



Lawrence Visitor Information Center Volunteer Manual

Union Pacific Depot
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Welcome – And Thank You!

Volunteers are an important part of the work we do at the Visitors Center. We promote the city and its events to visitors and provide travel information to visitors to the city. Your time assists staff at the desk and you will be trained to be knowledgeable on Lawrence. Your work enables the staff to expand their activities and increases the overall productivity of the Visitors Center.

We would like to encourage you to be familiar with our website to use it as a resource in order to point visitors to points of interest in the city, as well as to help you better understand our work within Explore Lawrence. You may also be a part of events outside your regular shift, such as envelope stuffing, pop-up information stations, and registration for conferences. This work is crucial to our mission, and you make it possible! This manual is intended to help you better understand the big picture of what we do, as well as your specific role. Please reach out to any staff if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you!

About this Manual

This manual is intended to help you be successful as a volunteer at the Visitors Center. By the end, you should be familiar with eXplore Lawrence, our values, and your role in volunteering with us.

A manual can't cover everything, so please ask questions! During your first month with us, we expect lots of questions and will do our best to make sure you are oriented with us and have all the training you need. We hope this will give you a solid foundation to begin your work with us. We believe you will enjoy your time with us and other volunteers and we hope you find this a good place to volunteer.

We ask that you read this manual carefully and use it as the first resource when questions arise. A copy will be available in the Volunteer FYI binder behind the desk. We also suggest that you take your copy home so you can share eXplore Lawrence with others and so you can become more familiar with our policies.

eXplore Lawrence

Mission: eXplore Lawrence develops and coordinates resources to create an exceptional visitor experience for both leisure and business travelers, resulting in increased overnight stays, direct visitor spending and repeat visits.

eXplore Lawrence, the convention and visitors bureau of Lawrence, Kansas, is here to share the experience of this unmistakable town and to invite visitors to come see for themselves. We assist leisure travelers, meetings and events planners, sports events planners, groups, the media and Lawrencians, too. We are focused on increasing overnight stays, direct visitor spending and awareness of Lawrence and its amenities. eXplore Lawrence leads by identifying the needs of its target audiences and delivering on those needs. eXplore Lawrence facilitates resource coordination to create an exceptional visitor experience for both leisure and business travelers.

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Visitor Information Center Mission Statement

Provide a welcoming atmosphere for visitors to Lawrence and Douglas County that reflects a growing, friendly community, maintain up-to-date information about our city and region in order to help visitors experience their visit more fully. Collect demographics of our visitors, and be a resource and focal point for the community.

Permanent Volunteer Position Description

Duties

- Answer phones and keep records of each call and/or request for information.
- Greet and answer visitor's questions.
- Ask all visitors to sign the guest register, assist guests with any difficulties in using the iPad.
- Know how to operate film equipment.
- Have knowledge of the following: depot history, local activities, Lawrence history, walking and driving tours, and where to find information a visitor may request.
- Assisting staff with preparing visitor mailings. May include stuffing of envelopes with brochures, bundling and sorting.
- Assist with registration for conventions, held at local hotels as scheduled. Greet convention participants, answer questions about Lawrence history, events, activities etc.
- Conduct formal and informal tours of the Union Pacific Depot. Show film and be able to give brief summary of film.
- Assist staff with other duties as requested.

Permanent volunteers are allowed to do light activities or reading during their shift. Permanent volunteers are allowed to use the computer. Any activity must not interfere with their ability to assist guests or staff.

Qualifications

Knowledge of, or an interest in learning about, and sharing Lawrence information. Demonstrate an enthusiasm about Lawrence. Telephone and record keeping skills. Basic computer skills, including Outlook. Ability to use an iPad and to learn to use Square POS.

Time Commitment

One 2 hour shift per week. May be scheduled for additional activities at request of Visitor Center Managers.

Supervision

This position is supervised by the Director of Visitor Services and the Manager of the Visitor Center.

