

**Volunteer
Manual**

HELLO

HISTORY

VOLUNTEER!

ATLANTA
HISTORY
CENTER

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Vision

The Atlanta History Center connects people, history, and culture.

Mission

The Atlanta History Center through its collections, facilities, programs, exhibitions, and publications preserves and interprets historical subjects pertaining to Atlanta and its environs and presents subjects of interest to Atlanta's diverse audiences.

Goal

The volunteer program will focus on and support the organization's goals and objectives.

HELLO!

We are pleased to welcome you to Atlanta's History Center. Located in one of Atlanta's most vibrant neighborhoods, our 33-acre experience features award-winning exhibitions, historic houses, enchanting gardens, interactive activities, and a variety of year-round adult and family programs. Inside and outside of our buildings, we reveal the magic, meaning, and context that gives rise to a multidimensional, shared understanding of our city. A world of history awaits!

We recognize that each volunteer brings to the Atlanta History Center a wealth of interests, resources, and areas of expertise. Accordingly, the involvement of each volunteer is dependent upon their personal talents. The purpose of this manual is to aid you in getting acquainted with our organization and provide guidance to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. For ease of reading, the term "AHC" may be used to refer to "Atlanta History Center."

We welcome you to the AHC Volunteer Family, and thank you for choosing to share your time and talents with us!

Cellphones

No use of cellphones while on duty, unless it is to assist a guest, staff, or other volunteer, or there is an extenuating circumstance.

Cellphones are not, at any time, allowed to be connected to a computer.

Onboarding Process

To complete the onboarding process, you must submit a background check, sign a liability waiver, and sign a receipt of this manual. Below are instructions on using our volunteer portal, including how to sign up for opportunities and how to sign in and check your hours. We will begin to help familiarize you with staff and departments. While we cannot guarantee an open position immediately, when a position becomes available, you will be ready to go!

Background Check

At the end of this manual you will find instructions on how to complete the volunteer background check, which is run through Verified Volunteers. Please note that Atlanta History Center covers the \$19 cost of the background check, however if you would like to make a donation towards a portion of the cost, there is a prompt allowing you to do so. Thank you in advance!

Expect a 10 hour processing time, after which you and AHC will both receive an email notifying us of its completion.

Liability Waiver & Receipt of Manual

These documents are at the end of the manual, and are to be signed and returned either through email or hardcopy. If you have any questions, please let us know.

General Office Information

Hours

Volunteer hours and schedules are established by each program/department.

Dress

Volunteers must dress in a professional manner — consistent with job duties and program needs. Unless otherwise stated, our office dress runs on the side of business casual.

Smoking

Smoking is allowed in designated smoking areas only.

Worksite

An appropriate worksite shall be established for volunteer use, as needed. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment, and space to enable volunteers to effectively and comfortably perform their duties.

Valuables

Volunteers should not bring any type of valuables when volunteering. Proper precautions should be taken in storing purses. AHC assumes NO responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage to any volunteer's property, including cash. Lockers are available on a first come, first served basis.

Lost and Found

If you find an item left by a guest or otherwise lost, please deliver it to the guard in the security control office next to the loading dock near the Gardens' Building. Please do not leave the item without signing the log book. Signing the log book is a new step in the process, but it will help us ensure that lost items are logged, which will give us the best chance to get them back to the owner.

Categories of Volunteers

Active Volunteers

Volunteers who have completed at least 3 service hours in the past six months.

In-Training Volunteers

Volunteers who have joined within the past six months.

Adult Volunteers

Volunteers who are individuals who are 18 years of age or older, who are not receiving any credit with school or court.

Youth and Student Volunteers

Volunteers who are primarily junior and high school age volunteers; however, younger aged youth may be permitted in some volunteer opportunities. These are generally short-term volunteers who may or may not be fulfilling community service or service learning requirements for school. They may participate as an individual or with a group, but adult supervision is always required for on-site activities. They are minimally 15 years of age (though some programs' requirements may differ).

Interns and Service Learning Students

Individuals enrolled in high school or college, receiving credits or not, who have specific curriculum objectives they wish to fulfill.

Groups

Volunteers belonging to an established network, including corporate groups, civic organizations, social clubs, or family units. Many groups participate in one-time or short-term projects that may be completed at an AHC program or at their own group site (collecting canned goods, clothing drives, etc.).

Employees as Volunteers

Those who are accepted, provided that the volunteer's services are not coerced, the services involve work which is outside the scope of the normal staff duties, and the services are provided outside of the usual working hours.

Community Service Workers

Those who are individuals assigned specific community service time requirements based on a court-ordered alternate sentencing, restitution program, or other mandated efforts such as welfare reform. AHC generally does not provide volunteer work to fulfill these types of requirements, but reserves the right to do so on a case by case basis.

