

Chicago Architecture Biennial 2017

Position Description:

Volunteer

Reports to:

Brenda Lara and Julie Rosenberg, CAB Volunteer & Tour Coordinators (main)
Project Manager of Visitor Experience & Volunteers

Training Required:

Completion of preparatory reading materials and optional walk-through with Volunteer & Tour Coordinators

[Sign-up to volunteer here](#)

Chicago Architecture Biennial Overview

The second edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB) is the largest architecture and design exhibition in North America, showcasing the transformative global impact of creativity and innovation in these fields. This year's Biennial features over 141 practitioners from more than 20 countries addressing the 2017 theme "Make New History." Artistic Directors Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee have selected architects and artists whose eye-opening creations will invite the public to explore how the latest architecture can and will make new history in places around the world. The main exhibition is free and open to the public from September 16, 2017 through January 7, 2018.

CAB is hosted by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events at the historic Chicago Cultural Center. The Biennial is also a city-wide platform that serves citizens and invites visitors to explore Chicago. It includes extensive programs; education sessions serving 15,000 young people; and free tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed SC Johnson headquarters in Racine, Wisconsin.

The *Make New History* exhibition extends to off-site locations and is amplified through six community anchor exhibitions in Chicago's neighborhoods and two special project sites – plus installations, performances, talks, films, and more hosted by over 100 local and global cultural partners.

Volunteer Summary

Chicago Architecture Biennial volunteers will welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Chicago Cultural Center and community anchor sites from September 16 – January 7. Volunteers will interact with visitors from Chicago and around the world—many traveling specifically for the Chicago Architecture Biennial and visiting the Chicago Cultural Center for the first time. Volunteers do not need to be architecture experts or tour guides to get involved. A variety of volunteer roles and shifts with varying responsibilities are available including Greeters, Exhibition Guides, and Program/Event Hosts.

Volunteers will be able to schedule their own shifts through an online system, link provided after registration.

Volunteers for the Chicago Architecture Biennial will be required to:

- Spend 1-2 shifts on their feet (with time for occasional breaks)
- Interact with all visitors in a friendly and professional manner
- Be comfortable approaching and/or being approached by groups/individuals of all backgrounds
- Have strong communication skills and the ability to talk to large groups
- Be flexible and willing to assist in a variety of roles and adapt to change
- Be 18 or older

It is also helpful (but not required) if volunteers have:

- Some background knowledge of architecture, design and art
- Strong knowledge of Chicago (geography, history, architecture)
- Experience as a tour guide
- Fluency in languages other than English

Volunteer Roles

Prospective volunteers will be able to sign up for one of three basic volunteer roles and select shifts within the Biennial's predetermined shift schedules. Each role operates on a slightly different schedule and includes varying responsibilities.

Greeter

Greeters will be stationed at strategic entry points and informational areas within the Chicago Cultural Center and act as ambassadors of the Chicago Architecture Biennial. Prepared as logistical/geographic experts, Greeters will welcome locals and tourists to the building and introduce them to the Biennial. The primary objective of this role is to ensure that visitors entering the building understand a) what the event is, b) how the event functions, c) how to guide their own experience, and D) understand what/where community anchor sites are. Greeters will orient visitors, assist with wayfinding, and answer general questions about the exhibition. Greeters are not expected to be interpretational experts or give tours of the installations in the Chicago Cultural Center. Volunteers in this position will rotate between assigned areas such as the Biennial Welcome Center, Information Kiosk, and Book Store. Each area will have its own operational procedures and volunteers will be trained to operate in each area to maximize flexibility.

Shift length: 3 hours to 3.5 hours (arrive 15 minutes before your shift)

Shift times: Mon-Fri: 10am-1pm, 1pm-4pm, 4pm-7pm

Sat-Sun: 10am-1:30pm, 1:30pm-5pm

Exhibition Guide

Exhibition Guides will be the “interpretive” experts available at the Chicago Cultural Center to guide visitors through the hundreds of 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional design installations that are the primary focus of the Chicago Architecture Biennial. Guides will be available as a) floating expert docents in popular exhibition halls to interact with guests who have questions, or b) as tour guides for daily public tours lasting 45-60 minutes or for scheduled private tours. Guides will be prepared with informational materials created by Biennial curators and the designers of the installations to provide informed responses to questions or to deliver a practiced tour.

Shift length: *Tours: 1-hour tour (arrive 30 minutes before your tour)*

Floating Docent: 3 hours to 3.5 hours (arrive 15 minutes before your shift)

Shift times: *Daily Public Tours: 11am, 2:30am, and 5:30pm + varying private tours*

Floating Docent: Mon-Fri: 10am-1pm, 1pm-4pm, 4pm-7pm

Sat-Sun: 10am-1:30pm, 1:30pm-5pm

Program/Event Host

Program Hosts and Event Hosts will provide essential support to Chicago Architecture Biennial staff at a series of programs and events (lectures, press conferences, VIP events, screenings, etc.) located at the Chicago Cultural Center and a series of community anchor sites. Program Hosts and Event Hosts will generally be stationed at a check-in table to assist with access control, collect visitor information, answer basic questions, and ensure smooth operation of programs and events—but may also help with wayfinding and orientation at some events. Program Hosts are not expected to be interpretation guides or content experts but will be prepared with some general logistical knowledge about the Biennial. Shifts for this position will be scheduled based on the Biennial’s schedule of programs and events, most of which take place in afternoons or evenings. Program and Event Hosts will be expected to arrive an hour before a program begins and stay until 30 minutes after a program ends, exact times will vary based on the event calendar.

Shift length: *Varies, usually 2-4 hours*

Shift times: *Varies, typically afternoons, evenings and weekends*

[Sign up to volunteer here](#)

Please contact volunteers@chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org with any questions