Student Volunteer Position Description

Duties

- Answer phones and input contact information and inquiries into Simpleview for each call.
- Greet and answer visitor's questions.
- Ask all visitors to sign the guest register, assist guests with any difficulties in using the iPad.
- Know how to operate film equipment.
- Have knowledge of the following: depot history, local activities, Lawrence history, walking and driving tours, and where to find information a visitor may request.
- Assisting staff with preparing visitor mailings. May include stuffing of envelopes with brochures, bundling and sorting.
- Assist with registration for conventions held in Lawrence as scheduled. Greet convention participants, answer questions about Lawrence history, events, activities etc.
- Conduct formal and informal tours of the Union Pacific Depot. Show film and be able to give brief summary of film.
- Assist in pop-up information stations for scheduled events. May include transporting collateral, setting up tables or tents and returning materials to the office or visitor center after the event. May assist guests with directions, local suggestions.

Student volunteers are able to do homework or reading during their shift. Student volunteers are not allowed to watch movies or television, and are not allowed to use headphones during their shift. Any activity must not interfere with their ability to assist guests or staff. Student volunteers are allowed to use the computer.

Qualifications

Knowledge of, or an interest in learning about, and sharing Lawrence information. Demonstrate an enthusiasm about Lawrence. Telephone and record keeping skills. Familiarity with Microsoft/Windows. Ability to use an iPad and learn to use Square POS and Simpleview Consumer roles. Ability to stand for up to 4 hours.

Time Commitment

One 2 hour shift per week for at least 8 weeks. Student volunteers are also requested to assist staff outside their shift on an as-needed basis. Volunteers will be given at least 2 weeks advance notice before being scheduled.

Supervision

This position is supervised by the Director of Visitor Services and the Manager of the Visitor Center.

Recruitment Process

An individual interested in becoming a volunteer must first fill out an application then complete an interview with a member the Visitor Information Center's Staff. Interested parties will be given a general overview of the Lawrence Visitor Information Center and a thorough explanation the tasks required of volunteers. Training, time requirements and scheduling will be discussed at this time.

After the interview, the applicant should decide if the volunteer program meets his/her needs and standards and if he/she can fulfill the requirements of the program. The interviewer will then decide whether or not to accept the applicant into the program. Permanent volunteers will be asked to join us for a one month probationary period. After one month, both the volunteer and the Visitor Center Staff will evaluate the volunteer's performance and decide whether the volunteer will be accepted for a one year commitment. Student volunteers will only be evaluated at their interview.

Training

All new volunteers are required to attend a one hour training session, where you will receive an overview of volunteer duties and information on the operations of the Visitor Center. New volunteers will be given a copy of the Lawrence Visitors Guide, the Kansas Travel magazine, and other brochures to read during their first 2 weeks. Volunteers are also requested to watch the Lawrence Free State Fortress film during their first shift. Volunteers should also familiarize themselves with www.unmistakablylawrence.com as a key source of information on Lawrence and are highly encouraged to read the blog in order to find new places to recommend to guests.

Volunteers will receive ongoing assistance from staff in answering questions and will be provided any important new literature to read as well. Periodic training sessions may be offered with advance notice and attendance is strongly encouraged.

General Information

Visitor Center Hours

Monday - Saturday	9:00am - 5:00pm
Sunday	1:00 - 5:00pm

Volunteer Shifts

Monday - Saturday
10:00am to 12:00pm
12:00pm to 2:00pm
2:00 to 4:00pm

Volunteers will be supervised by a staff member during their shift and are not responsible for opening or closing duties. However, staff members also use this time to leave the Visitor Center for meals, deliveries, meetings, and other errands. Volunteers have access to staff cell phone number on the staff directory next to the desk and in the Volunteer FYI binder for use in emergencies. Volunteers will also have a directory of all volunteers if the need arises.

Holidays

The Visitors Center will be closed on New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. There may be additional days the Visitor Center is closed, but you will be notified of any changes. You will also be informed of any particular closings or irregular hours via our volunteer newsletter.

