

Education & Outreach

Education and Outreach volunteers are outgoing, enjoy meeting new people, are strong communicators, and are willing and able to follow directions. Education and Outreach volunteers must be able to demonstrate they can facilitate dialogue and convey messages and information with tact and diplomacy. Familiarity with museum offerings is an asset.

Staff Supervisor: Community Program Coordinator

Category: Public facing

NEW Junior Program Assistant (PA Day & March Break)

An opportunity designed specifically for high school students seeking to fulfill their volunteer hours or gain experience in a museum setting. Lend a hand to support PA Day and March Break programming at the Brockville Museum. Lead an exhibit-based hands-on activity station to inspire children and their families to fall in love with local history.

Goal:

Provide engaging learning opportunities for youth that inspire curiosity and interest in the community and their history.

Essential Skills:

- Ability to follow direction
- Comfortable working with children
- Comfortable speaking with adults and children in small groups and one-on-one

Preferred Experience:

- Experience in a classroom, camp, or childcare setting

Training:

Volunteers will be shown how to do the activities they will be supporting in advance of the program.

Time Commitment:

2 or 4 hour shifts on PA Days and during March Break (a total of 40 hours in one school year are available):

- October 25th, 2024
- November 22nd, 2024
- January 31st, 2025
- March 10th to the 14th, 2025
- April 11th, 2025
- May 30th, 2025

Gallery Docent

Help bring the museum's exhibition galleries to life by sharing stories and history, answering visitor questions, and facilitating dialogue. May include directing and supervising the movement of group tours through physical spaces, animating a particular object, serving as a resource of more information on a particular exhibit or story, providing exhibit security, and serving as a tourism ambassador for Brockville.

Goal:

Provide engaging learning opportunities for adults that inspire interest in the community and Brockville's history.

Essential Skills:

- Comfortable speaking with adults in small groups and one-on-one
- Ability to learn and share large quantities of information
- Flexibility

Preferred Skills:

- Ability to tailor information to the audience
- Conversational French

Preferred Experience:

- Interpretative and/or Tour Guiding experience

Preferred Knowledge:

- General knowledge of Brockville history
- General knowledge of Brockville's tourism offerings

Training:

On-going staff-led training on the material on exhibit and exhibit themes. Volunteers are expected to independently engage in continuous self-learning on topics related to Brockville history by exploring the exhibits on their own and reading material recommended by staff.

Time Commitment:

As needed. Likely 2-4 times per month June-October, about 2 hours per occasion. Typically two week's notice. May increase based on program offerings and volunteer engagement.

Outreach

Help bring the museum out into the community by representing the museum at festivals and events. May include setting-up and taking-down outdoor and indoor displays, sharing information on current exhibits, programs, and events with passers-by, engaging passers-by in activities, answering questions about the museum, spending 2-4 hours with displays in an outdoor setting, and providing passers-by with information and directions.

Goal:

Provide opportunities for the public to engage with the museum outside of the museum walls and increase visibility, interest, and awareness of museum programs and services in the community.

Essential Skills:

- Friendly and warm personality
- Comfortable speaking with adults one-on-one
- Ability to learn and share large quantities of information
- Ability to answer difficult questions with diplomacy and tact
- Ability to provide simple instructions to audiences of all ages

Preferred Skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Ability to multi-task

Preferred Knowledge:

- General knowledge of Brockville history
- General knowledge of Brockville's tourism offerings

Training:

Information package provided on related material.

Time Commitment:

3-6 hours two or more times per month May-September, occasionally October-April. Typically scheduled at least two weeks in advance. Often includes Saturdays.

Governance

Governance volunteers are strong networkers with an understanding of the important role museums play in communities. Governance volunteers must demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour, an understanding of the role of policy, and be able to convey messages and information with tact and diplomacy. Experience serving on committees, leading fundraising campaigns, working in a municipal structure, and/or familiarity with museum standards would be important for governance volunteers.

Staff Supervisor: Curator

Category: Behind the scenes and public facing

Museum Advisory Committee

Museum Advisory Committee volunteers will attend regular meetings, serve on sub-committees, lead fundraising campaigns, publicly advocate for the museum, and represent the interests of the community in the museum's operations.

Advisory Committee volunteers will advise and support the role and responsibilities of the City of Brockville's Cultural Services Department as it relates to the Brockville Museum as per the Brockville Museum Advisory Committee Terms of Reference (2023):

The Advisory Committee shall:

- a) Advise Council, Senior Management and Cultural Services by identifying and responding to issues, concerns and government policies that may affect the Museum.
- b) Provide input on the mission and vision statements, operational policies and development and implementation of strategic long-term plans.
- c) Liaise with the community including individuals, groups, and organizations to get input and encourage support for the Museum.
- d) Promote the activities and programs of the Museum.

