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# PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & POSITION MANAGEMENT

## Staff Roles, Responsibilities, and Communications

An organizational chart outlining the Steamtown NHS (STEA) Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) program's chain of command is included in **Appendix A**. Continue reading this section for a more in-depth overview of various roles.

### Superintendent

The superintendent ensures that STEA has a designated Volunteer Program Manager and provides overall support to maintain a safe and effective volunteer program.

### Volunteer Program Manager

The Volunteer Program Manager (VIP Manager) administers the park's volunteer program and ensures compliance with all National Park Service (NPS) VIP policies. The VIP Manager's duties are reflected in their position description. **Key responsibilities include:**

- Coordinating with park team to assess volunteer needs and identify work that can be accomplished by volunteers.
- Advising team members in the proper utilization of volunteers.
- Assisting VIP supervisors with recruitment using volunteer.gov.
- Maintaining volunteer records and service descriptions.
- Coordinating formal recognition events.
- Managing VIP program budget to procure VIP uniforms, recognition items, and supplies.
- Completing required reports and communications with national VIP program offices.
- Coordinating VIP background check requests.

### Volunteer Supervisors

VIP Supervisors are NPS employees assigned this role by their division manager. VIP supervisors are responsible for the day-to-day supervision and management of volunteers within their team. **Key responsibilities include:**

- Submitting complete and accurate volunteer paperwork to the VIP Manager, including OF-301 forms *signed* by both the volunteer and VIP Supervisor.
- Communicating VIP duties, expectations, and responsibilities to the VIP Manager.
- Conducting interviews as necessary and confirming volunteers are fit for duty.
- Providing clear direction on the volunteer's responsibilities and expectations outlined in the service description.
- Providing reasonable accommodations as needed.
- Delivering required VIP training and orientation.
- Establishing VIP schedules and communication standards.
- Issuing uniform items and ensuring adherence to uniform standards.
- Reporting any conduct issues, safety concerns, or injuries to the VIP Manager.
- Attending monthly VIP Supervisor meetings.
- Supplying content for the monthly VIP newsletter

### Secondary Volunteer Supervisor(s)

Secondary volunteer supervisors may be assigned by division managers as needed. Qualifications vary by division. In the absence of both the primary and secondary VIP Supervisors, volunteers should report to the division manager.

## **Available Volunteer Opportunities**

Refer to the organizational chart in **Appendix A** for current VIP positions at the park. To see which positions are currently accepting new volunteers, those interested should check out the park website and volunteer.gov for the most up to date information.

## **Position Management**

### **Creating New Volunteer Positions**

New VIP positions may be developed based on division needs, project availability, park priorities, and/or operational capacity.

Service descriptions (SDs) are written collaboratively between the VIP Supervisor and the VIP Manager. For single-day volunteer events, SDs may be created by the event lead, VIP Supervisor, or VIP Manager. All SDs must be approved by the VIP Manager, who will then post the opportunity on volunteer.gov for recruitment.

## **Forms and Records Management**

### **Volunteer Agreements: Signing and Renewing**

In accordance with RM-7, OF301A forms, also known as the Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) form, must be renewed annually. Volunteers shall not perform duties without a current, signed VSA on file, no exceptions.

VSA expiration dates are tracked in the FY VIP Hours Spreadsheet on Steamtown's Volunteer SharePoint (Reporting > Hours). VIP Supervisors are responsible for checking this sheet to ensure that their VIPs have up-to-date VSAs; new forms must be obtained from volunteers prior to expiration.

Upon receiving a VSA, the VIP Supervisor must sign as the government representative. Unsigned forms are invalid and void federal workers' compensation coverage. Completed forms are submitted to the VIP Manager for secure filing.

The VIP Manager may assist with renewal outreach as needed, but supervisors remain primarily responsible for ensuring compliance.

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# **TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS**

## **Vulnerable Populations**

### **Minors**

Minors can volunteer at STEA with consent from a parent/guardian through a signed VSA. While volunteering, all minor VIPs will be placed in group work settings or in public spaces. Supervisors who wish to use minor volunteers outside of these parameters must consult with the VIP Manager.

### **Court-Ordered Community Service**

Individuals convicted of minor crimes who are participating in court-approved probation can serve as volunteers at the discretion of the Park Superintendent. No person who has been convicted of any violent crime, crime against persons, or crimes involving the use of a weapon shall be allowed to volunteer.

### **Older and Disabled Volunteers**

No volunteer shall be discriminated against based on age or ability. Any reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure older and disabled volunteers can begin and/or continue their volunteer service.

