

experience  
**Colorado Springs**<sup>®</sup>

Convention and Visitors Bureau

**About Our Organization**

The Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (Bureau) was established as a private, non-profit corporation in January 1980.

**Mission Statement**

We Bring the World to Colorado Springs.

**Equal Opportunity**

The Colorado Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (Bureau) is an equal employment opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law.

**Funding**

The Bureau receives approximately 80% of its funding from a 2% bed tax and a 1% car tax administered by the City of Colorado Springs. The remaining 20% of our budget comes from private revenue sources such as membership, advertising, product sales and services.

**Visitor Services**

The Visitor Information Center (VIC) manages tourist information and services including:

- \*Staffing the downtown Visitor Information Center
- \*Handling visitor inquiries: walk-ins, requests by phone, FAX, e-mail and the internet
- \*Compiling monthly and yearly visitor statistics
- \*Tracking results of marketing promotions.
- \*Promoting our member organizations.

**VIC Stats for 2009**

Visitors to VIC – 33,765

Internet, mail & telephone inquiries – 108,616

Total hours of volunteer service – 3,433.05

**Volunteer Responsibilities**

- \*Staffing the VIC front desk and assisting visitors with information, giving directions and answering their questions
- \*Attending site visits to member properties
- \*Answering telephone inquiries
- \*Preparing informational packets and meeting materials
- \*Assisting with special mailing projects.

**Time Commitment**

Each volunteer is asked to contribute four and a quarter (4.25) hours of service each week.

In addition, volunteers are requested to attend informational meetings to receive updates on VIC and CVB operations and activities.

## **Volunteer Benefits**

- \*Complimentary name tag
- \*Training and orientation provided
- \*Annual attractions pass
- \*Opportunities to tour member properties
- \*Invitation to members-only events
- \*Expand your knowledge of our community and all it has to offer
- \*Two major event per year in honor of ECS Volunteers
- \*Volunteers are eligible for a 20% discount on all merchandise sold in the VIC gift shop

## **Job Description**

Staff the Visitors Information Center for Experience Colorado Springs. Greet visitors and assist them with dining, accommodations, and entertainment in the city and surrounding area; keeping in mind our mission of promoting members of ECS. Become familiar with the general history of Colorado Springs and the attractions of interest to most visitors.

There are additional opportunities to assist other departments with special projects.

Qualifications: Applicants should have a friendly and courteous manner, and a professional appearance; be generally familiar with the city and area; be willing to learn detailed information about attractions, hotels, dining and events; be able to give clear and concise directions; and be available for initial and on going training.

Shift Requirements: Applicants should be available to work a four and a quarter-hour weekday shift. A minimum six-month commitment to the program is expected.

## **Recruiting and Orientation**

Applicants will be asked to complete an application and schedule an interview with the Director of Visitor Services. Orientation will include an introduction to the ECS staff, the basic materials used to assist visitors and the VIC operation. Every effort will be made to ensure a good match between the volunteer and the placement. Note: Current volunteers are encouraged to refer new applicants, keeping the above qualifications in mind. Interested persons should be referred to the Director.

## **Communications**

News bulletins will be distributed to all current volunteers when deemed necessary.

## **Volunteer List**

The volunteer list will ***NOT*** be shared with any other entity. If any organization or event wishes to solicit help from the ECS volunteer staff, such requests will be directed to the Director, who will then contact the volunteers to determine their interest and availability. Copies of the volunteer list are provided to volunteers for personal (non-commercial) use.

## **PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

### **Identification Badges and Dress Code**

Volunteers are asked to wear identification badges whenever they are representing ECS.

Dressing in a professional manner at all times is expected. Memorial Day through Labor Day volunteers are requested to wear shirts with the Experience Colorado Springs logo embroidered on them and khaki slacks, skirts (ladies only, please) or knee-length shorts.

### **Food and Beverages**

Volunteers are busy people who do a lot of talking, so feel free to keep something to drink ***out of sight*** in the volunteer desk area. ECS has a coffee maker, refrigerator and microwave for your use in the kitchen. We ask that everyone using one of the kitchen cups please put it in the dishwasher after your shift. Because visitors may hesitate to interrupt someone enjoying a "meal", please stash and enjoy snacks out of sight of the visitors.