Volunteer FYI Binder

The Volunteer FYI Binder should be your go-to source for instructions and information after this manual. It is a grey binder that is behind the desk next to the books. Updates will be included at the beginning of the binder and you will be expected to initial that you read them, so check the binder at the beginning of every shift. Always replace it behind the desk when you are done using it. If you think something should be included, please suggest it to the staff. This binder is intended to be helpful to you, so please use it frequently. However, as always, feel free to ask staff any questions you can't find answers to here.

Volunteer Newsletter

Our newsletter, the Volunteer Connection, is intended to be a resource to help you understand more about the ongoing work at eXplore Lawrence and recognize your achievements during the month. It will be delivered via email in the first week of every month. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter or have an idea for information that should be included, please contact a staff member. This is one way we would like to show our appreciation to you and help you connect to the rest of the volunteers.

[Simpleview](#)

Simpleview is the customer relationship management (CRM) software that we use. Simpleview is used in all areas of eXplore Lawrence, and is crucial to measuring the outcomes of all our activities. New volunteers will be trained on the basic use of Simpleview in the Consumer user group. Documents will also be available in the Volunteer FYI binder for your reference. Volunteers will share a single account on Simpleview. Specific instructions will also be included below as relevant.

[Film – Lawrence: Free State Fortress](#)

The film, Lawrence: Free State Fortress, is available for guests and groups in the Arden Booth Free State Theatre. You should watch the film during one of your first shifts so that you are able to describe it to visitors when they ask about it. The equipment and chairs are usually set up by staff members in the morning. If not, there are instructions on the equipment on how to turn it on and there are chairs in the theatre room. The film is about 30 minutes long. Ask all guests who watch the film to sign the guest log on the iPad before you play the movie for them.

[Union Pacific Depot](#)

The Union Pacific Depot has a long and vibrant history as a part of the community. Guests frequently ask about the history of the depot, so basic information is provided here and further information is provided in the Volunteer FYI binder.

The Union Pacific Depot was built in 1889 to replace an older building. It was designed by Henry Van Brunt, who also designed Spooner Hall on the KU campus. In 1903 it was damaged by the flood, and in the 1930s the original steeple was removed. In 1945 it was remodeled to have a single large waiting room. In 1951, the depot flooded again, and the high water marker can still be seen in the display case. In 1971, Union Pacific stopped all passenger service at the Depot, and in 1984 they suspended freight service. The Depot was slated to be demolished in December 1984, but the community formed a task force to save the historic building. In 1991, JLA began the rehabilitation of the building and in 1996 the final phase was completed. The building reopened in 1996.

[Depot Rental](#)

Groups may rent the depot from Parks & Rec for use for private events. Staff will be present at the beginning of reservations to answer questions. Visitor Center staff and volunteers do not provide set up or tear down for events. For events after Visitor Center hours, Parks & Rec will provide an employee to watch the Visitor Center. Renters are required to clean up and remove their own trash after their event. Renters are not allowed to use the Visitor Center items or the space in the Visitors Center.

Volunteer Benefits

Volunteers are entitled to a number of benefits not afforded the general public.

Permanent Volunteers

- A keener understanding of Lawrence history through reference materials, hands-on training sessions, and working with the staff
- A monthly newsletter providing notification on upcoming events, volunteer news and topics related to the Visitor Center
- Volunteer recognition holiday luncheon and tour, held in December each year
- Periodic recognition on birthdays or anniversaries of service
- 10% discount on merchandise sold at the Visitor Center
- An opportunity to be part of an interesting group of people who enjoy sharing interesting aspects of their community with visitors
- An opportunity to learn and share knowledge

Student Volunteers

- A keener understanding of Lawrence history through reference materials, hands-on training sessions, and working with the staff
- A monthly newsletter providing notification on upcoming events, volunteer recognitions and topics related to the Visitor Center
- Attend the student volunteer dinner during any semesters they are active
- Periodic recognition on birthdays or anniversaries of service
- 10% discount on merchandise sold at the Visitor Center
- An opportunity to be part of an interesting group of people who enjoy sharing interesting aspects of their community with visitors.
- An opportunity to network with other students and professionals who are a part of eXplore Lawrence
- An opportunity to learn and share knowledge

Policies & Expectations

Volunteer Commitment

Permanent Volunteers

We ask for a one-year time commitment. Each March you may elect to renew your commitment or discontinue service. Also at this time, Substitute Volunteers may change their status to be an Active Volunteer, or Active Volunteers may become a Substitute Volunteer. Permanent volunteers have first choice of shifts if they would like to change, followed by returning student volunteers.