The Advisory Committee shall encourage the Museum to provide programs and services that are affordable, accessible, and inclusive.

The Advisory Committee shall ensure that the museum activities promote the advancement of education or other purposes beneficial to the community as a whole.

NOTE: Advisory Committee volunteers are appointed by Council and subject to City of Brockville Boards and Committees terms and conditions.

Goal:

Represent the community in the operation of the Brockville Museum, promote the museum and its services, advance the museum's mission.

Time Commitment:

Preparation and attendance at regular meetings, active engagement in ongoing projects and initiatives, regular participation in museum programs and events.

Policies and Procedures

All volunteers must review and adhere to the following policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are subject to change; volunteers will be notified of any such changes with a digital copy of any new policies or procedures. If there is a conflict between the policies and procedures detailed below and any relevant City of Brockville policy and procedure, the City of Brockville's policy and procedure will take precedent. All attempts will be made to ensure there is no conflict.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers are subject to the City of Brockville's Code of Conduct (100) for employees. Volunteers should review and agree to adhere to this policy prior to commencing any volunteer role with the museum.

Screening

All volunteers (18+) must undergo a police record check at their own expense prior to commencing any volunteer functions at the museum. Volunteers interested in the volunteer role of Youth Program Assistant will be required to undergo the Vulnerable Sector Screening security check at their expense.

Orientation and Training

Volunteers will be provided with museum- and role- specific orientation as well as regular ongoing training opportunities. Volunteers are expected to attend orientation and training sessions when offered and to be active participants in such training. Every effort will be made to offer multiple sessions to accommodate varying schedules. It is the volunteer's responsibility to make every reasonable effort to attend and participate in all training and to ask questions when necessary.

Recording Hours

Volunteers will record all time spent volunteering, including time spent training, in orientation, or during regular duties and will report their hours monthly to their staff supervisor (unless directed otherwise).

Volunteers who have not recorded any hours over a six-month period, without notice communicated with their staff supervisor, will be considered inactive.

Communications

Museum staff will primarily communicate with volunteers via email. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their staff supervisor has their most current contact information, including telephone number and email address. Volunteers are expected to have access to email, to check it regularly, and to respond to all emails addressed to them sent by their museum staff supervisor.

Commitment

Volunteers who have committed to a program, position, placement, or shift should be prepared, on time, and on task. Volunteers unable to fulfill a commitment will immediately contact their staff supervisor through the museum's front desk (613-342-4397) or through the museum's general inbox (museum@brockville.com).

If a Volunteer wishes to take a leave of absence due to unforeseen circumstances, or wishes to resign from their placement, they must contact one of: their Staff Supervisor or the museum Curator. They may be asked, for quality improvement purposes, to fill out an exit survey.

Dress

The Brockville Museum does not have a standard Volunteer uniform. Clothing choice is at the discretion of Volunteers, who will keep in mind that they represent the museum. Generally, a neat, clean, business-casual look is appropriate. When interacting with the public volunteers may be provided with a museum vest to be worn over their own clothing. Note that the museum is a reduced scent environment.

Identification Badge

Volunteers who interact with the public in any way will be provided with a name tag. The name tag will include the volunteer's first name and identify them as a museum volunteer. Volunteers must wear their provided name tag at all times while fulfilling their volunteer tasks. Volunteers are responsible for safeguarding their name tag. Lost name tags should be reported to their staff supervisor.

Addressing Questions and Concerns

Volunteers will direct any questions or concerns about their assignment to their staff supervisor. Should the question or concern not be adequately addressed, the Volunteer will contact the museum Curator.

Interaction with the Public

The Brockville Museum strives to create a positive, friendly, inclusive, accessible, equitable, and barrier-free environment. At all times, Volunteers will maintain a professional attitude and behaviour, treating everyone with courtesy, kindness, patience, and respect. Volunteers will not ever harass, discriminate against, belittle, embarrass, nor alienate anyone, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, or socio-economic position. Volunteers will keep in mind that they represent both the Brockville Museum and the City of Brockville and will refrain from negatively portraying either when interacting with the public in executing their volunteer tasks.

The Brockville Museum adheres to a no-touch policy: Volunteers must not touch anyone, regardless of age or ability without first asking permission; in the case of a minor, Volunteers will not touch without obtaining permission first from the supervising adult.

Speaking on Behalf of the Organization

Volunteers will not speak on behalf of Brockville Museum, unless specifically directed by the Curator to do so. Other than answering queries directly linked to their Volunteer position, Volunteers will not make any statements that might affect or obligate the Brockville Museum, or City of Brockville (or its agents) in any way.

