

**STATE THEATRE OF
ITHACA, INC.
VOLUNTEER
MANUAL**

State Theatre of Ithaca, Inc.
105 West State St.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Thank you for joining the State Theatre Volunteer Corps!

The following manual outlines the volunteer program. If you have any questions please contact Carolyn Ambrose, Volunteer Coordinator at (607) 277-8283 ext. 898. For emergencies please email at carolyn@stateofithaca.com or call (607) 229-5461.

****As the face of the theatre, volunteers are a valuable resource providing the first and ongoing impression of our organization****

****A volunteer's primary responsibility is to provide excellent customer service. At each event volunteers are to be proactive with patrons, have a positive attitude and work as a team****

To be a volunteer you must:

- Attend and complete an Emergency Evacuation Training and Volunteer Usher Training
- Be 18 years of age (accompanying children are not allowed)
- Agree to all policies and procedures in this manual
- Participate in the required number of community performances

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

<u>Event Team</u>	Support the front of house operations during performances. Jobs include ticket takers, door ushers, aisle ushers, runners, and concessions attendants.
<u>Hospitality Team</u>	Welcomes the cast & crew of incoming events before, during, and after shows. Jobs include setting up, serving, and tearing down meals. Additional training is required.
<u>Facilities Team</u>	General maintenance, cleaning and organizing of the facilities. Jobs include scraping windows, changing light bulbs, refreshing signage, and organizing storage areas.
<u>Liaison Committee</u>	The liaison committee serves as an interface between volunteers and the volunteer coordinator. An appointed group of four to six volunteers meet monthly to discuss volunteer policies and concerns.

****The remainder of the manual applies to Event and Hospitality Team****

DRESS CODE

****To project a professional, unified image a dress code is enforced for all front of house volunteers. It is essential to be easily identifiable. Volunteers improperly dressed are unable to participate in the event****

<u>Men & Women</u>	White top, black bottom, dark shoes
<u>Unisex Items</u>	Solid black or white jacket, sweater or vest (no patterns); Gloves are permitted if close to an exit
<u>Name Badge</u>	A name badge will be supplied to all volunteers
<u>Personal Hygiene</u>	Ensure clothes are clean and pressed Please avoid heavy cologne or perfume
<u>Required Accessories</u>	A positive attitude and smile

****The following items of clothing and/or accessories are NOT appropriate for event volunteers****

Pants	Shirts	Accessories
Anything that is not black	Anything that is not white	Hats
Stirrups	spaghetti straps	bandannas
Sweats	undershirts	MP3 players
Leggings	tube tops or midriiffs	
Leather or suede		
Short skirts		
Short shorts		

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

Prior to house opening

Main event contact is the House Manager

Arrive 90 minutes before show time (**unless the Volunteer Coordinator communicates otherwise**)

- Store all outdoor wear in room off of the production office (where the cubbies are located)
- Sign in with the head usher and collect name badge, flashlight (if aisle usher), and apron (if working tickets)
- Stuff programs
- Attend pre-show meeting
- Familiarize yourself with your assigned area, locations of bathrooms/supplies, concessions, and seating layout.
- If you would like a snack from concessions please get one **before** the house opens.
- For safety reasons, refrain from going backstage or on stage
- During sound checks stay in the lobby and remain quiet

House Opens

- The House Manager will announce when the house is open for every show. A few minutes prior to the house opening take your assigned post. Patrons are not allowed in the theatre until the house opens.
- **Welcome all patrons with a smile and positive attitude**
- **Never argue with a patron**
- **Mobility Impaired Patrons**
 - If the patron arrives before the house opens, please see House Manager for decision on whether or not to seat the patron.
 - Read the tickets. See House Manager if tickets are in the balcony.
 - If using a wheelchair check to see the tickets are in wheelchair accessible seating (orchestra row B [seats 2, 4, 6, and 8 or seats 1, 3, 5, and 7] or right orchestra row N seat 28). If one of these seats has not been assigned to the patron, ask if they will be transferring out of the wheelchair (if “no” see House Manager).
- **Ticketing issue: patrons with the “same tickets”**
 - Re-check the patron’s tickets for the proper event, date, time & location. If this does not solve the problem, then:
 - Check the seated patron’s tickets for the same problems.
 - If neither of these works, escort the standing patrons to the back of theatre/lobby & inform the house manager of the issue.

