

Frequently Asked Questions

We have anticipated some of the most pressing questions you will have regarding our volunteer program changes. We realize we will not have thought of everything! Please note we are scheduling information sessions, organized by your current program, to address additional questions or concerns not answered by this document. The links to sign up for the information sessions are in the Announcement email. We will record these sessions and make them available.

Do I need to take action and make a choice to continue as a Mia volunteer?

Yes, we ask that you review the choices offered in the survey we are sending on May 24 and determine what best fits with your preferences and availability in the new structure.

For CIF guides or weekend docents who volunteered primarily on Art Carts, we do not have Art Carts as a choice. Until further notice, we are placing the Art Carts on hiatus. In light of the changing situation regarding the pandemic and current staffing levels, we are unable to support the carts at this time. We ask you to consider the Cross Currents tour as a substitute for the art cart assignments. The Cross Currents tour requires the same time commitment on weekends and allows you to focus on an area of the collection with which you are familiar. If you are interested in this option, you should choose Adult/University/Multigenerational tours on the survey. To learn more about the Cross Currents tour, visit <https://ipevolunteers.org/cross-currents-tours/>

What is the name for IPE volunteers in the new program? How will we be supported by staff? How will we remain connected with each other?

Since we are merging our three volunteer programs into one, we will not use any of the former program names. Instead, we will use one name for the new volunteer program: Mia Guides. In the past, educators supported specific programs. Moving forward, Debbi Hegstrom and Kara ZumBahlen will continue to support the new program for both adult and student tours.

We understand many of you are connected with each other through your AAG, CIF, or Docent networks and social media. We will begin a Facebook account for the new guide program this summer, and we encourage you to join the new account to unify communication with each other. We will merge the three rosters into one roster for all guides and distribute that roster this fall.

Though we are changing the name for the program, your personal social networks still exist! With this program change and participation in fall training sessions, you also will meet and get to know many new people.

What happens to the councils or executive committees for the former programs? What happens to the Docent Muse and CIFocus newsletters?

We will form a Transition Council this fall for the coming year. This council will be composed of all those who are currently serving on the AAG and CIF program councils and docent executive committee, and who wish to continue to serve on the merged council.

Staff will work with the Transition Council to resolve some of the outstanding questions, such as how to merge the sunshine funds, unify the newsletters, plan future social events, form study groups, develop an honorary group for all programs, and determine the future council structure for the Mia Guide program.

I am an Art Adventure guide. Do I have to select student tours?

I am a Collection in Focus guide. Do I have to select adult tours?

I am a docent who tours both students and adults. Why must I choose only one audience?

The reasons for our program changes are outlined in the announcement email. We acknowledge this change may be hard for some. If you are weighing both options, we must emphasize our greatest need at all times is for school (PreK-12) tour guides. Think about the young learners! When selecting your audience preference, please consider all of these great reasons to tour PreK-12 students:

- Children are the future of the museum. You have an opportunity to inspire a young person to become a lifelong museum visitor.
- When you engage a student you potentially engage everyone in their sphere of influence.
- Every school tour provides a portal for learners to start having a conversation about what art means to them and what it brings to their life.
- Art connects young learners to human creativity across time and geography and encourages perspective taking and global understanding.
- Art invites students to explore emotions, relationships, and empathy.
- Each of us can learn so much from kids today! Think about every tour as a way of listening to learn from them. They are our future.
- Did we mention that school students are our largest touring audience? You will have many more opportunities to tour school groups than adults.

However, if you are an AAG who no longer wishes to tour students, then you should choose adult tours. If you are a CIF guide who would love to learn how to tour students and are available during daytime hours on a weekday, then select school tours. For those who are switching their primary audience, we will provide the appropriate training to support your shift in audience in the Fall of 2021.

