

Volunteer Opportunities

When you volunteer with LVHS, you can:

- ❖ Be a part of preserving, understanding, and sharing local history and genealogy
- ❖ Discover a variety of roles to fit your skills and interests, or try something new
- ❖ Meet new people and build camaraderie with other volunteers
- ❖ Enjoy special Volunteer League programs, field trips, and social activities
- ❖ Share your time, talents, and experiences to keep the Lancaster Virginia Historical Society going strong!

Volunteer service is vital to the operations of the Lancaster Virginia Historical Society! LVHS, through its Museum, Library, and Public Programs, is an important resource for historical and genealogical research and educational outreach about the people, places, stories, and events of Lancaster's past, and our region's role in the history of Virginia and our nation.

LVHS is managed by a volunteer board of directors and many volunteer committees with the support of just two employees—a full-time Executive Director and part-time Programs & Operations Assistant. Volunteers greet and guide our visitors, perform historical and genealogical research, maintain our garden, plan and produce our exhibits and special events, participate in school programs, run the gift shop, provide administrative support, and more!

Volunteers might give their services for a few hours a year, a regular shift per week, or an ongoing commitment to support a particular activity or project. Every effort will be made to match volunteer availability to museum and library schedules. Volunteers will receive training related to their responsibilities, so prior experience is not a requirement for most positions.

As a volunteer, you can expect to gain a better appreciation and understanding of local history, genealogy, and historic preservation, and discover ways you can help educate and inspire others about these topics. You will also have the opportunity to work with other volunteers and meet other people with shared interests.

Volunteers also have exclusive access to continued training, field trips, and social activities through the LVHS Volunteer League. Volunteer League meetings and appreciation events offer you interesting programs as well as time for fun, food, and friendship. Optional participation in the Volunteer League is open to all LVHS volunteers and most activities are free or minimal cost.

All skills, talents, backgrounds, and experiences are welcome!

Online volunteer application at <https://lancastervahistory.org/give/#volunteer>

More information: Lancaster Virginia Historical Society

PO Box 97, Lancaster VA 22503 804-462-7280 history@LancasterVaHistory.org

LVHS Museum Docents & Gift Shop Clerks

Docents & Gift Shop Clerks support the daily operations of the Museum by serving on the “front-line” of visitor services.

Typical duties include:

- Greeting and orienting visitors and collecting admission fees
- Providing an overview of what the visitor can see in Lancaster House, the Old Clerk’s Office, and the Old Jail
- Explaining and answering questions about the site’s history, current exhibits, and gift shop inventory
- Selling gift shop items and handling cash, check, and credit card transactions
- Providing local tourism brochures and information

Volunteers interested in doing more with the Gift Shop can help form a new store management committee to assist with inventory selections, merchandising layouts, custom products, advertising, and sales reviews.

LVHS Dunton Library for Genealogy and History

Volunteers support the daily operations of the Genealogy & History Research Library by assisting patrons to search and use all publications, catalogs, finding aids, electronic resources, and other materials in the Library collection.

General research experience or knowledge of genealogy methods is helpful, but we will provide plenty of training. If you like solving mysteries or puzzles, this might be for you!

Typical duties include:

- Providing walk-in patrons with guidance and access to Library materials
- Looking up resources to answer phone and email inquiries
- Collecting and recording money for library use, copies, membership, and book sales
- Using the computer and internet, photocopier, scanner
- Opening the Library building in the morning and securing it at the end of the day

Volunteers may use Library resources for personal research during “down time” while on duty or during other regular library hours.

Collections and Archives

The LVHS historical collections are comprised of artifacts and archival papers reflecting the history and social life of the area. They include furniture, paintings, photographs, documents, clothing, tools, household goods, personal keepsakes, and many other types of materials. The tasks of the collections volunteers support other staff and volunteer work in exhibits, docent interpretation, educational programs, research, and public information services.