**Smoking**

No smoking is permitted on Bureau premises.

**Volunteer Status Designation**

To be considered “active”, the volunteer must work at least once a month, i.e. be assigned and work 70 hours per year on a regularly scheduled shift, OR work 45 hours per year as a substitute or assist with a special project.

**Temporary Leave Status**

This designation will be used for volunteers whose temporary absence is due to extended vacations, illnesses, or other circumstances that keep them from working once a month. In this category, the volunteer expects to return to “active” status within a reasonably short time.

**Inactive Status**

This designation will be assigned when a volunteer cannot maintain active or temporary leave status.

**Shift Assignments**

Shifts are assigned on a space-available basis. If the volunteer is not able to work a scheduled shift, they are asked to arrange for a substitute to cover that shift. In the event that your shift falls on a major holiday in which the center is open, you are **NOT** expected to work your assigned shift; those days are covered by paid staff. Requests for changes in shift/times should be made through the Director. Every effort will be made to accommodate changes.

**Holidays:**

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday  
President's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Veterans Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Friday after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Eve Day  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Eve

When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed as the holiday. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as the holiday unless otherwise announced by the President and CEO.

**Shift Procedures**

- \*Be approachable. Smile and greet visitors as they approach our counter.  
Ask if you could start them out with one of our comprehensive Visitor Guides and encourage them to sign our guest register.
- \*Keep work and visitor area neat and fill brochure displays if necessary.
- \*Occasionally go through the resource material; it is a good way to remind yourself of what is available.
- \*Read brochures; each attraction, accommodation or restaurant has spent marketing dollars describing their facility. You may learn new “one-liners” to pass along to the visitors.
- \*At the end of your shift record your hours on the volunteer hours sheet.

## **Security**

Because the cash drawer and retail merchandise are within easy reach, it is very important that the VIC be covered at all times. Should it be necessary for you to leave the area, please call a staff member to cover while you are absent.

## **Safety**

The personal health and safety of each volunteer is of primary importance. Aisles, exits, stairways, and electrical switchboards must be kept clear at all times. Water and other spills must be cleaned up immediately as spills can cause slipping hazards. Chairs, boxes, tables, etc. should never be used as step-ladders. Any unfamiliar odors or malfunctions in the ventilation or exhaust systems should be reported immediately. Volunteers should not lift or carry heavy objects; they should seek assistance or use dollies.

If at anytime you feel uncomfortable with a situation or person, call a staff member. If the situation cannot be diffused, leave the area at once and a **911** call will be placed by a staff member

## **Unacceptable Behaviors or Violations**

The following list, which is not all-inclusive, defines unacceptable behaviors or violations of policy.

- Committing acts that affect the safety of the employee, other employees or visitors.
- Possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia or other illegal substances during working hours or reporting to work under the influence of illegal drugs, improper use of medication or alcohol.
- Disorderly or other inappropriate conduct reflecting negatively on the Bureau.
- Dishonesty in the performance of duties.
- Willful destruction or damage of the Bureau's property. Unauthorized removal of another employee's property or the Bureau's property.
- Possession of firearms, fireworks or explosives on the Bureau's property.
- Remarks, slurs or jokes relating to sex, religion, age, disability, national or ethnic origin, race or color, or the use of abusive, threatening or obscene language.
- Physical or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers, or visitors.
- Disregard of Bureau's policies and procedures.
- Conviction of any felony or misdemeanor which substantially relates to the circumstances of an employee's job.
- Insubordination.
- Sabotage, undermining the efforts of the Bureau, a supervisor or other Bureau staff/volunteers.

## **Anti-harassment Policy**

The Bureau is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital status, or disability. Workplace and sexual harassment may violate one or more of the following:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Age Discrimination Employment Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Civil Rights Act of 1991

All Bureau employees, volunteers and Board members are responsible for helping assure that the Bureau is kept free of unlawful harassment. If an employee feels that he or she has experienced or witnessed harassment, they are to notify immediately the Chief Financial Officer. The Bureau's policy is to investigate all such complaints appropriately and promptly. If an investigation confirms that unlawful harassment has occurred, the Bureau will take disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The Executive Committee of the Board will investigate and resolve complaints of harassment perpetrated by a member of the Board.