In the survey form we are sending on May 24, we ask for your first choice for tour audience, and then we also provide an option for tour audience preference (I prefer giving tours to both students and adults/I prefer only giving tours to adults/I prefer only giving tours to students). If you select the preference for touring both audiences, we are unable to promise you would receive both types of tour assignments until we determine how many volunteers we have in each area. In the time of this transition to the new program, you will focus on the training for your first choice of audience (adult or student tours).

I am a docent who gives school tours. Will I be expected to give Art Adventure tours?

I am an Art Adventure guide. Will I be expected to give other types of school tours?

The answer is yes. Volunteers who sign up for student tours are expected to give any type of school tour requested during the time you are available.

As a student tour guide, you will receive assignments for Art Adventure, Highlights and other school tour topics, and possible special exhibitions. This summer, Mia staff is creating support materials for all school tours, including some new tour topics. Key ideas and suggested questions will be drafted for a core set of artworks in each tour. These materials will help support those of you learning new tours. Remember that you all already possess great experience facilitating conversations with students about art!

We will work with volunteers in the fall to build lists of additional artworks for the tour topics, so you will be able to adjust your tour for the needs of a class, to fit your knowledge base, or to substitute an artwork for something off view. It is our hope everyone will have the confidence to give new tours after completing the fall 2021 training.

Will volunteers still give public and private tours of Mia's special exhibitions?

Yes! We will continue to train volunteers to tour special exhibitions (the big seasonal exhibitions in our Target Gallery). One change will be including student tour guides in training for exhibitions we expect will be popular for school visits. The demand for school tours really depends on the level of interest schools have in the exhibition as well as the time of year the exhibition runs. If we do anticipate numerous school tours for a special exhibition, an educator will give an additional training session to focus on age-appropriate approaches to the art within the special exhibition.

For this coming fall, we will not tour *The Contemporary Print: 20 Years at Highpoint Editions*. However, we anticipate being able to offer in-person tours for the subsequent shows. We understand that many of you are interested in the Highpoint show, so we will arrange an Art Break with the curator to cover the highlights within the exhibition. We also will keep offering volunteers content training on important smaller exhibitions (e.g. Rituals and Resilience).

What is the future of virtual tours? Will I still be able to give virtual tours? Why aren't we giving virtual private tours or school tours this fall?

We are not offering in-person tours until January 12, 2022. Mia's virtual tours also will be limited. Public virtual tours (both Current Conversations and Book Tours) will be the only tours offered each month this fall. This hiatus will allow Paula Warn time to fully transfer tour scheduling into our new system. We also are discussing our fee structure for private adult tour groups (both virtual and in-person). School tours (virtual and in-person) will remain free.

We are committed to continue providing virtual tours as an option to the public, to honor Mia's commitment to accessibility. However, we need more time to determine our request guidelines and capacity for this option after we return to in-person tours. As part of that review, this summer we will survey our virtual tour guides for their interest in giving future virtual tours.

As for this fall, we need to focus on the training sessions necessary to return to in-person tours. To provide both virtual tours and a full schedule of weekly training would not be possible for staff or volunteers.

All the tour credit commitments differed between our current programs. What will be my tour credit commitment in the new program?

To align all programs within this new structure and better accommodate volunteers' needs, we will have a transition period from January through the end of June 2022. We will have a 15 to 25 tour credit range for active status for all in our transition period. We will re-evaluate the tour credit range, based on need, for fiscal year 2022-23.

When will I choose my tour day?

We will send out letters of agreement for the new program after everyone has completed the survey. Because Mia has reduced hours at least through January of 2022, we will not ask you for a tour day choice until we have more certainty on what our hours will be in the future.

What happens if I am at "sustaining status" in my current program?

We no longer will have sustaining status as an option in the new program. If you choose to stay on as a Mia guide, you will be considered to be at "active status." However, it is important to note that we will now give a tour credit range for each year. The range allows more flexibility in scheduling and better accommodates check-outs and leaves of absence.

What kind of training will I receive for giving school tours?