Volunteer Files

Confidential files will consist of volunteer application, acknowledgement of volunteer manual, liability statements, volunteer job description, background check results, and service hour logs. The file may also contain, when applicable, items such as additional references.

Unusual Incidents

Any incidents, accidents, or abuse that involve a client, visitor, volunteer, or employee, which is not consistent with normal agency routine, must be reported immediately to a staff supervisor or program manager.

Interpretation Guidelines

You are part of our Atlanta History Center volunteer family because you possess a passion for both history and service. Because of your love of history, you may hold strong views on historical topics. We respect your right to prefer one interpretation of history over the other, but we ask that you consider the following when assuming your volunteer role:

As Atlanta's premier historical institution, it is crucial that all history presented to AHC guests adhere to a high professional standard. Plain and simple, history is our business. It is the job of AHC's professional historians to ensure that the content we present is consistent, evidence-based, and in-line with our broader interpretation of significant events in Atlanta's past - the most controversial likely being the causes of the Civil War and its aftermath.

Guests visit AHC to learn about Atlanta's history from a highly regarded museum. Once they step foot on our campus, all historical content they consume carries the legitimacy of our brand. A problem arises because a majority of our guests are not familiar with the internal workings of a museum. Thus, they have no way of differentiating between the professionally created content on an exhibit plaque and an un-vetted statement from a History Center volunteer; both appear to be of equal veracity to the average visitor.

The importance of this might be better understood through an example from outside the museum world: A sick person goes to a doctor's office to obtain professional medical care. Likewise, visitors come through our doors expecting a professionally curated experience, and it is our obligation to provide this to them.

It is also important that we maintain an environment welcoming to guests of diverse racial, socio-economic, and geographic backgrounds. While fascinating to study and explore, Southern history is nuanced, complex, and very often politically charged. Even in 2017, there is a political element to debates surrounding the events of the 1850s and 60s. It is difficult for just about anyone to refrain from injecting their political views into interpretations of the Civil War, which is why we must leave such interpretation to trained historians.

In order to uphold our high professional standards and to avoid conveying misinformation under the legitimacy of our brand, it is imperative that all volunteers stay within their assigned roles, follow their training, and refrain from relaying their personal opinions on history to guests** — no matter how much you have read on the subject or how strongly you believe your interpretation to be correct. As always, your supervisors are here to help you do the best job possible, so do not hesitate to ask them questions on what is and is not appropriate.

**Noncompliance of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the volunteer program.



Performance Management

Orientation & Onboarding

As a part of the training process, volunteers are required and encouraged to participate in a general agency orientation as a prerequisite to service.

On-Site Training

Volunteers will receive specific on-site training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment.

Supervision

Supervision, the formal and informal process of guiding a volunteer's activities, is the responsibility of the program in which the volunteer is placed.

Please respect staff instructions even when you are visiting as a guest and not in a volunteer capacity.

Communication & Ideas

The AHC encourages open communication between volunteer and staff. Volunteers are invited and encouraged to share their ideas and suggestions with their direct supervisor and as a backup, the volunteer manager.

Communication & Etiquette

There may be times when you will have to contact the Volunteer Department or a supervisor directly. Please be considerate with communication as a volunteer. If you know you cannot make a position that you have signed up for, contact the Volunteer Department directly unless this has been an ongoing position. If you have been given a supervisor's direct number please notify them so they are not waiting for you, especially if the position is theater related or on a specific event day. This will be important so that the position can be filled as soon as possible. Each volunteer experience will be different and have varying degrees of responsibility, therefore relationships will also vary. If you are unsure of who you need to contact, always ask first.

Dismissal

Generally, dismissal is a response to one of three areas of concern: performance problems, conduct problems, or economic problems. Performance problems generally relate to the quality of work, the quantity of work, the timeliness of the work performed, or the rate of improvement on a given work-related task. Conduct problems relate to behaviors, such as the volunteer's attendance, dependability, and generally acceptable work behaviors, such as honesty, and sobriety. Economic problems can also apply to the area of volunteerism. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, an organization that has experienced significant fiscal cuts resulting in staff lay-offs may not have a sufficient number of supervisors to facilitate the work of volunteers, or entire programs may be eliminated.

Listed below are examples of reasons that a volunteer may be corrected and/or dismissed. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, merely illustrative. Volunteers may be corrected and/or dismissed for reasons other than those listed here.