### **VIC Kiosk**

Familiarize yourself with the VIC Kiosk. This is a valuable tool when assisting visitors with information. In addition to a brief description of the member, visitors can frequently use the direct telephone connection to make reservations.

### **ECS Website**

Get to know “your” website. The ECS website is [www.VisitCOS.com](http://www.VisitCOS.com) and provides a wealth of information for both visitors and locals.

### **Recommendations**

As you will discover during training, you will often be asked by visitors to make a “personal” recommendation. **REMEMBER THE MEMBERS**. Because this is a membership organization, we cannot recommend one member over another. Show the visitor the guide and direct them to the brochures so they can make their own choices. (Frequently our members do a little “secret shopping”, pretending to be visitors to see if their particular property is mentioned or recommended.) You may, and should, ask the visitor for more detail on what they need and their geographical preference, then show them all the members meeting their criteria.

### **Inclement Weather**

Should ECS be closed because of inclement weather, you will be notified as early as possible prior to your shift. The Bureau now has a snow line that you can call to confirm that our office is open; 685-SNOW (7609 please note the third digit is a zero not the letter O). You are a “volunteer”; you are not required to travel from your home to work your shift if driving conditions are unsafe. Please let us know if you are not planning to come in.

### **Medical Emergencies**

If there is any doubt about the gravity of a visitor’s condition, check with a member of their party and then call **911** if necessary.

If it is a minor situation (i.e., scraped knee, cut finger, feeling faint, etc.) check on them and offer appropriate assistance (cold compress, a chair). Offer basic items from the First Aid Kit that is kept in the storeroom, but let them apply it. If a child is ill or injured, have the parent make the decision about whether to seek emergency assistance. Refrain from offering **any** medication, including aspirin.

If an injury requiring medical attention occurs on our property, call a staff member, who will then gather information to submit to the CFO.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Be prepared to answer visitors’ questions or, at the very least, refer them to someone who might be able to assist them.

**“Is Colorado Springs safe?”** Possible answer: “Use common sense safety rules here as you would in any city with a population of approximately 500,000; we have good security in areas frequented by visitors; I feel safe here.”

**“What is there to do here?”** Possible answer: “We have 50 major attractions and 19 museums within a 50-mile radius; hiking; theatre, music; what are some of your interests?”

**“What is there to do on a rainy or snowy day?”** Offer the “Rainy/Snowy Day” list from the VIC file cabinet.

**“What is there for kids to do?”** Offer the “Kid Stuff” or “Teen Stuff” list from the VIC file cabinet.

**“Where is the nearest drugstore? Mall? Supermarket? Post office?”**

**“My son, daughter, niece, nephew ... is doing a report on Colorado; do you have any information?”** Offer the “Colorado Springs School Packet” and any other information you feel is pertinent.

**“I am in need of temporary assistance with food, shelter, etc.”** Refer them to Ecumenical Social Ministries or the Salvation Army New Hope Shelter (addresses and phone numbers are in the card file).

**“I need several copies of the visitors guide for ... wedding, conference, convention, family reunion, etc.”** We have several departments that specialize in any of the above; if you cannot discern which department should handle the request, call any VIC staff member.

### **How to Handle Visitor Criticism**

Fortunately, most visitors are here to have a great time and experience our beautiful community; however, there may be situations where volunteers will encounter negative criticism from visitors.

If you receive a complaint, try to remain sympathetic but objective. Tell the visitor you will pass their comments along and encourage them to fill out a comment card. If they insist on speaking with a staff member, call any VIC staff member (if possible, alert that staff member as to the situation so that the visitor does not have to repeat his/her complaint).

### **Service Awards**

Service awards will be presented for the number of years one has been with ECS. It has also been decided that volunteers who have not accumulated at least 70 hours of service in one year, or for substitutes, 45 hours in one year, will be placed on the inactive list. It is your responsibility to record the number of hours you work each week. The Volunteer Coordinator will send number of hours twice a year, once in June and again in December.

**Handbook revised as of January, 2010.**