



## Welcome Aboard!

The Austin Steam Train Association operates a vintage excursion railroad in the Austin, Texas area. We are a well-established non-profit organization that has been in continuous operation since the early 1990s. We operate trains every weekend of the year and typically run about 140 trains per year. The organization depends primarily on volunteers to operate and maintain the trains. Operating crews are appropriately trained and qualified to meet all Federal Railway Administration requirements. It takes a large number of dedicated volunteers to accomplish this level of service to our passengers.

As you can imagine, it is an expensive proposition to operate and maintain vintage railroad equipment. We rely on a combination of resources including ticket sales, grants, and donations to stay in operation. ASTA has only a few paid employees and depends on volunteers for everything else.

We could not exist without our volunteers. We attempt to reward dedicated volunteers with a variety of perks including free tickets to ride the trains and other rewards that vary from time to time based upon our resources.

ASTA offers five categories of positions to new volunteers:

- **On-Board Passenger Service Volunteers – Car Attendants or Concession Car Attendants**
- **Administrative Support**
- **Maintenance & Restoration Volunteers**
- **Train Crew Volunteers**
- **Special Event Volunteers (Day Out with Thomas & The North Pole Flyer)**

## On-Board Passenger Service (OBS)

### Car Attendants

On-Board Passenger Service is the recommended and most common starting point for new volunteers. It is the quickest way for new volunteers to become familiar with our operation and meet a large number of other volunteers. It is ideally suited for those who like to meet and work with people and for those who just like trains. We have numerous volunteers who like this position so well that they have been doing it for years.

The primary responsibility of our OBS crews is first and foremost to ensure the safety of the passengers and crew, and second to make sure that our passengers enjoy their trip. New volunteers that start with OBS are put through training runs where they work as Car attendants or Concession Car Workers under the supervision of experienced volunteers. A basic exam will be administered to ensure that the new volunteer has assimilated all of the safety information, operational procedures, basic facts about the train and the railroad, and history of the train and railroad.



**We ask that volunteers try to average two trips per month on the train. Time commitment for each run ranges from 5 hours to 8 hours depending on the route.**

### Concession Car Attendants



The **Concession Car Attendant** is responsible for overall operation of the concession car, including selling merchandise, handling money, and re-stocking the car with snacks as needed. The concession car sells snacks and beverages as well as souvenirs. In some cases the job of Concession Car Attendant may be divided between snacks & beverages and souvenirs.

**We ask that volunteers try to average two trips per month on the train. Time commitment for each run ranges from 5 hours to 8 hours depending on the route.**

## Administrative Support

For those volunteers who do not wish to work on the train, we always have a need for administrative help. Our Office Specialist volunteers assist customers both on the phone and in person with ticket sales. We also need ticket agents to issue tickets and sell walkup tickets prior to each train's departure. We often attend various trade shows around the state and we need volunteers to staff our display, answer questions, and pass out brochures. We may need clerical help in the office during busy times.

## Maintenance & Restoration



We have a never ending supply of projects for those who have mechanical, electrical, plumbing, painting, carpentry, and general handyman skills. For that matter, you do don't even have to be an expert in one of these areas. You just need to be willing to come out and get extremely dirty. Examples include restoration of our steam engine and tender, upkeep and restoration of our depots in Burnet and Bertram, maintenance of our diesel engine, paint and restoring our rolling stock, maintenance of our

lounge cars and other facilities. Volunteers interested in this area generally work in one of two modes.

First, we regularly have Saturday/Sunday work days that focus on specific projects. A project leader is assigned and volunteers are asked to sign up in advance so that we know how many we can count on. Volunteers need to wear appropriate clothing and safety equipment such as hard hats and steel toe boots. They will be given guidance appropriate to their skills.

Second, we have a group of retired volunteers who come out to our yard in Cedar Park during the week to do cleaning and maintenance. Some folks volunteer to help clean the train for the next weekend's runs. Others work on repairing any malfunctions that occurred during the precious weekend. There is also a continuing need to do required FRA maintenance.