- Discourteous treatment or discussion of any other person (public, staff, or other volunteer)
- Theft
- Violation of agency policies including, but not limited to, conflict of interest and code of ethics policies
- Dishonesty about volunteer-related matters to supervisors, other volunteers, staff, clients, other agencies, or the public
- Gross misconduct
- Possession, sale, use, or being under the influence of an illegal substance, intoxicant, or alcohol while volunteering
- Neglectful or willful actions which endanger clients, staff, or other volunteers
- Failure to perform volunteer assignment or accept supervision
- Insubordination



Accountability

Attendance

Volunteers are expected to be punctual and reliable. Volunteers are asked to call their supervisors and to provide as much notice as possible when unable to fulfill their commitment to serve as scheduled or when they will be unavoidably delayed for a shift.

Signing in and out

Volunteers are responsible for signing in and out every time they are on-site or complete volunteer work.

Volunteer time includes any planning, meeting, and training time involved. Accurate records are important for insurance purposes, references, and reporting organizational needs.

Group time should also be recorded. Each activity should be counted as well as any planning and/or preparation time involved.

If you are working a daytime shift and require an access badge, you may check one out at the museum admissions desk. This does not apply for volunteers who have a regular, recurring position. Please be prepared to leave a form of identification to check out the badge.

Workplace Conduct

The Atlanta History Center will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by an employee or volunteer which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

Productive Work Environment

AHC recognizes that for employees and volunteers to be most effective in their work they must work in an environment free from harassment.

Any volunteer who believes that the actions or words of a supervisor, employee or fellow volunteer constitute unwelcome harassment has a responsibility to report the incident as soon as possible to their supervisor and/or to the volunteer coordinator or designee.

If a volunteer, for any reason, is not able to follow the reporting procedure outlined above, they may contact the Chief Operating Officer at pcarriere@atlantahistorycenter.com.

All complaints of harassment are investigated promptly and confidentially. Retaliation against a volunteer who reports harassment will not be tolerated. In all cases, the volunteer is to be advised of the management's findings and conclusions. Any volunteer, employee, supervisor, or manager who is found after appropriate investigation to have engaged in harassment of another volunteer or employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Volunteer Concerns

It is the intent of the Atlanta History Center to be fair, equitable and consistent in the supervision and management of all volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to bring concerns regarding their work or work environment to the attention of their supervisor and/or the volunteer manager.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Information, both verbal and written, regarding intellectual material, volunteers, and employees is to be kept confidential at all times and not to be discussed with anyone other than the appropriate staff members. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the agency or other corrective action.

Media

We encourage volunteers to share our mission! "Like Us" and "Follow Us" on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Representation of the Agency

Volunteers are not authorized to act as a representative of the Atlanta History Center in any manner to the media, outside organizations, or to the community without consent of the organization. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from contractually obligating the Atlanta History Center in any way.

Professionalism

A volunteer's attitude toward volunteer work needs to be professional. Volunteers have made a commitment to the assigned work, to those who direct them in the program, to colleagues, and to all guests.

Safety

Volunteers should consult with their program regarding specific procedures for reporting accidents.

Drug Free Workplace

All volunteers are forbidden to use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs at any time during their shift or anywhere in the workplace. Volunteers are also forbidden to engage in any sale or other transaction involving illegal drugs on the agency's premises. Violators will be subject to immediate dismissal. In addition, any volunteer under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the site or arrested on a drug-related matter outside of working a shift will be subject to immediate dismissal.

