

Strategic Priorities for Volunteer Engagement

Planning Process

The strategic planning process began with a full-day retreat in November 2023 with staff and volunteer representatives from different departments at the DAM. Participants reviewed the results from the August 2023 volunteer engagement survey and the 2019-2023 Volunteer Engagement Strategic Plan and the DAM's new Strategic Framework. In several small group environments staff and volunteers identified key priorities, goals, and objectives for our updated Volunteer Engagement Strategic Priorities.

Following the retreat, participants worked in sub-groups to finalize and fine tune relevant goals and objectives. The two strategic priorities that have resulted will serve as a road map to DAM achieving its vision for volunteer engagement over the coming three years.

Vision for Volunteer Engagement

Staff and volunteers working collaboratively to unlock the power of art and inspire creativity.

DAM's Strategic Framework

Key Strategies

1. Take great care of our people, campus and collections.
2. Tell stories that are important to the community, our culture, the field and our future.
3. Cultivate a welcoming environment for people of diverse backgrounds, abilities and perspectives.
4. Align our resources in ways that enhance sustainability.

2024-2027 Volunteer Engagement Priorities

1. Strengthen working relationships between staff and volunteers to create greater understanding, respect, and impact in our work together.

Training

- A. Develop and implement training and resources for staff liaisons on how to work with volunteers.
 - **Action Item:** Create and implement (6) one-hour sessions covering topics related to relationship building; designing and conducting volunteer training; giving/receiving feedback; communication; recognition and appreciation; and recruitment and

retention and do so in partnership with Learning & Engagement, Visitor Services, and Talent & Culture Resources.

- **Action Item:** Create and implement annual refresher training sessions. Include pre- and post-training assessments and follow-up discussions.
 - **Action Item:** Train and encourage staff to prepare and deliver personalized written or verbal thank you messages to volunteers about their impact at the DAM.
 - **Action Items:** Promote Way to Go and Way to Joe programs. Organize card writing activities for staff annually.
- B. Develop and share resources about working with volunteers for staff liaisons and any staff interested in working with volunteers.
- **Action Item:** Develop the resources in consultation with Marketing, Learning and Engagement, Talent & Culture.
 - **Action Item:** Identify the best places to put these resources (Pulse, LMS, etc.).
 - **Action Item:** Assess effectiveness of these resources.
- C. Develop and implement a process for staff to request new volunteers and include in training and resources.
- **Action Item:** Create a process document with accompanying tool to request new volunteers, clarifying whether the need is episodic, short-term, or ongoing; include physical requirements, skills required, position description, and intended impact.
 - **Action Item:** Assess effectiveness of this process annually.
- D. Implement a training program for volunteers on how to effectively give and receive feedback.
- **Action Item:** Identify learning objectives for this training. Positive and constructive feedback.
 - **Action Item:** Develop and implement the training.
 - **Action Item:** Involve small group of volunteers in the planning and delivery of training.
- E. Identify and communicate opportunities for volunteers and staff to attend the same training sessions and share resources.
- **Action Item:** Identify training and onboarding initiatives for staff that could be helpful for volunteers.
 - **Action Item:** Communicate identified opportunities through Talent LMS, Volunteer newsletters, monthly staff liaison email communication.
- F. Create opportunities for volunteers to attend staff huddles and staff to attend volunteer huddles (where relevant and appropriate). Pilot opportunities for volunteers and staff to observe each other in their respective roles.
- **Action Item:** Identify the goal of this program and determine appropriate pilot opportunities in consultation with Visitor Services, Learning & Engagement, and Talent & Culture Resources.
 - **Action Item:** Assess what works well and what adjustments can be made quarterly.
- G. Develop and implement a communication plan for volunteers and staff whose roles have overlapping expectations.
- **Action Item:** Identify all similar roles and, in collaboration with the appropriate department, clarify the differences and similarities and how each can support the other.
 - **Action Item:** Communicate the clarifications through Pulse and LMS.

Clear Expectations

- H. Annually review staff liaison position descriptions to ensure they clearly identify all volunteer-related responsibilities.
- I. Share department organization chart with volunteers at onboarding and annually.
 - **Action Item:** Create departmental specific organizational charts featuring positions (rather than names) and share with volunteers of that department.
- J. Annually revise and share with volunteers and staff a communications flow chart that includes whom to contact for common questions or situations.
 - **Action Item:** Work with the design team to create a graphic of this flow chart.
 - **Action Item:** Share in the Volunteer Handbook annually.
- K. Ensure that volunteer-related expectations are included in progress meetings with supervisors, in workplans, and in annual reviews for staff liaisons.
 - **Action Item:** Work with HR/Talent & Culture to incorporate volunteer engagement expectations in templates for workplans, annual reviews, and other related processes.
- L. Develop innovative strategies for reinforcing the expectations of volunteer roles.
 - **Action Items:** Incorporate DAM Values. Part of ongoing training. In the fall of each year, volunteers and staff in a particular area or department will review position expectations and create a rubric for volunteers to assess themselves in the middle and end of the year.
- M. Define and implement a communication plan (staff to volunteers) for each area of volunteer work.
 - **Action Items:** Create a communication plan that reinforces goals, successes, and challenges of each department that works with volunteers and implement the plans.