Volunteers must be “fit for duty”, which means they meet the health and physical demands of the position they are volunteering in. If there is a question regarding the volunteer’s ability to perform the assigned duties, the VIP Supervisor may request that they complete a Self-Identification of Medical Disability form (SF-256), request a doctor’s note (doctor’s medical clearance form) or obtain a medical examination at the government’s expense.

## **NPS Employees**

### **NPS Employees as Volunteers**

An NPS employee can serve as a volunteer if the duties they perform as a volunteer are not the same for which they are paid in the same NPS unit.

Individuals should never be signed up as VIPs simply to attend training required for a position for which they will be paid. Employees waiting for background investigation clearance must not serve as a volunteer in the same role for which they’re being considered for paid work.

### **Family Members of NPS Employees**

Relatives of NPS employees may serve as volunteers if they are qualified and fit for duty for the position. However, the volunteer position may not be supervised by an immediate family member without consulting DOI’s ethics standards or an ethics counselor.

Family members must never be signed up for the sole purpose of being permitted to use government equipment, such as driving or riding in government vehicles or borrowing landscape or recreational equipment.

### **Volunteers with Partner Organizations**

At Steamtown, employees and volunteers may volunteer with partner organizations. Note that volunteers must wear the appropriate uniform items for the position they are currently volunteering in and only count hours towards that organization.

This means that NPS VIP's must not wear Iron Horse Society or other non-uniform ballcaps and t-shirts while recording volunteer hours at Steamtown. Additionally, any volunteers on-site who are not recording NPS VIP hours must not wear any NPS volunteer uniform items.

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# **RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING PROCESS**

## **Recruitment**

Most positions are advertised on Volunteer.gov, but recruitment may also occur through community outreach, word of mouth, educational partnerships, special events, etc. The park also typically attends the University of Scranton's volunteer and service fair each fall.

## **Interviews, Reference Checks, and Selection**

VIP Supervisors may interview prospective VIPs to evaluate interest, skill level, ability, and suitability for the position. References may also be checked. For positions involving youth interaction or access to government computers, a background check is required, which the VIP Manager assists with.

## **Background Checks**

Certain volunteer positions at Steamtown require a federal background check due to the nature of their duties.

VIPs selected for these positions will be notified during onboarding and must complete all required forms, fingerprinting, and identity verification steps. The background check process can take several weeks, and volunteers may not begin duties requiring clearance until the investigation has been favorably adjudicated. Supervisors should plan accordingly and ensure that alternative duties or start dates are communicated clearly.

## **Drug Testing**

VIPs in safety sensitive testing may be required to

## **Onboarding**

Before beginning service, volunteers must:

- Attend a site orientation, provided by their VIP supervisor or another NPS employee
  - Review the Position Description and Job Safety Analysis with the VIP supervisor
  - Be provided a uniform and any personal protective equipment for the position
  - Complete all park paperwork, including signing an OF301a or OF301b Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA)
-

# ORIENTATION & TRAINING

## Orientation

VIP Supervisors must ensure that all volunteers receive a basic orientation that includes:

- Brief introduction to NPS mission and park purpose
- Overview of STEA's operations and visitor experience
- Review of relevant policies, safety requirements, and expectations; this includes Local Policy and Code of Conduct documents
- Tour of primary work areas
- Introduction to staff and VIPs in relevant work areas
- Explanation of emergency procedures

Orientation may be delivered individually or in groups, depending on program needs. Event based volunteers receive a brief orientation as a group before starting the project.

## Volunteer Training

Training requirements vary depending on the VIP's service description. Some positions, like those in rail operations, have required annual training, whereas other divisions may be more flexible. However, across all divisions, VIP Supervisors are responsible for ensuring volunteers receive:

- ALL trainings and certifications required for NPS employees completing the same duties
- Safety training appropriate to their duties
- Position-specific instruction and demonstration
- Training on equipment, tools, or technology used while volunteering
- Periodic refreshers or updates when policies or procedures change

**Volunteers must not perform duties for which they have not been trained.**

Throughout the year, the park may offer classroom, virtual, and other training opportunities to NPS staff members. Whenever possible, these training sessions should be open to volunteers.

## Documentation

VIP Supervisors must track all training by volunteers. These hours are also logged on the FY## Hours Tracking sheet for the current fiscal year. Training hours should be listed for each individual VIP who attended the training under the "admin" category.

## Drug Testing

In addition to annual required training, certain positions may include randomized drug testing. Volunteers in these roles will be briefed on testing procedures and expectations when beginning their VIP service. Compliance with all testing requirements is mandatory to occupy or retain a safety-sensitive volunteer position.

