



Northwest
African American
Museum

Volunteer Position: Docent Volunteer
Supervisor: Museum Educator

The **Northwest African American Museum (NAAM)**, located in Seattle, WA, shares the story of the African American experience in the Northwest. The Museum's exhibitions and programs feature the visual arts, music, crafts, literature, and history of African Americans in the Northwest. Visitors discover our journey to this region, the establishment of our vibrant community, and the ways in which we have survived. Cognizant of the Black community's continuous evolution, NAAM focuses on African Americans whose route to the new world was through slavery as well as recent immigrants arriving from places such as Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia.

NAAM's mission is to spread knowledge, understanding, and enjoyment of the histories, arts and cultures of people of African descent for the enrichment of all. We accomplish our mission by working with others to:

- Present and preserve the connections between the Pacific Northwest and people of African descent; and to
- Investigate and celebrate Black experiences in America through exhibitions, programs and events.

NAAM seeks **Docent Volunteers** to assist in educating Museum guests on the history of the African Diaspora and transatlantic slave trade in the United States, particularly the journey of African Americans in the Pacific Northwest. Docents serve primarily as Museum tour guides to education groups throughout the year. Responsibilities include greeting visitors and assisting with check-in, guiding visitors through Museum exhibits, setting up and leading educational activities, and cleaning or organizing educational spaces after tours.

NAAM is located in the historic Colman School Building in Seattle's Central District. The Museum's address is **2300 S. Massachusetts St., Seattle, WA 98104**. Free parking is available in our lot directly outside the Museum. Volunteers should park in Museum parking spots *only*, as the other parking spots are reserved for residents. The Museum is also easily accessible by public transportation—please visit [King County Metro Trip Planner](#) for directions.

The Docent Volunteer position is a great role for individuals who:

- Are passionate about NAAM's mission of sharing the story of the African American experience in the Pacific Northwest
- Are personable, welcoming, outgoing, and engaging
- Are proven public speakers
- Enjoy interacting with large groups of youth
- Relish opportunities to tell stories and oral history
- Consider themselves to be history lovers

Volunteer Benefits:

All NAAM volunteers are receive the following benefits as a "thank you" for volunteering:

- Unlimited, free admission to the Museum



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- Reciprocal admission to partner museums during Volunteer Appreciation Week (April)
- Opportunities throughout year to attend partner museums' exhibitions and programs
- Discounts and complimentary tickets to select Museum programs
- Recognition at Annual Volunteer Appreciation event
- A chance to meet and connect with a community of Black arts and culture enthusiasts
- Free food and refreshments during group activities and special events

Responsibilities:

Docents are the storytellers of the Museum and regularly engage with Museum visitors. This includes the following tasks:

- Adhere to the mission, vision, and core values of NAAM
- Give tours to student groups and other Museum visitors
- Greet visitors and direct guests to proper event space
- Explain layout of the museum and hand out maps and brochures
- Assist Guest Service Volunteers in group check-in (lunches, coats, backpacks) and check-out at front desk
- Connect with group leads and ensure that payment is taken care of at front desk
- Take initiative to assist visitors as needed
- Be familiar with layout of museum, the collections, and current exhibitions
- Direct visitors to restrooms and amenities as needed
- Set up, break down, and clean up educational activities room
- Set up screen projector as needed
- Assist in leading educational activities
- Encourage visitors to complete "Museum experience survey" after tour

Skills and Qualifications Needed:

Individuals interested in the Docent Volunteer position should possess the following skills and/or qualifications:

- Understand and support NAAM's mission and vision
- Ability to embrace and articulate NAAM's mission to visitors
- Passionate about African-American history
- Strong verbal communication skills
- Excellent oral storytelling ability
- Friendly, warm, and energetic attitude with a desire to initiate interactions with Museum visitors
- Collaborative, team player
- Nimble in adapting to guest interactions
- Extremely patient
- Comfortable with multitasking and setting priorities in a loud and busy environment
- Demonstrated ability in being adept, tactful, and objective with relaying sensitive/difficult subject matter



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- Experience working with large groups of youth (K-12)
- Experience working with and relating to the general public from all backgrounds and walks of life
- Ideal volunteer role for Museology and/or history students, or volunteers with museum training
- Able to physically move with group through Museum during tour—accommodations can be discussed during application process
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Ability to pass a criminal history background check
- Attend all required orientation and training sessions
- Ability to abide by all of NAAM's policies, procedures, and best practices
- Ability to abide by the Standards for Museum Volunteers

Setting:

This volunteer position takes place inside the Museum for most of the shift, with the exception of volunteers going outside occasionally to greet tour groups. Docents should be able to stand and walk for a moderate amount of time (tours are usually 35-45 minutes), as well as sit and stand intermittently depending on the task at hand. Museum staff will be onsite to assist volunteers with guidance or assistance during shifts.

Time Commitment:

Docent Volunteers are expected to commit to volunteering for **four months minimum**. Docents choose their shifts based on the monthly tour schedule. Tours take place primarily on weekdays.

Training:

All volunteers will attend an orientation and trainings that include:

- Best practices, policies, procedures and expectations
- Info on NAAM's mission, vision, and core values
- Shadowing Museum Educator on guided tours

All volunteers must undergo NAAM's volunteer application, screening, and onboarding process, which include passing a criminal history background check. Volunteers interested in the Docent position should expect to participate in an onsite, in-person interview with the Museum Educator.