

Docent and Tour Programs Manager
Position Description

Department: Education	Reports to: Director of Education		
Type: Full-time	FLSA: Exempt	Date: May 12, 2021	Rev. Date:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut, seeks an experienced art education professional to join our Education Department staff. The Wadsworth offers a broad range of arts-inspired programs for families, youth, and the public. The Docent Program supports all audience areas through public tours at the museum, schools, and community locations like libraries and senior centers and online. The Docent and Tour Programs Manager is the primary supervisor for this large group of volunteer educators, overseeing their recruitment and training, as well as the museum's tour program for all audiences.

DOCENT PROGRAM

Formed in 1968, the Docent Council actively engages the public with the collections and exhibitions at the Wadsworth Atheneum. About 100 Docents welcome close to 20,000 visitors every year and conduct pre-K tours through Grade 12 students, college students, adults, and families relating to all collection areas and exhibitions. Their service and dedication to excellence in teaching allow visitors to experience infinite possibilities for dialogue, learning, and enjoyment of art.

The Docent Council is governed by an active board that works collaboratively with the Education Department. Docents attend meetings and required training sessions to learn about exhibitions, collections, and current teaching practices that embrace a commitment to equity, diversity, and accessibility for all audiences. Training takes place two times a month, September through May every year. Docents may opt to attend training on Monday mornings or Tuesday evenings to allow for working schedules.

Docent trips are organized for visits to other art museums with their colleagues. The docents also produce the *Dialogue*, an educational newsletter, written by and for Wadsworth Atheneum docents. In addition, state and national docent symposia provide an opportunity to further touring skills and meet colleagues from other museums.

Docents-in-Training complete a rigorous two-semester course introducing art history and the museum's collections as well as teaching and touring techniques for various museum audiences. Weekly assignments include readings and independent study and activity in the museum's galleries. Upon successful completion of the course, Docents-in-Training are mentored by an experienced docent for about three-six months and join the docents for ongoing training. They are evaluated before graduation and are expected to commit at least two years to being a docent. Every docent, regardless of years of experience, is evaluated by both peer and education staff evaluators every three years to foster continued growth and professional accomplishment.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

DOCENT PROGRAM

- Conceive and supervise training program for active Docent Council with approximately 100 volunteers. Coordinate, present and prepare content and teaching resources on the museum's collections and special exhibitions.

- Work continually with docents to improve touring and teaching skills and cultivate familiarity in all collection and audience areas. Provide training that assures tours align with academic content standards and encourages docents to enhance their touring skills, increase their knowledge of the collection, remain current on best practices in museum education, and understand the needs and interests of teachers, students, and museum visitors.
- Develop and coordinate continued training on DEAI (diversity, equity, accessibility inclusion) and provide opportunities for interested docents to participate in these efforts.
- Serve as primary liaison to Docent Council Board and its committees, providing guidance and support on all activities, including personnel, governance, evaluation and docent and tour procedures.
- Coordinate and conduct approximately 25 docent evaluations per year. Review and follow up on group tour evaluations and feedback, including any necessary disciplinary actions.
- Recruit applicants and field docent program inquiries; review applications and interview candidates. Teach and manage Docent-in-Training Program – an 18-month process consisting of a two-semester (evening) course followed by several months mentoring and final evaluation. Work with Docent Council on recruitment strategies to diversify volunteer base.
- Be an ambassador and advocate for DEIA initiatives

TOUR PROGRAMS

- Assist with the development of resources and interpretive materials designed for school and teacher audiences to ensure integration of state standards in all preK-12 tour programs. Manage docent-led tour programs in the galleries for preK-12 through university to adult audiences (including public drop-in tours, Austin House visits and curriculum-structured tours). Work with Group Visit Coordinator on tour and docent coordination to ensure smooth scheduling and logistics.
- Develop comprehensive knowledge of the museum's collections and special exhibitions. Present gallery talks, lectures, teacher professional development workshops and classes as needed.
- Teach all grades in galleries as needed for school programs.

INTERPRETATION

- Work closely with cross-departmental teams to support exhibition development, including devising visitor learning goals and outcomes, editing and writing in-gallery text, drafting funding proposals, and designing interpretive strategies.
- Draft, edit, and create interpretive content and in-gallery interactives for collections and special exhibitions as assigned.

ADMINISTRATION

- Assist with grant writing and reporting and monitor program budgets.
- Prepare monthly and annual reports detailing activities.
- Work with marketing and public relations to develop program promotion in print and online.
- Promote the Wadsworth, Board, staff, and volunteers positively at all times to maintain goodwill and encourage continued community participation in all Museum sponsored activities.
- Other duties as assigned.

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- Skilled teacher with excellent public speaking skills. Dedication to interactive and interdisciplinary teaching. Experience with object/inquiry-based teaching and learning
- Exceptional management and interpersonal skills, including tact and diplomacy, with demonstrated ability to lead and coach volunteers.
- Strong knowledge of museum education theory and practice as well as art history.

- Experience developing and implementing training programs.
- Strong organizational skills. Ability to manage numerous projects simultaneously and adapt to change.
- Ability to work well in a team.
- Ability to work evenings and weekends as program schedule requires.
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) desired
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Proficient with Microsoft Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, and databases
- Strong interpersonal skills will be key! Ability to work with a broad constituency, resolve conflicts while motivating and supporting volunteer docents
- Exceptional organizational skills; attention to detail and ability to track and follow through with multi-dimensional, deadline-driven projects
- Ability to multi-task and to handle multiple requests in a fast-paced environment

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred) in art history, museum education, art education or related field.
- Three to five years of experience teaching in museums or other informal educational settings.
- Work experience with volunteers and/or community partners required.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those a Docent and Tour Programs Manager encounters while performing the essential functions of the role:

Climate-controlled art museum with display galleries, standard offices, café, library/archives, theater, museum shop, and other non-public spaces. Work is performed primarily indoors and occasionally outdoors in lobbies, art display galleries, public and as well as non-public offices and storage areas. Our Covid-19 related protocols mandate the wearing of masks by staff and visitors in all public areas and group settings.

Employee is required to move about their work area, between galleries and storage areas, ascend and descend stairs; and stand and/or sit for extended periods of time. The employee is occasionally required to lift, drag and/or move up to 15 pounds unassisted. The employee is required to visually or otherwise identify, observe and assess.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable qualified individuals with a disability to perform the essential functions to the extent the Wadsworth may do so without undue hardship. The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual who with or without reasonable accommodation can perform the essential functions of the position.

DISCLAIMER:

Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time.

HOW TO APPLY

Wadsworth Atheneum is committed to creating a diverse environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.

You can do so by sending a cover letter noting the reason for your interest and salary requirements, plus your resume to: Staffing.Development@TheWadsworth.org