

2026 DOCENT CLASS APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Our docent training is a rigorous experience. The program aims to give new docents a broad understanding of architecture and architectural language, as well as the confidence and skills necessary to lead specific tours. Once your docent training is complete, we hope you'll be excited to put everything you've learned to use. You'll join the ranks of CAC docents who happily share their knowledge and passion for Chicago, its world-class architecture, and the urban environment.

- We accept adults of all backgrounds.
 - We do not accept full-time graduate or undergraduate students into our docent training program.
 - We do not accept people who work for or plan to work for a tour company.
- You must have a flexible enough schedule to attend all Saturday training sessions - if you are unable to attend one or more training dates, we ask you to consider waiting to apply to the program until your schedule will permit full attendance.
- Extensive homework is required each week, including both watching and recording videos, reading articles, and working with an experienced mentor.
- You must pass a simple background check.

The application process is competitive, and we encourage you to answer each question fully and completely with thoughtful responses that will give us insight into your motivation to be a volunteer with the Chicago Architecture Center.

Since the application form must be completed in one session (you cannot save the form and return later), please use these questions to formulate your responses in advance before beginning the online application.

1. What interests you most about architecture or urban design?
2. Tell us about a time when architecture or design made a strong impression on you.
3. Why Chicago? What about this city is exciting to you?
4. What specifically motivates you to become a docent for the Chicago Architecture Center? Please elaborate on what truly excites you about this role and how it aligns with your personal interests, passions, and long-term goals.
5. What tours or events have you attended at the Chicago Architecture Center?
6. Tell us about your experience giving presentations, speeches, or leading training sessions. Include details like the type of audience, size of the group, frequency, and content covered. We're looking for evidence of your comfort and skill in engaging groups.

7. How long have you lived in the Chicago area? What connection do you feel to the city?
8. Have you ever served as a docent or tour guide before? If yes, provide a full description of your experience.
9. Beyond simply delivering facts, how would you capture and sustain an audience's attention and keep them actively engaged throughout an architecture tour? Share your specific techniques and approaches.
10. Docents often work with staff, peers, mentors, and volunteers. How do you approach teamwork?
11. Could you give an architecture tour in a language other than English? If yes, please list the language(s).
12. Which Docent Information Session did you attend? Please share any insights or takeaways that stood out to you during the session.
13. How did you hear about us?
14. Our docent training program requires attendance on specific dates as listed on the website. Are you available for all confirmed training sessions? If not, which dates would you be unavailable?
15. Do you work for or plan to work for a tour company?
16. How would you describe your employment or student status? (Include employed, not employed or retired, full-time student, part-time student, etc)
 - a. If employed, describe your job and typical hours worked and how this might affect your availability for training and tours.
17. What days and times are you typically available to give tours, including both weekdays and weekends? Please be as specific as possible.
18. Are you able to conduct tours lasting up to 2 hours in a variety of weather conditions, some extreme, including rain, snow, heat, humidity and extreme cold, with or without accommodation?
 - a. If you answered no, what would that accommodation be? The Chicago Architecture Center will provide accommodation in cases where doing so will not cause an undue hardship on the business.
19. Is there anything else you would like us to know about you—your background, interests, or anything that didn't come up elsewhere on this application?
20. Optional Self-Identification and Demographics
 - a. What is your gender identity?
 - b. What is your race and/or ethnicity?
 - c. What are your preferred pronouns?