



**MDAH**

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

William F. Winter Building  
200 North Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201  
601-576-6850  
[www.mdah.ms.gov](http://www.mdah.ms.gov)

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# DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear Volunteer:

Welcome to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH). Founded in 1902, we are the second-oldest state archives in the United States. Volunteers serve in a variety of roles throughout the department—primarily helping provide public access to our resources and supporting the preservation of Mississippi’s historic treasures. Speaking of treasures, we consider our volunteers to be the true treasures of MDAH. It is because of the caliber of our volunteers that we are able to offer such a variety of outstanding services to the public.

The Board of Trustees and staff of MDAH are honored to have you as our partners in our mission: By preserving Mississippi’s diverse historic resources, and sharing them with people around the world, MDAH inspires discovery of stories that connect our lives and shape our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Blount". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular background.

Katie Blount  
MDAH Director

# GREETINGS FROM VOLUNTEER SERVICES

I am thrilled to welcome you aboard the Mississippi Department of Archives & History (MDAH)! As an MDAH volunteer, you will serve as an integral part of our team in sharing Mississippi's stories.

Please review this handbook as it gives an overview of the volunteer process, responsibilities, and policies and practices. At some sites, you will be given additional site-specific volunteer information or handbook. Please do not hesitate to ask your immediate supervisor if you have any questions regarding your volunteer service.

If you have any questions about the many volunteer opportunities within our organization, please feel free to contact me at 601.576.6985 or [eblackledge@mdah.ms.gov](mailto:eblackledge@mdah.ms.gov).

Thank you for providing your time, skills, and commitment to MDAH. We look forward to our partnership with you and hope you will enjoy your time learning and serving in our department.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin Blackledge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Erin Blackledge  
Volunteer & Internships Coordinator  
601.576.6985  
[eblackledge@mdah.ms.gov](mailto:eblackledge@mdah.ms.gov)

# ABOUT MDAH

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History was founded in 1902. It is the second-oldest state department of archives and history in the country. The department comprises five divisions: Administration, Archives and Records Services, Historic Preservation, Museum, and Programs and Communication. The department is headquartered in the state-of-the-art William F. Winter Archives and History Building, located at North and Amite streets in downtown Jackson.

To learn more about the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, please follow this link: [www.mdah.ms.gov](http://www.mdah.ms.gov)

**Vision:** Empowering people through Mississippi's many stories

**Mission:** By preserving Mississippi's diverse historic resources, and sharing them with people around the world, MDAH inspires discovery of stories that connect our lives and shape our future.

**Core Values:** Volunteers and employees should exhibit passion, integrity, excellence, and respect in all interactions with the public and each other.

## MDAH VOLUNTEER SERVICES STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) volunteers shall partner with MDAH employees to further the mission of the department. Volunteers and employees shall work together to enrich the visitor/client experience and provide visitor/client services vital to the operation of the department. MDAH volunteers are a diverse, knowledgeable, talented, and skilled resource highly valued and appreciated by MDAH staff and the community they serve.

# VOLUNTEER SERVICES POLICIES

**Age requirements:** Volunteers must be at least sixteen years of age. Underage volunteers must submit a signed Volunteer Release Form for Minors from their legal parent or guardian.

**Active status:** Volunteers must serve a minimum of twenty hours per calendar year to remain on active status. Some volunteer positions are continuous service assignments, requiring a set number of hours or scheduled days to fill the volunteer obligation.

**Badges:** Volunteers must wear badges at all times while performing work for MDAH. Volunteer badges must remain on MDAH property when not in use.

**Tracking service hours:** Volunteer hours will be tracked by MDAH employees. This information is needed for accreditation, grant proposals, recognition of volunteers, a summary of service letters for work or school, and letters of recommendation.

**Volunteer appreciation activities:** Active volunteers may participate in MDAH volunteer appreciation activities. MDAH employees who work with volunteers must report each volunteer's annual total hours of service to Volunteer Services at the end of the calendar year. The deadline to report these hours is January 15 of the following year.

**Volunteer-Agency Agreement:** All MDAH volunteers must sign the MDAH Volunteer-Agency Agreement. Volunteers who serve in highly sensitive areas may be asked to sign a specific confidentiality agreement related to their assignment.

**Evaluation:** Periodic review and feedback between MDAH employees and volunteers will be conducted to maintain a successful volunteer program.