Idea Sharing

- N. Create opportunities for idea and resource sharing between staff liaisons.
 - **Action Item:** Establish regular meetings and a Teams channel including Volunteer Services and Staff Liaison.
 - **Action Item:** Identify goals for idea sharing.
- O. Identify opportunities for volunteers and staff with similar roles to share ideas.
 - **Action Item:** Research schedules of specific groups of volunteers and staff for appropriate gathering time and plug into existing meetings.
 - **Action Item:** Identify and share goals for sharing idea events.
 - **Action Item:** Identify and communicate goals for this initiative.
 - **Action Item:** Communicate ahead of time when volunteers will attend staff meetings and when staff will attend volunteer meetings.
- P. Invite staff to 3-4 volunteer learning or social events each year. Invite volunteers to 2-3 staff social events per year.
 - **Action Items:** Research and create joint events for artmaking or having coffee and Identify goals for these joint events.
- Q. Volunteer Services meet with staff to incorporate volunteer engagement strategic priorities in department workplans.
 - **Action Items:** Conducted March through April.
- R. Quarterly, collect reports on priority implementation progress and share with staff and volunteers.

- S. Annually collect and share qualitative and quantitative data of volunteer impact to staff, volunteers, and the board.
 - **Action Item:** Collaborate with Volunteer Advisory Panel to develop ways to collect qualitative data in different areas of volunteer work and implement those strategies.
- T. Encourage staff and volunteers working in the same spaces to introduce themselves at the beginning of their shift or tour.
 - **Action Item:** Add to Volunteer Services Pulse page, Volunteer Handbook, Huddle notes.
 - **Action Item:** Share at volunteer and staff meetings.

2. Recruit and retain a diverse workforce of volunteers.

Recruitment

- A. In collaboration with appropriate museum departments and leaders, define “diverse” (e.g., generational, BIPOC, neurodiverse) for the DAM’s volunteer engagement for the next 2-3 years.
 - **Action Item:** This would be a larger volunteer recruitment goal, but we would still determine a focus for each recruitment. Invite any potential and qualified volunteer to join the team.
- B. In collaboration with appropriate museum departments, develop and implement recruitment plans to achieve the benchmarks determined by objective 2.A and to address a specific DAM volunteer need.
 - **Action Item:** Consult with department requesting volunteers as well as marketing, administration, communications, and equity.
- C. Leverage DAM community partners to recruit for both traditional and flexible/episodic volunteer positions.
 - **Action Items:** Collaborate with Development, Learning & Engagement, Communications, and Talent & Culture to create a plan for community recruitment efforts.
- D. Develop and implement a plan to promote volunteer opportunities.
 - **Action Items:** Produce a rack card or postcard that can be handed out at the museum or at a community event for each specific recruitment. Offer paper applications at the Sales and Services desk for each recruitment.
- E. Engage current volunteers in recruitment efforts.
 - **Action Item:** Communicate recruitment plans to volunteers and ways to support the effort through Talent LMS, Volunteer Newsletters and emails.
- F. Monitor current volunteer demographics and retention rates and share with staff and volunteers in Volgistics biannually.
- G. Annually evaluate recruitment strategies and application process.

Retention

- H. Identify and implement ways to ensure a friendly and welcoming environment for new volunteers during onboarding, training, and ongoing work.
 - **Action Item:** Engage current volunteers in this work. Create a small working group for each recruitment to plan activities.
- I. Annually evaluate the onboarding and training program for each volunteer area to ensure effectiveness, inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability.
- J. Develop and implement a system to check in with new volunteers about their experiences.
 - **Action Items:** Engage volunteer help with this.
- K. Invite and encourage all volunteers leaving the DAM to complete the Exit survey.

- **Action Item:** Assess Exit Survey annually for effectiveness each August.
- L. Create a museum membership program for volunteers to lessen the financial barrier to volunteering at the DAM.
 - **Action Item:** Meet with Marketing and Communications as well as Membership to talk about options.
- M. Identify and implement new volunteer roles that offer flexibility and the opportunity to share unique skills.
 - **Action Item:** Work with various departments to identify new roles and pay particular attention to the times of the volunteer assignments. Weekend and evening hours will attract working volunteers.
 - **Action Item:** Identify and implement episodic volunteer roles and determine the requirements for these roles quarterly.