Student Volunteers

We ask for at least an 8 week commitment from students, with a 16 week semester-long commitment being preferred. At the end of your initial stated commitment you may elect to renew your commitment or discontinue service. You may also choose to remain on our Substitute Volunteers list or select a different shift that would better fit your schedule. While current long-term volunteers have first choice of shifts, current student volunteers will be given preference over any new volunteers for shifts.

Inactive/Emeritus Status

If a Volunteer or Substitute Volunteer is unable to fulfill their commitment (i.e. work their regular schedule, or have been unavailable to substitute for six months) they will become inactive. At such time as you are able to perform the duties of a Volunteer or Substitute Volunteer again, you need to reapply and would be considered a new volunteer.

Substitutes

Permanent volunteers are strongly requested to locate a qualified volunteer to work for them if time off is needed. However, there may be times this is not possible due to limited volunteers. If you are unable to find a substitute, staff should be notified no later than 48 hours prior to date of absence. If an emergency occurs, first call the Visitor Center and if after hours, leave a message. Also feel free to contact a staff member on their personal phone if after Visitor Center hours.

If you cannot attend an event beyond a normal weekly shift that you were scheduled for with advance notice, you are required to find a substitute and notify staff of your conflict with at least one week notice. If an emergency arises, contact staff directly by calling the Visitor Center and if need be, calling staff at home.

Dress Code

Comfortable casual office clothing is appropriate. Athletic wear is not permissible. A volunteer name tag or Unmistakably Lawrence badge should

be worn at all times when on duty. An Unmistakably Lawrence polo or shirt may be provided as available and is preferred.

Guests & Visitors

There are two major ways that you will interact with guests as a volunteer – in person with walk-in guests, or over the phone. We must ask all guests to sign the guest log on the iPad. We prefer that guests sign for themselves so they can provide the information they feel appropriate. However, it is imperative that every contact with a guest is logged into Simpleview as an inquiry with the Walk-In Caller Form IF they do not sign the guest log on the iPad. If you have any difficulty logging this information and can't contact a staff member immediately for help, write it down and keep track until staff is available to assist you.

Walk-In Guests

The primary way we interact with guests is through assisting walk-in guests. It is important to ask where they are from. It may seem awkward to ask, but it is crucial to measuring the impact of our marketing. Staff will help you practice ways to ask where a guest is coming from. If need be, the Walk-In/Caller Form also has prompts for collecting guest information. Guests are not required to give us any information.

Be sure to ask guests how you can help them. Guests are free to take any brochures or magazines. If they want to take a large quantity of items (>10) for use with a business or organization in Lawrence, ask for further information, including business/organization name, address, and email. Bags are also available behind the desk for guests to put their items in. If you are on the phone when a guest comes in, you must acknowledge any person who enters the depot. Some options include a small wave and a smile.

Phone Calls

Volunteers frequently speak to guests and locals on the phone. The phone should be answered promptly. If you need to move away from the desk or step outside during your shift, take a cordless phone with you. If you are speaking with a person in the Visitors Center, ask them if they can wait for just a moment or excuse yourself. Answer the phone politely, and ask who you are speaking with. Ask if the person is calling from within Lawrence or somewhere else. Guests may frequently ask why we need their information, and one possible answer may be that it helps the Visitors Center maintain our funding. Staff members will help you practice these conversations and ensure that you are equipped with all the tools you need to answer the phone.

Rental Inquiries

We frequently respond to inquiries about renting the community room or theatre room. You may provide basic information if you are knowledgeable, but we do not maintain any record of future availability. You are not expected

to provide any information for guests other than to direct them to call Parks & Recreation at the information below.

