



Museum of Natural History

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Welcome

Welcome to the Volunteer Program at the CU Museum. We are excited that you are a member of our team. We hope to provide you with a rewarding volunteer experience.

As a CU Museum Volunteer you will have the opportunity to interpret the Museum and its collections for our visitors through behind the scenes prep work and/or direct interaction with visitors. You will serve as a vital link between the visitors and the objects and exhibits. Our visitors come with their own expectations, their own interests, and their own backgrounds, and each is different. Your role is crucial to the Museum since you have the opportunity to positively shape visitors' experiences. You are a role model for our visitors. You can help them learn how to visit a museum, how to look closely at objects, and how to learn more about this fascinating world in which we all live.

Purpose of this Resource Handbook

This Resource Handbook will help you to become a successful CU Museum Volunteer. This guide will provide information on the museum's history, philosophy, practices, policies, and content, as well as all the benefits we will provide to you as a valued volunteer.

No volunteer handbook can answer all the questions you might have about our program. It is in our Volunteer orientation and training that we can get to know each other, express our views, and work together in a harmonious relationship.

We hope this Resource Handbook will help you to feel more comfortable at the CU Museum. We depend on you – your success is our success. Please do not hesitate to ask questions. We believe you will enjoy your volunteer work and the company of your fellow volunteers. In addition, we believe you will find the CU Museum a rewarding place to volunteer.

We ask that you read this Resource Handbook carefully, and refer to it whenever questions arise. If you cannot find the answers in this handbook, please do not hesitate to reach out to the appropriate museum staff person.

Volunteer Position Description

A Volunteer is a non-paid member of the Education Section of the CU Museum who provides interpretive services to Museum visitors through guided tours, guided activities, and special programs such as teacher and adult workshops, family programs, and other public programs. The Volunteer Coordinator, Senior Educator, and Family & Community Education Coordinator supervise volunteers.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

1. Knowledge of natural science and anthropology on a general level.
2. Skill in dealing with all kinds of people, of all ages, individually or in groups.
3. Skill in verbal communication.
4. Ability to work with others as part of a team, and to work unsupervised.
5. Willingness to continue to learn and expand knowledge of natural science, anthropology, and educational methodology.
6. Willingness to share experience and knowledge in an effort to further the growth of colleagues.
7. Available, dependable, flexible, and reliable.

Responsibilities:

1. Completes orientation and initial training, and other training sessions as scheduled.
2. Reports promptly and reliably for all scheduled assignments.
3. Maintains vigilance for the safety of visitors at all times.
4. Maintains vigilance for the safety and protection of museum objects at all times.
5. Provides excellent educational programs to groups of all sizes and ages, based on current content information and educational methodology.
6. Is familiar with basic information on the University of Colorado and the CU Museum
7. Follows all policies and procedures established by the University of Colorado and the CU Museum.
8. Displays conduct in a manner befitting a representative of the CU Museum.

The CU Museum

Mission Statement:

The University of Colorado Museum fosters exploration and appreciation of the natural environment and human cultures through research, teaching, and community outreach. We provide academic training for graduate students in Museum and Field Studies; build, conserve, and interpret research collections; and offer exhibits and educational programs for the University and the public.

What We Do:

The Museum was founded in 1902. The primary focus of the Museum is the natural history of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region. The Museum houses nearly 5 million objects in our collections. Our collections cover the five subject areas of Anthropology, Botany, Entomology, Paleontology and Zoology. CU Faculty with joint appointments in both the Museum and other relevant departments use the collections for research with their students.

The Exhibits Section produces on-site and traveling exhibits. The Museum houses five exhibition galleries and an interactive, hands-on Discovery Corner.

1. The Paleontology Hall focuses on fossils of the region.
2. The BioLounge features a variety of temporary exhibits about biodiversity.
3. The Anthropology Hall exhibits artifacts from the Southwestern United States and focuses on research conducted by Museum personnel and CU anthropology faculty. Currently it also houses "Unearthed", an exhibit about an important find of stone tools in Boulder.
4. The McKenna Gallery is a small space used for temporary exhibitions. Currently on display is "Ozone". This exhibit describes the impacts of ground-level ozone on humans and the environment.
5. The large Changing Gallery showcases larger exhibitions developed either in-house or from other sources. The current exhibit is "TreeSpace". This exhibition showcases trees in a contemplative, reflective space.
6. The Discovery Corner is a hands-on activity area geared towards young children. Curiosity, Collections, and Community are its underlying motivation.