Volunteers typically:

- inventory, describe, and photograph items
- research and verify object information
- input data and update paper and computer files

Exhibits

Exhibit galleries in Lancaster House, the Clerk's Office, and Old Jail are used for period displays and changing exhibits about various local topics or interpretive themes. Exhibits may contain a mix of permanent collection items, loaned items, text panels, labels, illustrations, and audiovisual material.

Museum exhibits are the sum of many parts and volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of planning, research, design, installation, and interpretation. The Exhibits Committee thrives with volunteers who bring different skills and perspectives, such as:

- A love of antiques
- An eye for interior decorating
- An interest in storytelling
- A curiosity about historic things and people
- A talent for art or graphic design
- An aptitude for researching and writing
- An appreciation for detail
- A flair for creativity

Adult and Youth Educational Programs

Education is at the core of our mission and is intertwined in all of our programs and activities. The Educational Programs Committee is an umbrella group that incorporates the work of several important subcommittees, such as School Programs, Public Programs, Lecture Series, and Oral History Projects.

A variety of programs and activities throughout the year, designed to reach all ages, are presented on-site and all over the Northern Neck—at public schools, outdoor community festivals, civic and service organizations, lecture halls and auditoriums.

Typical volunteer tasks:

School Programs

- Help create lesson plans for field trips and in-classroom use
- Assist with visits for school groups
- Present “Museums on the Go” programs in local schools
- Plan workshops for teachers, in collaboration with partner organizations
- Serve as a liaison with social studies faculty members in public schools

Public Programs (adult/general audiences)

- Plan and assist with public lectures by scholars and authors
- Plan and assist with living history demonstrations
- Help coordinate programs to support exhibit themes or prioritized topics
- Greet/usher attendees at events; help at sign-in tables

Research and Publications

The Research and Publications Committee helps LVHS fulfill its educational mission to expand and share local knowledge and helps create services and products that can generate revenue. The projects of the research group collaboratively involve and support our collections, archives, exhibits, and library.

Volunteer tasks may include:

- producing new print and online articles and publications on various topics in history, genealogy, and material culture; republishing out-of-print materials
- conducting investigative research into the stories behind the objects in the Museum collections
- transcribing documents and oral histories
- using social media, blogs, and other new technology tools
- collecting data from cemeteries and other public sources
- digitizing and scanning materials

Gardens

LVHS has two gardens, inspired by early American gardens of the 18th and 19th centuries, as part of its educational and environmental offerings. One is a formal garden with boxwoods, peonies, crepe myrtles, roses, and other annuals arranged in a formal design. The other is an herb garden with plants historically known for their cooking and medicinal uses.

Duties include regular weeding and watering. Annually, refurbishments such as additional mulching and fresh plantings are done. Volunteers also maintain the container plantings in the front and side of the Museum. The gardens need maintenance throughout the year, however most work is concentrated in the spring and fall. Garden volunteers typically work in groups, but there are tasks that can be performed alone. Volunteers may also give tours of the gardens, lead student activities in the gardens, and help develop interpretive brochures and educational materials about the gardens and landscape.

Hospitality

LVHS holds public and members-only receptions for special events such as exhibit openings, lecture programs, the Christmas Open House, the Annual Membership Meeting, Volunteer Appreciations, and the Spring Gala. Volunteers help plan these functions from choosing the dates and developing the invitations to planning the menus and decorating with flowers and greens. The committee also enlists the help of additional volunteers to provide food, wine, and staffing for events.

Members of the Hospitality Committee typically like to cook, decorate, and pay attention to detail in scheduling and planning the receptions. They usually enjoy working as a team. Volunteers do not have to be available for every function.

Other Volunteer Areas

Running a non-profit organization involves many other duties, such as:

- Membership Development
- Volunteer Development
- Fundraising
- Grant Writing
- Office Clerical
- Publicity
- Facilities & Maintenance
- Find the right role for you at LVHS!