## Train Crew

The operating crew consists of the following:

- Brakeman (2 each run)
- Conductor
- Engineer

The operating crew's responsibility is the safe operation of the train. They will invariably be required to interact with passengers and the on-board services crew that

serves the passengers. Conductors are responsible for the entire train so they must be familiar with the duties of the on-board services crew. Similarly, brakemen may punch tickets, answer passenger questions, and help with boarding/de-boarding. Brakemen may need the help of on-board services crew to guard traps while they get off the train to align switches.



Volunteers are accepted as student brakemen once they have completed and passed all training classes as requested. All volunteers working as part of the operating crew are subject to hours of service laws and random alcohol and drug testing as required by the Federal Railroad Administration. Operating Crew volunteers are encouraged to volunteer regularly to maintain their skills. Trainees are promoted to brakeman based upon the approval of the General Superintendent.

For those interested in promotion to conductor, engineer or become involved as a member of the steam operations crew, they should contact the General Superintendent for information on the progression.

Volunteers are recruited for the operating crew based upon a number of criteria. Most importantly, there must be a need. From time to time attrition will be such that the operating crew pool size for each of the positions needs to be increased.

## Special Events

Each year we have special runs during different times of the year offering unique volunteer opportunities. Such events are Day Out With Thomas™ (in October) and North Pole Flyer™ (in December).

Some positions for these events include:

- Story Tellers
- Mrs. Claus
- Imagination Station assistant
- Day Out With Thomas™ Car Attendants

## ABOUT THE TRAIN

We offer four levels of service on each train route into the Hill Country: Excursion Coach, First Class Coach, First Class Lounge and Adults-Only First Class Lounge.

Ticket prices vary according to the route and the class of service (Excursion Coach, First Class Coach, First Class Lounge or Adults-Only First Class Lounge) and all classes are climate controlled.

**Adults-Only First Class Lounge Cars:**      **RIPPLING STREAM**  
**NAMBE**

Our adults-only first class lounge class welcomes passengers ages 14+ and offers tables and chairs or booths, depending on the car. Each car has a unisex bathroom. [Specialty routes vary.]

*High class of service. Complimentary water, coffee, tea, fruit and pastries.*

*Drinks and snacks are served to passengers using trays. Trash is collected from passengers using trays.*

**First Class Lounge Cars:**      **MAURICE BECKHAM (previously the SANTA FE)**  
**CITY OF CHICAGO**  
**EAGLE CLIFF**

This lounge car class offers tables and chairs, or arm chairs with tray tables next to them, depending on the car. Each car has a unisex bathroom.

*High class of service. Complimentary water, coffee, tea, fruit and pastries.*

*Children are allowed.*

*Drinks and snacks are served to passengers using trays. Trash is collected from passengers using trays.*

**First Class Coach Car:**      **SILVER PINE**

First Class Coach has a center aisle with seats on each side that can form sets of two or four. This car has both a men's and women's bathroom.

*Complimentary water and fruit are left on the table for self-service.*

**Excursion Coach:**      **BUCKEYE LAKE**  
**BUCKEYE TRAIL**

Our Excursion Coach class has a center aisle with seats on each side that can form sets of two or four.

Excursion cars have a unisex bathroom.

*This class is ride only; there are no snacks or extra service in this class.*

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **CAN CHILDREN VOLUNTEER?**

Children ages 14 - 17...

- May volunteer without a parent or guardian if they have demonstrated exceptional hospitality skills and proper training has been given and Parent/Guardian Authorization Form completed.
- Must wear proper ASTA uniform when volunteering.
- Can earn vouchers when working a car alone.
- Cannot bring a friend while they are volunteering unless the friend is also a trained volunteer.
- May not volunteer on rides where alcoholic beverages are provided Murder Mysteries, Wine Flyers, and Beer Flyers
- May not volunteer in cars that have been chartered and are serving alcoholic beverages

### **CAN I BRING A FRIEND WITH ME TO VOLUNTEER?**

Volunteers may use their earned vouchers for friends to accompany them on the train. The volunteer must contact the ticket office prior to the ride to book a seat for his/her friend.