The Education Section of the Museum is responsible for all events at the museum, including K-12 field trip tours, Family Days, CU student programs, and programs for Seniors. In addition, the Education Section is involved in the implementation of all exhibits.

The Museum web site, <https://www.colorado.edu/cumuseum/>, is where you can find information about exhibits, collections, research and events.

The Vision, Mission, and Goals of the CU Museum Education Section

The vision of the Education Section is to provide a complete and varied package of innovative object-based museum programs that is responsive to our audiences: students (pre-K through university level), teachers, and families. Our programs will set a standard of excellence for museums, be recognized as a community resource and a vital part of regional school curricula, and be characterized by key partnerships, strong attendance, and well-used resources.

The mission of the Education Section is to facilitate interactive and life-long learning, and to enhance the interaction between our audiences and the objects and ideas of the Museum.

To achieve our mission, we have developed the following goals:

- The CU Museum Education Section will provide a comprehensive package of innovative and relevant programs.
- The CU Museum Education Section will employ key partnerships within the Museum and the community.
- The CU Museum Education Section's programming and activities will be...
 - Visitor-centered and object-based.
 - Grounded in current education theory and practice, solid content research, and critical reflection.
 - Based on strategic planning, identified goals and objectives, and consistent evaluation.
 - Responsive to the needs of our audiences.
 - Attractive, accessible, and fun.

What You Can Expect From The CU Museum

CU Museum Volunteer Educators will...

1. Be given responsibilities according to skill, interests, availability, and training.
2. Receive orientation, training, timely communication and supervision.
3. Expect that their time will not be wasted by lack of planning, coordination, and cooperation within the Museum.
4. Be given appropriate recognition.
5. Receive regular consultation and feedback on performance.
6. Expect their suggestions about their assignment and the CU Museum Volunteer program will be welcomed.
7. Be able to access volunteer records documenting their personal volunteer experience, positions held, training, evaluation and commendation.
8. Be treated with the respect worthy of a fellow Museum staff member.
9. Have all these things done in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation so that the CU Museum will continue to be known as “a great place to volunteer!”

What the CU Museum Expects From You

Your first responsibility is to know your own duties and how to do them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly.

You are expected to...

1. Be familiar with the policies and procedures of the Museum.
2. Cooperate with Museum faculty, staff and your fellow volunteers and maintain a good team attitude.
3. Grasp opportunities for personal development that are offered to you.
4. Provide feedback and suggestions for ways to improve the CU Museum and the Volunteer Educator program.
5. Attend scheduled training sessions.
6. Report for all activities on time.
7. Inform the Education staff as soon as possible of any absence or lateness.
8. Sign in each time you arrive for a work assignment.
9. Dress appropriately for each activity and wear your ID badge at all times.

Remember, as a Volunteer, you are a role model for our visitors and a representative of the CU Museum and the University of Colorado.

Volunteering Policies & Procedures

When you first become a Volunteer at the CU Museum, you may feel a little awkward in your new surroundings. This is a normal feeling and is expected. Your fellow volunteers and the Education staff want to help you get off to a good start. Feel free to ask them for help.

Please read the following alphabetical listing of CU Museum policies and procedures that are relevant to you as a Museum Volunteer.

Absence and Lateness

Please be prompt and consistent! We know there will be times when you will be ill, on vacation, or unable to volunteer for one reason or another. However, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know as far in advance as possible if you will be absent or late for a shift. The positions filled by volunteers are critical to the Museum. If you fail to show up or show up late, it will negatively impact the program or tour for which you are scheduled.

If you are unable to report to volunteer, or if you will arrive late, please email the Volunteer Coordinator at cumnhvolunteers@colorado.edu. For day-of concerns, call the Volunteer Coordinator (303-735-5015) or Front Desk (303-492-6892) as soon as possible. Give them as much time as possible to arrange for someone else to cover your shift until you arrive. More than two no call/no show will be grounds for suspension of your volunteer status. Excessive absences may be cause for termination.

