



The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum has been an all-volunteer effort since the formation of the Friends of the Fairfax Station (the owner/operator of the museum) in 1973. Thank you for your interest and willingness to commit your time to “Fairfax County’s little gem.”

**1) Basic Volunteer Guidelines**

- The minimum age for volunteering is 16 years.
- Volunteers should commit a minimum of five hours per month.
- The museum will verify hours for students fulfilling community service requirements. Hours can be accumulated during the summer for the following academic year.

**2) Volunteer Activities**

We are open on most Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. At least two volunteers are needed each Sunday to allow continued operation of the museum from one week to the next.

- The first priority is for volunteers to open/close the station, and handle admissions and gift shop sales during open hours.
- Please plan on coming early enough and staying later to help set up and close the museum. Most volunteers report about 30 minutes ahead of opening to help with set-up; closing generally requires no more than 20 minutes.
- Additional volunteers serve as docents to interpret exhibits to visitors and provide tours of the facility and immediate neighborhood.
- New volunteers are paired with experienced volunteers to learn procedures until they become sufficiently comfortable to perform them independently.

The museum holds special events periodically. The most labor-intensive is the annual holiday train show that takes place in the first week of December. It is our largest event of the year and we hope to resume it in 2021. We also hope to resume a two-day event over the Labor Day weekend.

**3) Training**

New volunteers are paired with experienced ones during open hours to learn procedures for opening/closing and operating the museum until a point where they feel comfortable handling duties independently.

A procedures manual is available through our website that addresses many questions and situations that might arise during open hours. Please download and review the manual at your earliest convenience.

**4) Scheduling**

We currently rely on scheduling software provided by a commercial vendor. We create an account each volunteer with separate passwords. Volunteers are asked to log into the scheduling service, selecting the date(s) they are able to fill. Volunteers should check the schedule regularly for any changes that might take place in event times.

- Schedules normally are set two to three months in advance.
- If a volunteer is unable to fill his/her scheduled time, the volunteer should make arrangements for a substitute while notifying the volunteer coordinator.

## **5) Resources Available to Volunteers**

Resources are available to assist new and experienced volunteers, many through our website. These include:

- A Docent Procedures Manual and “cheat sheets” covering policies, practices and procedures.
- A Museum Guide that provides history of the railroad and station as well as detailed information on all exhibits)
- A Calendar of all internal and public events
- Volunteer Roster

## **6) Additional Activities**

We always need individuals who can fill other operational needs. The list below is not all-inclusive but provides an idea of the challenges in “keeping the trains running.” We hope that as new volunteers become more familiar with the museum and its activities, they will consider helping out in these other areas as well:

- Programs/activities during open hours
- Membership management
- Volunteer scheduling, coordination and recruiting
- IT management
- Social media/communications activities
- Publications, exhibits preparation
- Artifact restoration, inventory

Many of these activities can be carried out during times when the museum is not open and on a flexible schedule convenient for volunteers.