### **HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE TO VOLUNTEER?**

We ask all of our volunteers to assist at least 2 times per month. We understand that circumstances may change, vacations come up, etc. so if you feel that you cannot make this commitment year-round, please talk with the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **CAN VOLUNTEERS RIDE FOR FREE ON THE TRAIN?**

As a token of appreciation for your time, each volunteer receives one voucher for every 20 hours of service to the organization. For each 20 hours of service, a volunteer may choose to receive the voucher by mail or electronically. Digital vouchers do not have an expiration date. Reservations are required.

Vouchers may only be used on regularly scheduled Hill Country Flyer, Bertram Flyer, Capital City & Sunset Express trips. Vouchers are transferable, but may not be sold and have no cash value.

Volunteers may use as many vouchers as they wish provided it does not exceed 10% seating capacity of the train.

## **NEXT STEPS!**

### **If you are interested in becoming a volunteer....**

Complete the Attached Volunteer Application and Parent/Guardian Authorization Form (if applicable).

E-mail, mail or drop off the completed application at our ASTA Office:

**Volunteer Coordinator**

**Austin Steam Train Association**

**401 E. Whitestone Blvd., Ste C 100**

**Cedar Park, TX 786134**

**[volunteers@austinsteamtrain.org](mailto:volunteers@austinsteamtrain.org)**

After we have received your application, we will be contacting you regarding upcoming Volunteer Orientations  
- on the train!

## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

# VOLUNTEER APPLICATION



## AUSTIN STEAM TRAIN ASSOCIATION

401 E Whitestone Blvd, Suite C-100

Cedar Park, TX 78613

512.477.8468 x1

volunteers@austinsteamtrain.org

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
*Last First M.I. Mo. Day Year*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address City State Zip*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTERESTS

Tell us what areas you are interested in volunteering:

- On Board Services     Train Crew     Maintenance & Restoration     North Pole Flyer®  
 Special Events     Office Specialist     Day Out With Thomas®     Other \_\_\_\_\_

### SPECIAL SKILLS OR QUALIFICATIONS

Please list any special skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any railroad experience?  Yes  No If Yes, please attach a resume detailing your railroad experience.

Are you bilingual?  Yes  No If yes, please list language(s) spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Shirt Size? Please circle one SMALL MEDIUM LARGE X-LARGE XX-LARGE

### AVAILABILITY

What days are you available to volunteer?

- Monday     Tuesday     Wednesday     Thursday  
 Friday     Saturday     Sunday     Flexible

Date Available to Start: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

*Last Name*

*First Name*

*M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Street Address*

*City*

*State*

*Zip*

Home/Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUR POLICY

It is the policy of this organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age, or disability. Reasonable accommodations may be made unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship or pose a direct threat of substantial harm to the health or safety of the applicant or others.

## AGREEMENT & SIGNATURE

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

**LIABILITY WAIVER AND HOLD HARMLESS: THIS RELEASE, WAIVER, AND HOLD HARMLESS** is made and entered into by and between the undersigned, and if applicable, the Volunteer's Parent or Guardian, [hereinafter referred to as "Volunteer"] and the Austin Steam Train Association. The undersigned Volunteer does hereby release and discharge the Austin Steam Train Association, its agents, employees, other volunteers, officers and directors, from all claims, demands, actions, judgments and executions, which the undersigned Volunteer may now have or may hereafter have, or which the undersigned's heirs, executors, personal representatives or assigns may have or claim to have, against the Austin Steam Train Association, its successors or assigns, for all personal injuries, known or unknown, including those resulting in death or permanent disability, and injuries to property, real or personal, caused by, or arising out of, or relating to, directly or indirectly, volunteering or being present on Austin Steam Train Association trains, locomotives, cars, personal property or real property, with the Austin Steam Train Association. Volunteer, and Parent or Guardian, agrees to hold harmless the Austin Steam Train Association, its agents, employees, other volunteers, officers and directors from any claim made by on behalf of the undersigned or any of the undersigned heirs, executors, personal representatives or assigns in connection with any matter made the subject of this Release and Waiver.

**CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK:** By signing below, I hereby authorize the Austin Steam Train Association to process my application for serving as a volunteer by conducting a background check. I hereby release the Austin Steam Train Association, its employees, representatives and such individuals or organizations from all liability for any damage whatsoever incurred in obtaining or furnishing such information.

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature [if Volunteer is under the age of 21] \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_