Background Check

In order to ensure a safe environment and as a requirement for working with children, all volunteers will be required to submit to background and reference checks prior to acceptance as a Volunteer. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted as volunteers.

The University of Colorado uses the online service HireRight to conduct background checks. The Volunteer Coordinator can answer any questions you have regarding this process.

Benefits

Benefits to volunteers include the following:

- Working with and learning from the Museum's faculty and staff and a diverse group of professionals.
- Development of marketable skills for future career opportunities.
- Documentation of training and work experience.
- Free parking on campus while volunteering (if not a student).
- Recognition at an annual Volunteer Appreciation event.

- 10% discount at the museum Gift Gallery for all volunteers.

Commitment

We ask our volunteers to commit to volunteering 6 hours/month with the CU Museum. Of course, if your life changes, you leave school, or you move out of the area, we cannot hold you to this promise. However, our experience shows that when volunteers commit to a set amount of time, retention is higher and the experience for both volunteers and the museum is of a higher quality. We request that you participate in an exit interview to provide feedback for continual improvement of our volunteer program.

Confidential Information

We have an obligation to our visitors, staff, and the university to maintain confidentiality and respect privacy. As you work with the staff, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know. Such information is not to be shared with your family, friends, or acquaintances.

No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any CU Museum records, reports or documents without prior approval. Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service, and could involve legal proceedings.

The University of Colorado follows all FERPA guidelines. We will not share information about you without your express, written consent.

Dress Code

Take your lead from the staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. It is best to neither overdress nor under-dress. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your attire be neat. Please wear clothing without any holes or tears and no undergarments showing. You may be asked to wear clothing or accessories that identify you as a member of the CU Museum volunteer staff.

Equal Volunteering Opportunity

The CU Museum provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as upon dependability and reliability.

Exit Interviews

In instances where a volunteer elects to leave, the Volunteer Coordinator may ask to discuss the reasons for leaving and any other impressions that the volunteer may have about the CU Museum. If you decide to leave, we ask that you contact the Volunteer Coordinator. You will also be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. During the exit interview, you can express yourself freely. It is hoped that this exit interview will help us part as friends, as well as provide insights into possible improvements. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that the CU Museum will provide another agency about you.

Feedback

An efficient, successful operation and satisfied volunteers go hand in hand. Volunteer grievances are of concern to the CU Museum regardless of whether the problems are large or small.

In order to provide prompt and efficient evaluation of and response to grievances, the CU Museum has established a Feedback Procedure for all volunteers. It will always be the CU Museum's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against anyone for their part in presenting grievances.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by a staff member or a fellow volunteer.

The Feedback Procedure is as follows:

1. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator first. If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by the CU Museum is unjust, you can discuss the matter confidentially with the Volunteer Coordinator. If the Volunteer Coordinator is the problem, if they fail to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.
2. Meet with the Education Coordinator or Senior Educator. They will review the grievance and ask you to meet with them. At this meeting, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. In most cases, the matter will be resolved at this stage.
3. If still unresolved, the matter will go to the Director of the Museum.

Gifts, Tips, Soliciting

Do not accept any tips or gifts from visitors. We do not want to create an atmosphere where our visitors feel obligated to reward the Museum staff and/or volunteers for doing a job.

You may not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, political agenda, or religious beliefs while volunteering with us. Solicitation for a private charity is also prohibited.

Harassment

The CU Museum intends to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, healthful, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses that might interfere with volunteer performance. The CU Museum will not tolerate any sort of harassment or conduct which creates an intimidating environment or prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position. We abide by CU policy, and harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, or visual – will not be tolerated and is punishable by law. Harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence. Volunteers will be asked to complete online Discrimination and Sexual Harassment training. More information can be found at: <https://www.colorado.edu/oiec/policies/discrimination-harassment>.

Name Badges

The name badge you are issued is the property of the CU Museum and must be left at the museum after every program.

Parking

CU Museum Volunteers receive free parking for the time spent volunteering. The museum will pay for parking. Let us know what ParkMobile zone you have parked in and your license plate number when you arrive. Please keep in mind that the university controls the parking lot in front of our building and you will be ticketed and towed if you park there during the week between 7am and 5pm. If you are volunteering on the weekend or after 5pm, this lot is a ParkMobile zone. Remember to lock your car every day.