Parks & Recreation

785.832.3450

Community Building – 785.832.7920

Sales

The Visitors Center uses Square as our point of sale (POS) system. You will be provided specific training on using Square, and staff are always willing to answer questions. There are also further documents with instructions in the Volunteer FYI binder. All sales, including cash sales, must be logged in Square POS. The cash drawer is under the front desk, and keys will be in the small cabinet next to it during the day. A credit card reader is also kept in the cash drawer, to be used by plugging it into the iPad headphone jack.

Items for sale are kept in the display case, in the small filing cabinets under the front desk, and in the storage room. Volunteers may not provide any unlisted discounts to guests without staff approval. Listed discounts will be included in the Square POS and may be given to all guests who qualify.

eXplore Lawrence Sales staff may occasionally request items for meeting planners or others, and should be accommodated. Sales staff are not required to pay for items that are used for professional purposes. Prices may be changed at staff's discretion, so check Square, merchandise signage, and the Volunteer FYI binder for updates.

Inventory

The Visitor Center keeps inventory on the collateral that comes from local partners. There are two parts to this process – regular counts and orders. Inventory is counted on a monthly basis to be included in the staff report. Volunteers who have a regularly scheduled shift on the first 2-3 days of the month will be requested to assist in this process. Volunteers who do not have a regularly scheduled shift will be invited to participate, but are not required to do so.

There are two kinds of orders you may work on. Guest orders occur when a guest requests multiple items for professional or semi-professional use (e.g. realtor's request information for clients, KU employees request materials for prospective employees, AirBnB hosts requesting materials for visitors). Ask the guests to sign the guest log on the iPad and write down all the items they take and the quantities of them. If you have been trained by staff, enter the order into Simpleview. If you have not been trained by staff to enter orders into Simpleview, leave a clear and detailed note for staff to enter the order.

The second kind of order is a conference order. Conference orders originate with eXplore Lawrence Sales staff and use a limited number of items to create welcome bags for conference attendees. We should have advance notice for

these, and your role will be to help staff assemble the items. In specific cases, you may also help staff deliver these items to the client at their location or carry boxes to their car. If you have any concerns about your ability to carry boxes, please inform staff so we can accommodate your needs.

[Performance Review](#)

The primary purpose of a review is to ensure that the volunteer program is as effective as possible. Periodic reviews of the volunteer's work are intended to be positive and informative. Volunteers are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and discuss it with staff.

The volunteer will be encouraged periodically to evaluate the program and staff for the same purpose. Permanent volunteers will be specifically asked to evaluate the program annually. Student volunteers will be asked to evaluate the program at the end of their stated commitment. While these specific opportunities will be presented to volunteers, feedback from volunteers is always welcome and encouraged.

[End of Service](#)

Volunteers are retained on an at-will basis. If you decide you must end your service with us, please inform the Visitors Center staff in writing of your intent to resign and the date of your final shift. Staff will also send you a short exit survey to understand the reasons for your leave and ways we can improve the program. Student volunteers may not receive a reference for their service if they choose to leave before the end of their stated commitment. Volunteers who decide to retire who have dedicated significant time and energy to the Visitor Center may be recognized as Emeritus Volunteers, entitled to ongoing benefits and attendance at volunteer events.

[Volunteer Directory](#)

All volunteers will receive a phone directory, which lists active and substitute volunteers, their scheduled shifts, and staff listings. Volunteers should be careful to protect the personal information of the volunteers and staff listed on the directory. Volunteers should use this information only for activities related to their work, such as calling a staff member about an absence with short notice or finding a substitute volunteer.

Volunteer Agreement Form

To be read, signed, and returned to staff before beginning any volunteer activities.

I, _____,
(Please print your name)

have received a copy of the Lawrence Visitor Information Center Volunteer Manual and agree to follow the policies and procedures as listed in the handbook.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

Return to:

Victoria Purvis/Keith Manies
Lawrence Visitors Center
402 N 2nd St.
Lawrence, KS 66044