



Frequently Asked Questions About Volunteering for Art in the School

Who can volunteer for Art in the School?

Art in the School volunteers must have a relationship with a school and permission to teach art there. Typically, volunteers are parents or grandparents, so they have contacts at the school (such as teachers or administrators). Volunteers must get permission from administration and their child's teacher to teach art to the children and to be given time in the classroom during the school day. Many schools welcome family involvement in the school and recognize the educational value of this program. They may require a background check for volunteers.

Albuquerque Public Schools have an art teacher in the elementary schools every other year. If your child's school has an art teacher this year, please check to make sure that your volunteer efforts are still welcomed. Some schools follow a very structured curriculum which leaves little or no time for additional enrichment activities. If so, you might want to consider teaching the program immediately after the school day. The Art in the School program would make a wonderful after school art program.

I've never taught before and have no art background. Can I still volunteer? Absolutely! Our workshops are designed to acquaint you with the lesson's art topic, teach you how to look at and discuss art images with children, and then how to teach them to make art related to the lesson. The only requirement is that you attend the workshops to prepare you for the classroom.

I'd like to volunteer! What do I do next? First, it is very important to get permission from your children's teacher to have time to present the lessons in the classroom. You may need to also speak with the school's principal. Once you have their ok, you should talk to the school's PTA/PTO to see if they have funds to pay the membership fees or would be willing to help you raise the funds. Some schools require a background check before you can volunteer. Check with the school's administration office to find out how to proceed. We can work with you on when the membership will be paid (such as after a few months of fundraising or after an event).

Once you have the school's permission and support, fill out a membership form and mail it to us. The forms are on our website.

Who pays membership fees? The school's PTA/PTO typically pays the membership fees. Check with them to see if they can do so.

Are there scholarships available? Yes! If your school has never had Art in the School volunteers, or has not had any since 2008, we have a limited number of scholarships available this year to pay the membership fee for one year. It's our hope that once you and your school tries the program, the value and benefit to the children will be recognized and you'll continue the following year – sort of like a one-year free sample before you buy. If you and your school are new to the program and want a scholarship, give us a call.

Why is there a membership fee? Art in the School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but like all nonprofits, it costs money to provide our programs. We write grants and do fundraising, but this does not cover all the costs, such as printed materials, speakers and art teachers' fees, employee expense, office expenses (supplies, mail, phone, internet, equipment, etc.), art supplies, insurance, etc. The membership fee has not been increased in many years.

How many people must volunteer at a school? As few as one, who will be called the “coordinator” for the school. Some schools have just a couple of volunteers, some have a dozen or more. We recommend that you recruit additional volunteers so that it is a team effort at the school and more children will benefit. The first workshop for new volunteers isn’t until mid-September, so there’s time for you to recruit additional volunteers. We have flyers on our website that you can print out and post around the school, talk to the PTA/PTO, or send a note home to parents.

It is very helpful to have another parent to partner with in the classroom. Some volunteers teach two different grades if they have more than one child at a school, or teach multiple classes - it all depends on their availability, and if the teachers are able to allow time in the classroom.

How much time does it take? All volunteers must attend the workshops to prepare them to teach in the classroom. New volunteers should also attend the Introductory Workshop to best orient them to the program and get their questions answered. The four workshops are offered on a Tuesday and repeated on a Saturday for your convenience. The workshops are from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; there are four during the school year – two in the fall, two in January/February. See the schedule for details.

What do we teach? Each year, volunteers are trained to teach four comprehensive art lessons (see schedule for this year’s lessons). The lessons are not repeated for six years so that if a school participates in Art in the School continuously, their students would have received 24 different lessons by the time they complete 5th grade.

When will I go into the classroom and how often? This is up to the classroom teacher and your schedule. You can go in as few as four times – once for each lesson, or as frequently as you have permission. Some volunteers visit as often as once a week. It varies from school to school. The actual classroom time varies, also – as little as 45 minutes to as much as an hour or two.

Where do I get art supplies? Each school is responsible for getting their own art supplies. We make every effort to teach art activities which use readily-available, basic materials, many which the school may already have on hand (such as tempera paint, watercolors, paper, glue, scissors, crayons, etc.). Occasionally, specialized supplies are required and we’ll tell you the best place to get them at the lowest price. The coordinator at each school works out the logistics of supplies and procedures.

I have more questions. If there are already Art in the School volunteers at your school who have done the program before, it’s best to ask them first since there may be a specific procedures at your school. If your school is new to Art in the School, email us at mail@artintheschool.org or call (505) 306-0471.