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# UNIFORMS & APPEARANCE

## Uniform, Wear Standards, & VIP Insignia

### General Standards

- Uniforms must be clean, serviceable, and worn as intended. Must be free from excessive wear, which includes: fraying, holes, fading, stains, missing buttons, and similar issues.
- High-visibility vest required when in the railyard (except at public crossings)
- VIPs may only wear their uniforms for official volunteer duties at STEA. **Partner organization volunteers must NOT be issued STEA VIP uniforms** if they are not signing a park VSA and logging hours on park projects
- VIPs must not wear their uniforms to engage in any political activity, or while drinking alcoholic beverages.

### Role Specific Uniform Items

Position	Required Uniform/Appearance	Footwear Requirements	Park-Issued Items
Visitor Services/ Interp	VIP polo shirt, name badge, seasonal VIP caps and beanies; shorts and skirts allowed per superintendent's compendium; pants/shorts must be tan, khaki, brown, or black	Close-toed shoes; safety boots optional for shop tours (park provided)	Polo shirts, VIP patch, nametag, caps, cold-weather gear
Curatorial Crusader	VIP polo shirt, name badge, seasonal VIP caps and beanie; pants must be sturdy slacks or jeans with no rips	Close-toed shoes	Same as above
Engineer/ Fireman	Pin-striped or blue bib overalls and jacket, pin-striped or blue cap, denim shirt, bandana, hi-vis cuffs, name tag	Steel/composite toed boots	Full engineer uniform set, inc. boots
Conductor	Black conductor hat, white short-sleeve button up, black tie, black trousers/belt, black conductor coat, black vest; approved pins/patches only	Steel/composite toed boots	Conductor hat, coat, shirt
Trainman	VIP cap, white shirt, black tie, black trousers/belt; approved pins/patches only	Close toed shoes	VIP cap, shirt
Loco Shop	Natural-fiber work clothing; no graphic tees or synthetics	Steel/composite toed boots	Overalls and boots, if needed
Facilities/ Event VIPs	Durable work clothing appropriate to task	Close toe shoes, boots as required	PPE as needed

**Iron Horse Society VIPs**

Steamtown VIPs are encouraged to donate time to the Iron Horse Society, Steamtown's philanthropic partner. However, VIPs must not wear Iron Horse Uniform items (hats, shirts, ect.) while logging volunteer hours for STEA.

**Management and Disposal**

Turn in worn uniform parts to the VIP Manager for replacement.

VIPs who terminate their service for any reason may keep their polo shirts and caps. Everything else (winter wear, sweaters, etc.) must be returned

## **LIMITED LIABILITY & PROPERTY**

### **Use of Personal Equipment and Vehicles**

Volunteers should use government equipment, when possible, in the performance of their official duties. VIPs who use their personal equipment by choice are not protected in the case of damage or theft.

In the rare circumstance that a VIP is required by her or his supervisor to use personal equipment, that requirement must be explicitly written into the position description. Only then is that equipment covered in the case of damage or theft while that volunteer is using it to perform their volunteer duties.

### **Use of Government Equipment and Vehicles**

VIPs are authorized to operate government-owned vehicles (GOV) for official duties, as needed, as long as it is specified in their position description. Any volunteer whose official tour of duty includes GOV use must receive appropriate orientation and training on applicable fleet procedures.

Volunteers are responsible for reporting any situation that might alter their authorization status or their ability to operate a government- owned vehicle.

### **Limited Liability**

Volunteers are considered federal employees for the purposes of tort claims and workers' compensation when acting within the scope of their assigned duties and under a current, signed VSA.

Volunteers must follow all training, instructions, and safety guidance. Actions performed outside of assigned duties, listed in the position description, are not covered.

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## **REIMBURSEMENTS**

Monetary reimbursement is an exception that does not occur for routine volunteer activities at Steamtown. Mileage and other expenses incurred as a VIP may be tax deductible, and the VIP Manager is happy to provide necessary forms at the volunteer's request.

In very rare cases, VIPs may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. Reimbursement will be handled on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the VIP Manager and the Superintendent. Most always, volunteers will not be reimbursed for food or hotel stays.

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## **HOUSING**

There is no housing available at Steamtown for volunteers.

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## RECOGNITION & AWARDS

Volunteers are essential to STEA's mission. Recognition efforts are both formal and informal and are meant to ensure volunteers feel valued and motivated to continue contributing their time to the park.

### Complimentary Ticket Policy

Volunteers can request up to 4 comp tickets per year for any of the park's excursions or holiday events. VIPs must contact their VIP Supervisor for tickets.

### Recognition Events

Each fall/early winter, the STEA VIP Program organizes an annual volunteer recognition event. Historically, this has been a volunteer dinner, at no cost to the VIPs. At the event, certificates with hours served are given out to VIPs, along with any recognition items and awards (listed below).

### Awards and Items

#### Hour Based Awards

These awards recognize volunteers based on cumulative hours of service. Each level will also receive items listed at the previous tier.