**Dismissal:** If a volunteer violates MDAH policies repeatedly, or fails to represent MDAH in a professional manner, he or she may be dismissed. Other reasons for dismissal may be determined at the discretion of the MDAH director and/or division directors.

**Tips and Gratuities:** Volunteers serving at sites under MDAH purview are not to accept tips and/or gratuities; however, donors may be encouraged to contribute to the site's donation box/fund— funds are earmarked for preservation or education activities.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Sign in and Sign out:** Volunteers will sign in and out on the Volunteer Register. Arrival and departure times must be recorded. Some sites may utilize the VicTouch electronic sign-in/sign-out method. Please let your supervisor know if you have issues logging into your VicTouch account.

**Unable to serve:** Volunteers should notify their supervisors promptly if they cannot work their assigned shift.

**Badges:** Volunteers must wear volunteer badges while performing work for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Volunteer badges must remain on MDAH property when not in use.

**Personal property:** Purses and private property should be placed in a secure area designated for volunteers.

**Dress code:** Volunteers should dress appropriately for the job they are assigned. Professional dress (business casual) is preferred for volunteers who will deal with the public; however, those working behind the scenes or with special events may need to wear a casual dress (check with supervisor). Volunteer Ambassadors who serve at the Two Mississippi Museums must wear black or black and white business casual dress.

**Remain neutral:** Always keep in mind that we are on state property and that we must remain neutral at all times concerning “hot topic” issues such as politics, religion, current events, etc.

**Cell phone use:** Place all communication devices on silent when volunteering for MDAH. Refrain from using your phone in front of guests. If you need to use your communication device while volunteering, please inform your supervisor that you need a break to make your call or text. Exceptions include using your cell phone to communicate with staff or emergency personnel when conducting a tour or other volunteer activity.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Handicap accessibility:** When possible, MDAH facilities are handicapped-accessible. Service animals are always welcome at MDAH facilities. **Note:** NEVER ask why a visitor/client has a service animal (some people with hidden disabilities utilize service animals). Service animals are working and need to concentrate, so do not handle or engage them.

**Smoke-Free Policy:** MDAH facilities are smoke-free—including artificial smoking devices such as e-cigarettes (vaping).

**Food/Drink:** Be mindful of areas designated for eating and drinking. Many of our buildings are under strict guidelines that prohibit food and drink of any kind.

**Undesirable visitors:** If you see visitors who are panhandling, threatening, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, alert an MDAH staff member or Capitol Police.

**Accidents:** If you witness an accident involving a visitor, notify an MDAH staff member immediately.

**State property usage:** Office equipment (copiers, computers, printers, etc.) is the property of the State of Mississippi and is not available for use by organizations outside MDAH.

**Emergencies:** Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to a designated safe area.

- If severe weather/power outage occurs in your area, immediately notify the site director or their designee, Capitol Police, or security officer assigned to the site. Follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to a designated safe area.
- In case of fire, immediately notify State Capitol Police or law enforcement assigned to the site, then call the site director or designee, and follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to the designated safe place.
- If you are staffing an MDAH phone and receive a bomb threat, immediately notify State Capitol Police or law enforcement assigned to the site, then call the site director or designee, and follow the Emergency Evacuation Procedures as instructed by MDAH staff. Employees and volunteers, as directed, should guide/direct visitors to the designated safe area.



# VOLUNTEERING AT MDAH

## How Do I Get Started As a Volunteer?

Volunteer candidates are required to complete an application and interview, followed by orientation, training, and placement. When a match is made between the volunteer and the department, the volunteer may be given additional training or asked to complete additional paperwork.

## Rewards and Benefits

- As a volunteer, you will serve as an ambassador for the Department of Archives and History and represent the state of Mississippi to people from many cultures.
- You will have the opportunity to attend volunteer enrichment presentations, workshops, lectures, etc.
- MDAH will document your service and provide this information at your request.
- Active volunteers will be included in volunteer appreciation activities and will receive the quarterly electronic newsletter.
- Volunteers will receive a 15% discount on most merchandise at the stores located at the Old Capitol Museum, the Eudora Welty House and Garden, Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, and the Two Mississippi Museums—Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum.