Confidentiality

There may be times in the fulfilment of their duties that a volunteer may be privy to confidential information. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining such confidential information. Failure to maintain strict confidentiality is grounds for termination.

Computer Use/Social Media/AI

Volunteers using a City computer in the course of their work are subject to the City of Brockville's Social Media Policy (POL.IT.171), Computer Network Access Policy (POL.IT.16.138), Electronic Monitoring Policy (POL.I.22.143), Artificial Intelligence Usage Policy (POO.A.24.118) and any amendments, additions, or updates thereto.

Accessibility (AODA)

Volunteers must complete the assigned AODA training to ensure that their Volunteer work will support the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.

The Brockville Museum strives to make its collections, exhibitions, programs, and services accessible to our visitors with disabilities. We are committed to working in partnership with staff, volunteers, and the community to identify, prevent and remove barriers to participation.

Reimbursement for Parking/Public Transit

The museum does not reimburse Volunteers for parking/public transit expenses.

Breach of Policy

In instances of policy violation, including but not limited to, internal or external complaints, non-attendance, violation of policy or procedure, there is a three-step process.

1. For a first incident, the staff supervisor will discuss the violation with the Volunteer. The Volunteer will be given the opportunity to voice their side of the violation. A resolution to the problem and a timeframe will be agreed upon and will be documented.
2. For a second incident, the staff supervisor will provide a written statement documenting the concern, outlining the required solution, and the course of action to be taken if the solution is not achieved – in most cases, termination of the Volunteer.
3. For a third incident, if no suitable resolution has been achieved, a meeting with the Volunteer, the Staff Supervisor, and the museum Curator will be arranged and the Volunteer will be asked to discontinue their volunteer association with the Brockville Museum.

N.B. In cases of very serious violations (including harassment, touching, endangerment), the staff supervisor, and museum Curator may proceed immediately to step three at their discretion.

Health, Safety, and Security

Insurance

Personal Vehicle and Property Insurance

The Brockville Museum does not insure personal vehicles or property for Volunteers. Volunteers who bring personal property onto the premises, or drive their own vehicles on museum business, should contact their insurance broker to ensure that they have adequate personal insurance coverage.

Medical/Health Insurance

In the event of a medical/health problem, the Brockville Museum accepts no responsibility for any associated costs, nor will pay for any medical/health expenses which may be incurred by the Volunteer.

General Liability Insurance

Volunteers, while working within the scope of duties determined by the museum, are insured under the City of Brockville's general liability insurance policy against legal liability claims from third parties for property damages, bodily injury, and personal injury as long as they have not willfully, maliciously, nor intentionally caused the injuries.

In the Event of an Emergency

A Life-threatening Emergency

Volunteers will immediately report any life-threatening emergency to a museum staff member.

Discovering Unidentified or Suspicious Objects

Volunteers who observe unidentified or suspicious objects left in the museum galleries will immediately move away, and report observations immediately to a museum staff member.

Theft, Damage, or Vandalism

Volunteers who observe suspicious activity or any attempt to remove, damage, or vandalize museum property will report the incident immediately to a museum staff member.

Power Failure

In the event of a power failure, emergency lighting will illuminate and the elevator will not operate. Volunteers will proceed with caution, remain calm and await direction from staff.

Smoke or Fire

Volunteers who discover fire and/or smoke will activate the nearest fire alarm pull station, and upon hearing the fire alarm proceed to the nearest safe emergency exit to leave the building.

Volunteers will proceed to the designated meeting area **located outside the building in the Henry Street Parking Lot**. Volunteers will not use the elevators. Volunteers will not re-enter the building until authorized to do so.

Evacuation of the Building

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation (including a fire alarm), Volunteers (if in a position to do so) will support museum staff in directing visitors to exit the building via an emergency exit and meet at the **designated meeting place in the Henry Street Parking lot**. If Volunteering at an off-site location, please follow all posted and announced evacuation and emergency protocols at that facility.

Building Access Outside of Public Hours

To gain access to the museum outside of public hours for a scheduled shift, Volunteers will enter via the staff door in Beecher House, announcing their presence as they enter. Volunteers will not access the museum outside of public hours if not scheduled to do so in advance. During public hours, Volunteers will always enter via the main public entrance to the lobby unless directed otherwise.

Signing In and Out

Volunteers will check in with the front desk at the start and the end of their shift.

Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Volunteer safety is paramount at all times. Museum Volunteers are required to work safely and follow established workplace safety practices and procedures. If a Volunteer feels an assignment is unsafe, they have the full right to refuse to do it; remove themselves from the risk and immediately report it to their supervisor and/or the museum Curator.