Mia's largest audience for tours is school groups, and we all need a refresher before returning to in-person tours in January 2022. We will offer a short course to review useful childhood development content, revisit time-tested touring techniques, and introduce new ways to engage young people in Mia's galleries, using an anti-racist lens. We also will introduce the new tour topics we plan to offer to schools. The nature of tour experiences is changing--we would love to have you be part of this change!

Please keep in mind that Mia staff expect all tours, regardless of audience, to be learner-centered. Tours are not opportunities for tour guides to tell everything they know to any audience. Rather, they are inquiry-based and interactive experiences, designed to invite learners to bring their own experiences to the conversation. Our refresher courses for both audiences (PreK-12 and Adult/University/Multi-generational) will emphasize strategies for engaging audiences in conversations focused on their interpretations of the artworks.

What kind of training will I receive for giving adult tours?

As mentioned in the previous FAQ, we all need a refresher before returning to in-person tours in January 2022! We expect all tours, regardless of audience, to be learner-centered and not a lecture. We will take a look at how to most effectively share information on a tour while allowing visitors to engage and share their own thoughts on the art. We will explore some new approaches learned on empathy tours as well

as how to best engage a multi-generational audience. We will look at our artworks and approaches with an anti-racist lens. If you choose adult tours, some common training sessions in conjunction with school tours also will be offered in the fall.

Will I still be required to attend cultural fluency training sessions?

Yes. We are committed to helping our volunteers develop and build necessary touring skill sets that incorporate greater cultural fluency and responsiveness. We acknowledge that we have done a lot of DEAI work together, and we will continue to build on the skills we have learned. We are all actively continuing to develop our own teaching practice as well—the work of equity and anti racism is ongoing. We plan to continue offering a required cultural fluency training in the fall and the spring for all guides.

What is the schedule for training sessions? What is the format of the class?

Training will be held from September through December 2021. Our hours for in-person training will be limited to the times we are open, Thursday through Sunday, 10 to 5, so we will also be providing asynchronous training options.

We recognize that none of you would have anticipated the need for training sessions in planning for Fall of 2021. We will do our very best to offer a selection of times and options to accommodate as many of you as best we can. This is required training; we'll work with you to ensure you are able to complete the training within your schedule.

We hope to release a syllabus for both adult and student tour guide training by mid-summer, after we have the final audience choice survey results. As we gain more updated information on our guidelines for group gatherings, we will update the training schedule.

What if I wish to retire from volunteering?

Please let an IPE staff member know your decision. We will work with the Transition Council to develop an honorary volunteer group you could choose to join upon retirement, to stay connected with Mia's events and exhibitions.

I enjoyed attending the social events of my program (luncheons, potlucks, or happy hours). What kind of social events will be planned in the future? Will my years of service continue to be recognized?

IPE staff will be working with the Transition Council on setting up a social event at the start of the fall touring season and at the end of spring for all volunteers. We will continue to recognize the service anniversaries of all volunteers at these events.

Are there new procedures for checking out and submitting requests for leaves of absence?

Yes. Mia Guides will tour year round, for both audience groups (adults and students). You will need to formally check out whenever you are not available within our fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

To check out, directly email Paula Warn in the Tour Office, and copy Debbi Hegstrom and Kara ZumBahlen on your email request to check out or to go on leave. The Tour Office considers a leave of absence as three months or more, due to health or family needs that are in flux.

What happens when I return from a leave of absence?

We ask that you review any training sessions posted during your leave. If you have a leave of one year or more, IPE staff will observe and debrief with you on the first tour you give upon your return.

My email or home address has changed. Who do I let know of this change?

Michael Bennes' position has not been filled following his retirement last year. Molly Lax, Learning Innovation's Administrative Assistant, will now make these changes. Please email Molly, at mlax@artsmia.org, with any changes to your address or email so she can make the necessary updates.

Will I need to have a new badge?

Yes, we will be getting new badges for all volunteers in the Mia Guide program. We are working with Security to determine the best time to do this, and we will provide more information when it is available.

