



CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES

VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: Volunteer Docent
Date Prepared: Dec 7, 2021
Prepared by: Academy Volunteer Programs/Public Programs

We hope you are inspired by what we do and are excited to contribute to our mission. The Academy is looking for volunteers who do great work, and we know they may come from a number of different backgrounds and experiences. We encourage you to apply even if you do not believe you meet every -one of the qualifications for the volunteer opportunity.

Please note: As of Friday, August 27, 2021 Academy employees and volunteers will be required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination or undergo testing and provide negative test results before they are able to work on-site or off-site with others.

Position Description: Docents support the California Academy of Sciences through informal and interactive engagement with guests that inspire curiosity, learning, and action based on scientific knowledge. These engagements, including conversations and hands-on experiences, that inspire and excite guests by using authentic scientific information that is consistent with the Academy's mission to regenerate the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration.

Training Requirements: Docents are taught the best practices of informal engagement, fundamental scientific principles, and Academy initiatives. They are accurate and enthusiastic in their interactions. The initial training to become a docent is 40 hours of training over four to five weeks, with both online and on-site training components. The Academy has many different exhibits and components, and during the initial training new docents will be taught how to engage guests around one of four main areas of the museum. The four specialty areas include the Rainforest and Roof (referred to as Easy Being Green), The African Hall and Evolution Wall (As The World Evolves), Giants of Land and Sea and Physical Science (Let's Get Physical), and the Aquarium and Swamp (Water Is Life). All new docents will spend a majority of their first six months engaging with guests in the first specialty they learn. Other specialties may be added after a trainee has successfully completed 6 months as an active docent.

Initial Training Commitment: Initial Training is a four to five week process with approximately 10-20 hours of on-line training, and 25 hours of on-site training. Onsite training is two 8 hour days on consecutive Saturdays, and three consecutive 3 - 4 hour evening trainings.

Shift Requirements: As the training requirements are quite time intensive for staff and volunteers alike, we ask that volunteers commit to the program for at least six months. During that time, new docents are required to attend at least

three, three and a half hour shifts per month (10.5 hours total). After the initial six month period, docents have the option of reducing their schedule to two shifts per month.

Applicant Requisites: Candidates must satisfy the following requirements for consideration:

- At least 18 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalency
- Interest in the natural sciences and the Academy's exhibits specifically
- A strong desire to inspire guests of all ages to take an interest in the natural world
- Able to adeptly interact with many people, including guests, staff, and other volunteers; effective public speaking and written correspondence skills (including access to email)
- A positive, cooperative, and respectful attitude
- Able to meet all time requirements, including shifts per month, duration of service, and all trainings
- Able to read and interpret documents such as safety rules, operating/maintenance instructions, and procedure manuals, including materials posted online

Physical Demands: While performing the duties of this position, the volunteer docent is frequently required to stand, sit, reach with arms and hands, talk and listen. The position also demands walking on concrete floors, climbing stairs, tolerating high noise levels, and extensive public speaking in noisy settings. Docent volunteers must be able to lift 15 pounds and perform repetitive motions 50% of the time.

The physical demands described above must be met by a volunteer docent to successfully perform the essential functions of the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The California Academy of Sciences welcomes people of all backgrounds, identities, and beliefs to join us in achieving our mission to regenerate the natural world through science, learning and collaboration. We place diversity, equity, and inclusion at the heart of our recruiting efforts and strive to build a culture centered on mutual respect, equal treatment, and the opportunity to succeed.

The California Academy of Sciences will give full consideration for employment to all qualified applicants with criminal histories in a manner consistent with the requirements of the [San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance](#) (SF Police Code, Article 49).

The California Academy of Sciences is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to ensure that all employees and applicants receive equal consideration and treatment, regardless of race, color, creed, gender (including gender identity or gender expression), religion, marital or domestic partner status, age, place of birth, national origin or ancestry, physical, mental or medical disability, height or weight, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, military service status, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law or local ordinance

The California Academy of Sciences is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is also prohibited in Golden Gate Park.