Legal Drugs

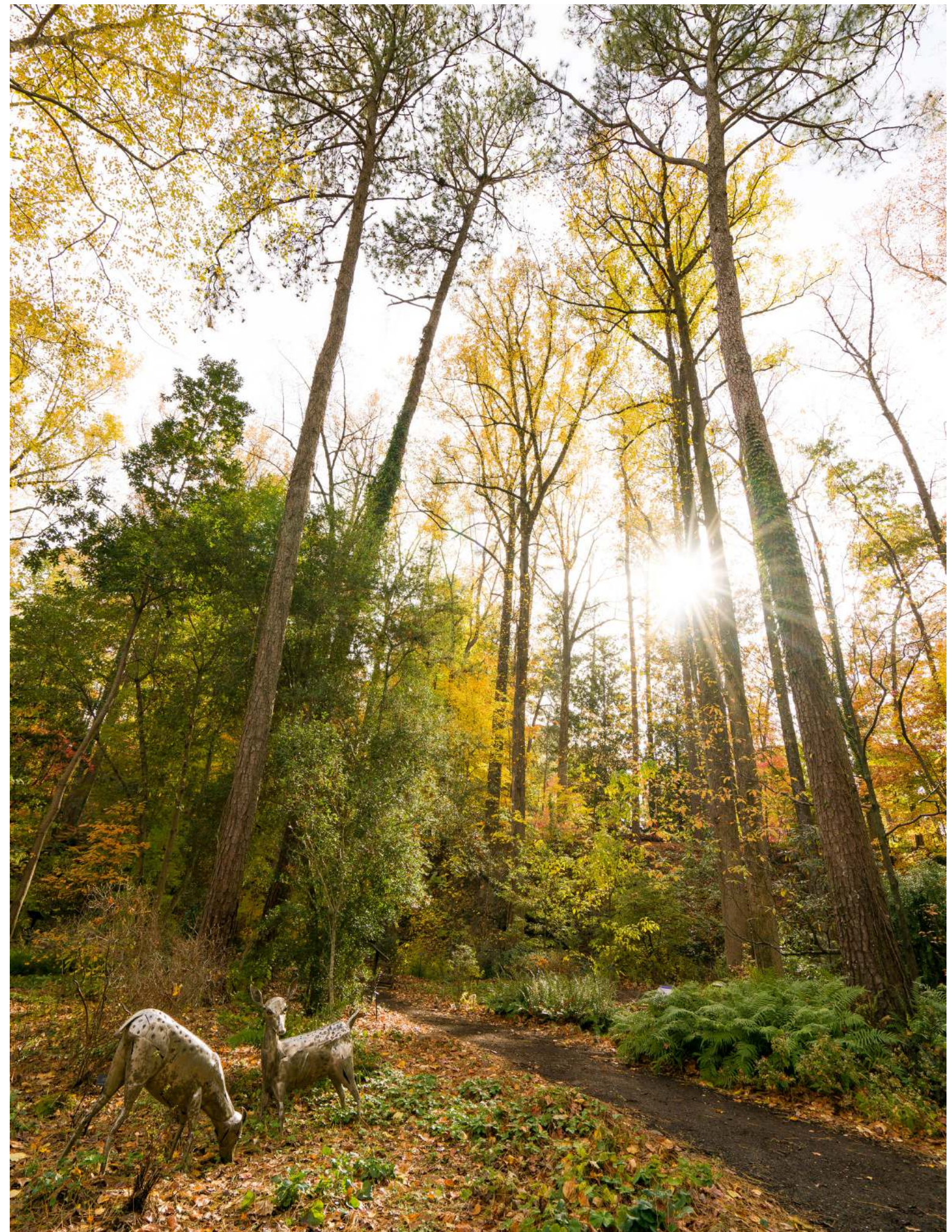
Legal drugs include any medication or drug which is prescribed to a volunteer by a licensed physician and over the counter drugs which have been legally obtained and which are being used for the purpose for which they were prescribed or manufactured.

Illegal Drugs

Illegal drugs are defined as drugs prohibited by Federal, State, or local law, or prescription drugs being used by a person other than for whom they were prescribed.

Alcohol

Possession and / or consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol in or on the grounds of the office, property, vehicle, or workplace of the corporation while engaged in business for AHC is prohibited.



We value and appreciate our volunteers and their many various contributions to the Atlanta History Center and its programs. It is our pleasure to offer the following benefits for our active volunteers as a thank you for your hard work!

We hope your adventure volunteering with Atlanta History Center is a successful, educational, and enjoyable experience. We are thankful you have chosen to spend your time with us!

If you are unsure if you qualify for any of the following benefits, or if you have questions, please contact the Volunteer Manager.

General Admission

All active or in-training volunteers can visit the museum during regular business hours free of charge. This offer is only available to the individual volunteer. Any additional guests will need to purchase general admission tickets. When you visit please check in at the museum admissions desk with a photo ID to receive admission to the museum and grounds.

Events and Programs

Any volunteer actively working an event or program may enjoy that program for free once your tasks and responsibilities are complete and you are signed out.

If you are not working a program or event, but would like to attend, you may receive membership pricing on tickets. This is only available to active volunteers. To redeem, you must contact the Guest Experience Lead Associate no later than 72 hours prior to the event with your name and a phone number with which to reach you.

You may contact Guest Experience Lead, Anna, Wheeler at awilliams@atlantahistorycenter.com, or 404.814.4030.

Guest Passes

For our truly exemplary volunteers we will grant two individual guest passes when the following conditions have been met:

1. You have been an active volunteer for a minimum of one year, or
2. You have completed at least 25 hours of volunteer work in the past year.

Passes are good for one year and are redeemable for one general admission ticket.

References

Upon request, references are provided for volunteers in good standing.

Tax Deductions

Income tax deductions may be available for certain aspects of volunteer service. Tax advisors or the Internal Revenue Service should be contacted for specific details.

[Volunteer Services](#)
VolunteerServices
@atlantahistorycenter.com
404.814.4053

[Margaret Mitchell House](#)
404.249.7015

[AHC Museum Shop](#)
404.814.4075

[Protective Services](#)
404.814.4171

[Kenan Research Center](#)
404.814.4040

[Swan Coach House](#)
404.261.0636

[AHC Weather Line](#)
404.814.4026

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