0+ Hours: Thank-you message from VIP Program Manager and Certificate of Appreciation

- Days of Service VIPs will receive a VIP branded appreciation item (i.e. sticker, water bottle)

25+ Hours: VIP sticker, pin, or patch

50+ Hours: Feature in VIP e-newsletter (*with permission*)

100+ Hours: Steamtown-branded appreciation item

250+ **Career** Hours: Eligibility for America the Beautiful Volunteer Pass (Annual), refer to RM-7 for additional details

#### Service Awards

These awards highlight individual and team contributions to Steamtown NHS and will receive a crystal plaque at the Annual Recognition Event in November. VIP supervisors are responsible for submitting nominations, awards, or service hour milestones for their VIPs. Awards may include, but are not limited to:

- *Outstanding Service Award*: volunteer with most hours per team
- *Rookie of the Year Award*: recognizes a first-year VIP who has made a significant impact in their role
- *Rising Star Award*: Recognizes a VIP under 25 who has demonstrated enthusiasm, leadership, and commitment to STEA's mission.
- *Safety Ambassador Award*: Recognizes a VIP who exemplifies safety awareness and best practices in their role
- *Lifetime Achievement Award*: Recognizes a VIP with 20+ years of service
  - Selection criteria includes: long-term commitment, leadership, impact on park operations, and mentorship of fellow VIPs

#### Special Recognition Awards

At the discretion of park staff, special certificates may be awarded to individuals or teams who have made unique contributions. Previous examples include:

- Volunteers who assisted with Heritage Express operations

- Volunteers who contributed to a specific restoration project
- Volunteers who played a key role in coordinating large-scale events (e.g., Boy Scout Camporee)

**NPS Excellence in Volunteerism Awards**

The Excellence in Volunteerism Award recognizes outstanding contributions by volunteers at a regional and national level. Submissions typically begin in January, which the VIP Manager will bring up at the following monthly VIP supervisors meeting. VIP Supervisors are responsible for naming any of their VIPs they would like to nominate for an award. The VIP Manager will submit the official nomination, working with their VIP Supervisor for any necessary information.

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## EVALUATION & TERMINATION OF SERVICE

### Performance and Conduct Management

VIP supervisors are responsible for establishing expectations for conduct, communication, attendance, and job performance. Expectations must align with the volunteer's service description.

When issues arise, such as violations to the Code of Conduct, VIP supervisors must:

1. Address the issue promptly and privately
2. Clarify expectations and potential impacts
3. **Document** the discussion
4. Notify the VIP Manager if any further action is required

### Termination Process

If, at any point, a volunteer decides to end involvement as a park volunteer, they should notify the VIP Manager who will terminate his/her Volunteer Services Agreement. The NPS also has the right to terminate the agreement if a VIP is not able to successfully perform the assigned responsibilities or respectfully represent the National Park Service.

When a VIP leaves the park, they receive an exit interview survey. The responses of this survey are used to improve STEA's volunteer program.

### Park-Initiated Termination

Volunteers may be removed on a case-by-case basis. When a VIP is terminated for conduct or performance issues, a termination letter should be issued explaining the reasons for termination, including a signature line for the volunteer to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

The VIP Supervisor must email the VIP Manager to notify them of the termination, and the reason. The VIP Manager then places a note in the volunteer's file explaining why the volunteer was terminated, and the file should be kept for at least three years. The return of any park uniform items should be facilitated as part of the process.

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# **RISK MANAGEMENT**

## **Risk Analyses and Assessments**

- Volunteer supervisors are responsible for conducting risk analyses and assessments for volunteer activities and providing the results to VIPs.
- Staff will use the JSA Job Builder to complete JSAs for VIP tasks
- JSAs for specific tasks will be provided to the VIP prior to performing that task.

## **Nature of Volunteering in a Railyard**

Steamtown NHS is in an active railyard. VIPs should expect trains to move anywhere at any time.

## **Risk Prevention**

### **General Safety Requirements**

Safety is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers. VIPs must:

- Receive and follow all JSA's relevant to their duties
- Use required PPE
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions, or near-misses to their VIP supervisor
- Follow NPS staff instructions and park safety protocols

## **Emergency Management**

Any injury, accident, near miss, or unsafe situation must be reported immediately to their VIP supervisor.

If a VIP suffers an on-the-job injury and desires to file a claim for compensation, they should contact their volunteer supervisor. The VIP supervisor is responsible for helping the VIP obtain and complete the proper forms and must certify the authenticity of the claim.

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# Appendix A

## VIP Organizational Structure

Updated 06/25/2025

### Steamtown National Historic Site Volunteer In Parks Program Organizational Structure