## Evaluation

Ongoing communication is a major component to a successful volunteer program. Periodically, you will be asked to provide information to us with the purpose of enhancing volunteer training and assessing your satisfaction as a volunteer. You may be asked to evaluate your own work. Later, your supervisor may conduct an evaluation so that our volunteer program can better meet needs and challenges as they occur.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Please visit [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) or <https://centralmshub.galaxydigital.com/> to see our current volunteer opportunities.

# HOW TO USE VICNET

You will use the MDAH Volunteer Information Center (VicNet) website to schedule yourself for shifts and check your volunteer hours.

To login:

- Go online to [www.mdah.ms.gov](http://www.mdah.ms.gov)
- Hover over the “Careers & Volunteering” tab
- Click 'VicNet' OR go online to <https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll?from=214799>
  - You can bookmark, or save this link on frequently used computers or tablet/mobile devices for easy access.
  - Login name: your provided email
  - Temporary Password: mdah1902 (you will be required to change this when you log in for the first time!)
- Click on the “*Sign-up*” gray button to the left on the Home page OR go to the “*My Schedule*” tab to see when openings are available—a “*Help Wanted*” message bubble will appear on the date when shifts are open.
- Go to the “My Profile” tab to see your service history broken down by year—click “Printable View” if you would like to print that information.
- Go to the “My Account” tab if you ever need to change your password.

# Mississippi Department of Archives and History

## Volunteer-Agency Agreement

The work of volunteers is critical to the Department of Archives and History. It is essential for volunteers and staff to clearly understand each other's roles in order to effectively conduct the work of the Department. This agreement, to be signed by the volunteer and an agency representative, spells out the responsibilities of each party.

AGENCY:

We, the \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Division of MDAH, agree to accept the services of \_\_\_\_\_ beginning \_\_\_\_\_, with the following

understanding:

- Staff will provide the necessary information, training, and assistance for the volunteer to meet the responsibilities of the position.
- Staff will provide supervisory support and feedback (evaluation) on the volunteer's performance, as needed.
- Staff will acknowledge the individual skills and knowledge of each volunteer and adjust the requirements, within reasonable parameters as deemed by staff, and as time allows.
- Staff will accept the volunteer's wish not to fulfill a volunteer assignment that the volunteer feels may be inappropriate, unsafe, or unacceptable.
- Staff will recognize the partnership with the volunteer as one that helps fulfill the mission of MDAH.

VOLUNTEER:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print) agree to serve as a volunteer and commit to the following:

- To perform my volunteer duties to the best of my abilities (as detailed by the volunteer job description to which I have been assigned).
- To meet the time requirements —always providing adequate notice when unable to make assignment.
- To accept supervision, abide by MDAH policies and procedures, participate in record-keeping requirements, and respect confidentiality rules governing my volunteer assignment.
- To seek help in a timely manner when problems arise that need staff assistance.
- To attend agency-supplied training that staff deems necessary.
- To act at all times as a conscientious member of the team.
- To understand that when using my personal vehicle for MDAH volunteer service, I must have a valid driver's license and proof of personal automobile liability insurance. I understand that MDAH will not be held responsible or liable for any traffic violations or accidents while on MDAH volunteer-related tasks.
- To serve a minimum of twenty hours per calendar year in order to remain on active status.

AGREED to:

\*Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Signature acknowledges receipt of Volunteer Handbook by volunteer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# MDAH CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit our website to learn about the archives library, tour information, calendar of events, and other MDAH resources that are available to you. Outreach services can be accessed by clicking on the “Learn” tab of the website and includes classroom materials and other resources for teachers, history resources, publications, scheduling a speaker, and traveling exhibits.

## **Administration, Archives & Records Services Division, and Programs & Communication Divisions**

200 North Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-576-6850

## **Historic Preservation Division**

Charlotte Capers Building  
100 South State Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-576-6940

## **Museum Division**

Two Mississippi Museums  
222 North Street #1206  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-576-6800

## MDAH SITES

### **Eudora Welty House & Garden**

1119 Pinehurst Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
601-353-7762

### **Governor's Mansion**

300 East Capitol Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-359-6421

### **Grand Village of the Natchez Indians**

400 Jefferson Davis Blvd.  
Natchez, MS 39120  
601-446-6502

### **Old Capitol Museum**

100 South State Street  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-576-6920

### **Two Mississippi Museums**

222 North Street #1206  
Jackson, MS 39201  
601-576-6800

### **Winterville Mounds Archaeological Park**

2415 Highway 1 North  
Greenville, MS 38703  
662-334-4684