If you should damage another car while parking or leaving, immediately report the incident, along with the license numbers of both vehicles and any other pertinent information, to the campus police. The CU Museum does not assume any liability for any loss or damages you may sustain.

Restricted Areas

In the interest of safety and security, certain portions of the CU Museum's facilities may be restricted to authorized personnel only. Such areas will be clearly identified.

Security

Maintaining the security of the CU Museum building is every volunteer's responsibility. Develop habits that ensure security as a matter of course. For example:

- Always keep cash properly secured. If you are aware that cash is insecurely stored, immediately inform the person responsible.
- Know the location of all alarms and fire extinguishers, and familiarize yourself with the proper procedure for using them.

If you need help, there is always someone on duty at the Front Desk.

CU Boulder has a variety of trainings, preparatory plans, and alerts that will help you in case of emergency. Please visit <https://www.colorado.edu/emergencymanagement/campus-emergencies-hazards/active-harmer#know-107> to learn about responding to an active harmer on campus.

You may also sign up for alerts such as campus closures and late starts at <https://alerts.colorado.edu/>, and scroll down to follow the directions for Affiliates.

Smoking

The CU Museum is a non-smoking campus. If you choose to smoke any substance off campus, there should be no detectable odor when you enter the museum.

Standards of Conduct

By accepting a volunteer position with us, you have a responsibility to the CU Museum and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain guidelines for conduct. The CU Museum tries to keep rules to a minimum. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary, and to protect you. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone.

Substance Abuse

The CU Museum has no desire to intrude into its volunteers' personal lives. However, both on-the-job and off-the-job involvement with any mood-altering substances can have an impact on our Museum and on the Museum's ability to achieve its objectives of safety and security. Therefore, substance use or abuse will not be tolerated while on duty. While you may make your own lifestyle choices, the CU Museum cannot accept the risk in the Museum which substance use or abuse may create. The possession, sale, or use of mood-altering substances while volunteering is against the law and CU policy. It is a violation of safe volunteer practices and is subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal, and is punishable by law.

Termination of a Volunteer

The CU Museum has the right to terminate a volunteer for any reason, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. Failure to adhere to policies of the CU Museum is cause for immediate release. The CU Museum has the right to ask a volunteer to leave the facility immediately for any reason.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination.
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Theft of property or misuse of Museum funds, equipment, or materials.
- Misusing your CU Museum identification badge.
- Falsifying statements on the application or during the interview process.
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts.
- Abuse or mistreatment of visitors or volunteers.
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the Museum.

Theft

Theft is a serious concern at the CU Museum. In addition to theft of personal items, we consider the unauthorized use of agency services or facilities or the taking of any Museum property for personal use to be theft.

The following list of examples is not inclusive, but provides illustrations of several activities that are unacceptable.

- 1. Use of Museum copy machines for personal use.** The Museum copiers are not available for personal use.
- 2. Use of computers.** The CU Museum's office computers and laptops are to be used exclusively for business purposes unless you receive permission from the Education Staff.

Unacceptable Activities

We expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. To avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of the CU Museum. If you have any questions concerning any volunteer or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see the Volunteer Coordinator for an explanation.

If a volunteer violates any rules established by the CU Museum, including the following rules, that person may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, immediate discharge.

- Willful violation of any Museum rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the CU Museum.
- Willful violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules or Museum safety practices; failure to wear required safety equipment when necessary; tampering with the CU Museum equipment or safety equipment.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in any Museum event designed for the participation of minors.
- Possession or use of all illegal drugs or other illegal substances is prohibited.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons, or explosives on Museum property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone on Museum premises or when representing the CU Museum; fighting, horseplay, provoking a fight on Museum property, or negligent damage of property.
- Insubordination or refusing to properly obey instructions issued by Museum staff.

- Threatening, intimidating, or coercing fellow volunteers on or off the premises – at any time, for any purpose.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers Museum objects or specimens.
- Theft of Museum property or the property of fellow volunteers; unauthorized possession or removal of any Museum property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of Museum equipment or property for personal reasons; using Museum equipment for profit.
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of Museum records or other Museum documents.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer on the job; willfully restricting volunteer output or encouraging others to do the same.
- Immoral conduct or indecency on Museum property.