I am a docent who toured the Purcell-Cutts House. What is happening to those assignments?

We continue to monitor the CDC guidelines and feasibility on offering tours at the Purcell-Cutts House. At the current time, no in-person tours are being scheduled. However, we do know the tours at the house will be changing. Jennifer Komar Olivarez is reviewing and revising the approach to touring the house. When the new interpretation plan is finalized, training sessions will be developed and opened to all those adult audience guides who are available for weekend tours.

I am a docent who has given Discover Your Story, Veterans' Tours, and Family Day Tours. Will I continue to be able to give these tours?

This fall, IPE staff is reviewing these programs with the help of our Multi-Generational Learning staff. We are re-evaluating how these types of tours will be scheduled.

I am interested in doing Book Tours. How do I get on the touring list?

If you are interested in book tours for an adult audience, then you should reach out to Debbi or Kara to be added to the list.

While we have offered Youth Book Tours in the past, we discovered very low attendance in review of the statistics. We suggest that a better approach may be providing a few suggested titles for summer reading, along with a self-guided tour for each book. This would allow families to visit and tour together. IPE staff will reach out to school tour guides to see who is interested in helping develop this resource for the website in the future.

Will we continue to offer a daily public tour when we return? How often will the Cross-Currents tour be offered on weekends?

Staff is reviewing tour statistics to determine the best approach with public tours and weekend tours moving forward. We do know that many weekend public tours were poorly attended, but we believe the Cross Currents tour model will allow for interaction in the galleries and better support the needs of weekend visitors.

Much of our IPE website is structured by the three programs. How will the website change?

Over the summer, the website will be restructured, with materials moved into Adult and Student Tour designations. The materials currently posted will be moved into the new structure, with older materials archived in order to clean up the website.

How will this program change allow for more diversity in our volunteer corps? The Collection in Focus guides are the most diverse group of volunteers, so why isn't the CIF program continuing?

We learned from the culture assessment completed by Vallot-Karp that volunteers most noted the need to diversify our volunteer group. We acknowledge that the CIF program successfully recruited our most diverse group of volunteers, but the structure of the program was not sustainable after 20 + years of growth with the focus only on evening and weekend hours. In short, we had too many guides and not enough options for volunteer shifts. When we did add additional public tours on the weekends, those tours were poorly attended and did not meet the needs of our weekend visitors or volunteers.

We plan to use what we learned from the CIF program for our future guide training. We will develop content and facilitation modules with a shorter training time commitment to open up opportunities for more people to join the Mia Guide program. With many people working from home during the pandemic, we may also see a change in our work culture moving forward as people retain more flexibility in their hours and office location. If this change does occur, it might allow more people to volunteer on weekdays and for virtual tours. We believe the Cross-Currents tours, virtual tours, and eventual return of the Art Carts will provide a more sustainable approach to volunteer needs as well as better meeting the needs of our weekend and evening visitors.

What is the current staffing structure of Learning Innovation?

As you know, we had to eliminate positions in Learning Innovation due to the pandemic and subsequent budget cuts. Following is a list of the current staff, followed by their department designation:

Karleen Gardner: Director of Learning Innovation

Molly Lax: Administrative Assistant

Alice Anderson: Manager of Audience Research and Impact

Debbi Hegstrom: Senior Educator (IPE)

Kara ZumBahlen: Associate Educator (IPE)

Sheila McGuire: Head of Student and Teacher Learning (STL)

Amanda Lesnikowski: Student and Teacher Learning Coordinator (STL)

Paula Warn: Tour Coordinator (STL)

Elisabeth Callihan: Head of Multi-Generational Learning (MGL)

Krista Pearson: Manager of Community Arts (MGL)

Angela Olson: Studio Programs Associate (MGL)

Crystal Celeste Price: Teen and Community Associate (MGL)

Victoria Myers: Participatory Experiences Assistant (MGL)