

Volunteer Opportunities at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

MFAH Docents

Docents are volunteer museum educators who engage visitors of all ages in active exploration of art. To become a docent at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, volunteer candidates must commit to an intensive training program where you will learn about the museum's art collections and exhibitions. The training also teaches techniques for engaging diverse groups of people as you tour the galleries. Work done outside of class, such as reading and tour-development exercises, supplements the in-class learning. Being an MFAH docent includes many benefits! As a docent, you receive a discount at MFAH Shop; invitations to special gallery talks and off-site events; access to the in-depth training program and continuing-education courses; plus the opportunity to connect with others who share an interest in art and culture. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, recruits new docents on an as-needed basis. For more information, please contact docents@mfaah.org.

Bayou Bend Docents

Bayou Bend docents are museum educators who specialize in the MFAH collection of American Decorative Arts at Bayou Bend. There is a three-year minimum commitment for the Bayou Bend docent program.

Rienzi Docents

Rienzi docents are volunteer museum educators who specialize in the MFAH collection of European Decorative Arts, which is situated at Rienzi. Rienzi offers a three-month/twenty-hour training course; classes begin in September. New docents learn about the predominantly 18th-century collection of porcelain, furniture, paintings, and fine objects, as well as related art history, including Houston architecture from the 1950s to the 1970s. Volunteers can choose Weekday or Weekend and Special Events touring schedules. Docents lead tours twice a month and attend one monthly meeting. There is a two-year minimum commitment for acceptance to the program.

Library Volunteer

The Hirsch Library, located in the Caroline Wiess Law Building, is the art research center of the MFAH, and contains an extensive collection of books, exhibition catalogues, artist files, and auction catalogues. Volunteers assist with various jobs, including re-shelving books, typing, verifying book titles in card catalogues, alphabetizing, filing, and clipping newspaper articles. A flexible weekday schedule is available. Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings are available, as well.

Archives Volunteer

The MFAH Archives consists of more than one hundred years of institutional records and a collection of sixty manuscripts from individuals or organizations closely associated with the MFAH. Volunteers are needed to assist with many aspects of its daily operations, such as filing, data entry, and assisting with the processing of ephemera, photographs, and other archival materials. The museum's Archives Department is located away from the main museum complex. When a need arises for volunteers, an e-mail is sent.

Office Assistance

Volunteers are sometimes needed by departments to assist with clerical and other duties. When a need arises, an e-mail is sent detailing the hours and location of the volunteer opportunity.

Retail Shop Volunteer

The MFAH Shop provides a wide selection of artful products at its Beck Building location. Volunteers may greet and assist customers and help with various merchandising duties, including light product stocking. There are no monetary responsibilities involved. Volunteers can also choose to help behind the scenes assisting with un-boxing and pricing merchandise in the stockroom. A flexible weekday schedule is offered, with some weekends available during peak times.

**Bayou Bend Cottage
Volunteer**

These volunteers assist at Bayou Bend, the MFAH's home for American decorative arts, by greeting visitors, making them feel welcome, and providing directions, instructions, prior to docent tours.

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Education Hospitality Volunteer	The museum's Education Department presents occasional events for area educators called Evenings for Educators. Volunteers are needed at various lectures, performances, and events to greet guests, help with registration, distribute materials, and help set up food (if applicable). Volunteers can expect a commitment of one to two hours in the evening, once or twice a month.
Mailing Volunteer	Volunteers are needed to assist with museum mailings and packet preparations throughout the year. Mailing volunteers work on Tuesdays and sometimes on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon (unless no mailing is scheduled). This is a vital volunteer area of the museum, as it saves the museum paying an outside firm to fold, stuff, stamp, seal, and even hand address the large volume of mailings sent out each year.
Bayou Bend Family Days Volunteer	Bayou Bend Family Days are monthly events held on the grounds of Bayou Bend. The home and gardens buzz with the excitement of activities, demonstrations, and performances. Volunteers are needed to assist children with creating pre-determined craft projects. Two-hour shifts are available (1:00 to 3:00 p.m. or 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.) for this event, held the third Sunday of every month, September through May.
MFAH Family Programs	These events held at the museum help families discover art through a variety of fun activities. Volunteers are responsible for greeting and orienting museum visitors or helping with programs in the galleries, such as assisting artists and staff with materials.
Rienzi Family Days	Several times a year, Rienzi holds a family day. Volunteers assist families with craft activities during the day while enjoying Rienzi's beautiful garden.
Museum Membership Hospitality Volunteer	The MFAH offers special member events throughout the year. Volunteers are needed at these evening events to greet guests, collect invitations and provide directions and information. For these exhibition preview parties, volunteers are needed from 5:45 to 7:15 p.m. or 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Bayou Bend Children's Party Volunteer	The Bayou Bend Children's Party is a benefit event scheduled in the spring at Bayou Bend each year. Many volunteers are needed at the event to assist with various activities for children, including face painting, crafts, games, rides, and other attractions. This one-time volunteer commitment takes place on a Saturday, usually in April, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Bayou City Art Festival	The Bayou City Art Festival is an arts festival held in Memorial Park in the spring and in downtown Houston in the fall. The festival relies on the volunteer support of Nonprofit Partners to make the events run smoothly, and in return, proceeds are donated to the various Nonprofit Partners. The MFAH is one such partner, and proceeds benefit the museum's acquisitions fund. Volunteers are needed in various positions at this biannual event.
MFAH Films Event Assistant	The film exhibition program at the MFAH presents screenings of both classic and contemporary films and includes premieres of significant new independent productions. Assistance is needed at the screenings in the Brown Auditorium Theater, usually on weekend evenings. Responsibilities include welcoming filmgoers, passing out literature and materials, and helping with ushering and crowd control. Shifts are typically one hour in length, but this varies with the film schedule. Volunteers may bring a guest and are allowed to remain for the screening.
Glassell Sketch Day Volunteer	Each year, the MFAH Glassell Junior School offers scholarships through an outdoor sketching competition held in the Cullen Sculpture Garden. Volunteers are needed to supervise children while they work and to provide materials, but they do not offer instruction. The competition is held on a Saturday afternoon, usually in April, and requires a two-hour commitment.
MFAH Holiday Party	The annual Holiday Party is offered in early December to all MFAH members and is fun for the entire family. Volunteers are needed to assist with party set-up the night before the event, and/or assist with several activities on the night of the party, including children's crafts, crowd control, and distributing information. Shifts are usually one-and-a-half hours on the day of the party and flexible during preparation the night before the party.
Public Relations Events	Occasionally, volunteers are asked to promote the MFAH and/or an exhibition at an off-site event. These opportunities occur once or twice a year, and with one-time-only activities.