Show Begins

- **Help latecomers!**
 - Latecomers should not disturb other patrons.
 - Seat latecomers in the back of the orchestra & balcony. They may take their designated seats after intermission.
 - If a latecomer insists on going to their seat, **DO NOT** dispute with them; it only makes for a larger disturbance. Try to get them to their seat with as little interruption as possible.
 - **In the case of a sold out, reserved seated show** – wait in lobby until a break in the performance to escort customers to assigned seats.
 - **In the case of a sold out general admission show** – encourage the patrons sit in the balcony.
- Remain at your post until the house manager gives you permission to be seated. Volunteer seating is in the last 5 rows of the orchestra and the second section of the balcony.
- At sold out events, volunteers are allowed to stand in the back of the orchestra or exit hallways of the balcony.
- **Never sit in front of or with the patrons**
- Orchestra Ushers
 - If you wish to sit, take a seat in any of the last 5 rows downstairs near your post.
- Balcony Ushers
 - If you wish to sit, take a seat close to the aisle separating the upper and lower balconies, near your post.
 - It is important you watch the middle and last aisles going under the upper balcony as the middle aisle is only to be used as an exit after the show has ended and the last aisle is only to be used in an emergency.

Intermission(s)

- Everyone is required to return to their original position unless notified otherwise.
- After all patrons have been seated at the close of intermission you may retake your seating or standing area
- If you would like a snack from concession wait until the close of intermission

After Event

- All volunteers are required to stay for clean up unless the House Manager gives you permission to leave early
- Return all reusable programs to the boxes on the concessions bar
- Pick up trash in seating areas and lobby
- Give all lost and found items to the House Manager
- **Return nametag, apron and flashlight**
- Sign out with head usher

POSTIONS & DUTIES

****Each Volunteer is responsible for conducting proper “General Behavior” as well as tasks tailored to each position****

****All volunteer ushers (except for Concessions Attendants) will unstuff and stuff programs before pre-show meeting****

Head Usher

- Assist House Manager with sign in/out and program setup
- Distribute/collect nametags and supplies
- Check in with volunteers throughout the event and relieve them for breaks if needed
- Direct clean up after show
- Make sure everyone returns apron, name tag, and flashlight

Concessions Attendant

- Set up and organize concessions upon arrival
- The ushers working concessions should agree on a division of labor before the doors open (i.e. who will be responsible for serving beverages, for initiating and completing transactions, etc.)
- Keep track of any free stuff taken, including water
 - Volunteers must PAY for all concessions EXCEPT water, cookies, and popcorn
 - Cookies and popcorn can only be taken AFTER intermission
- Clean and stock concession bar. The cash drawer will be brought to you.
- Once the show begins (depending on crowd flow) only one attendant will need to be at the stand. Attendants rotate at concessions during the show.
- Concessions may need to be restocked during the show (normally prior to intermission and after initial pre-show sales). Area may need to be cleaned at this time as well.
- If concessions will not operate the entire show, close the area by stowing all products neatly in the concessions closet; give the cash drawer to the house manager.

- After the show clean concession area and return all remaining products NEATLY to the storage closet.
- Please restock beverage refrigerators before leaving for the night.

WHEELCHAIR USHER

- Make sure the patrons in line have their tickets. If they do not have their tickets, direct them to the Box Office
- Be proactive and pleasant
- During the show and at intermission, you are responsible for checking the bathrooms to see if they are stocked
 - Bathroom supplies is located in the custodial closet next to the women's bathroom upstairs and in the electric closet off the stairs downstairs, near the stage
- Relieve other ushers of their duties
- Direct mobility impaired patrons in an emergency
- Help with cleanup after the show

Door Ushers

- Hand out programs at interior doors (doors entering house) downstairs and landing upstairs (below stairs going up to the balcony, near bathrooms)
- Be proactive and pleasant
- At intermission open doors
- Open the doors at the end of the show → wait until after the blackout or the closing of the last song
- Help with cleanup after the show

Aisle Ushers

- Specific aisles will be assigned Orchestra ABCD or Balcony ABC
- Watch emergency exits throughout the show
- Concentrate on directing patrons to their seat. If necessary escort patrons to their seats
- During general admission or "no re-entry" shows you will be asked to watch back exits (downstairs) to let patrons back in from smoking
- Be proactive and pleasant
- Seat late comers during a break in the performance
- Help with cleanup after the show

Ticket Takers

- As patrons are walking in rip tickets; keep barcode section of the ticket.
- Be proactive and pleasant
- Once the majority of the patrons are in the house one or two ticket takers can begin counting unless otherwise notified by the House Manager.
- Depending on the show, one ticket taker must stay in the lobby to check tickets, take latecomer patron's tickets and hold remaining will call tickets. Ushers may rotate in this position.
- Watch front doors during intermission and check patron's tickets as they exit and enter theatre
- Help with cleanup after the show

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The following actions may result in a **warning, probation, or dismissal from the program. The strictness and length of the penalty will depend on the violation and vary by case**

- Repetitive no shows, last minute cancellations, rule breaking, and/or inappropriate attire
- Failure to complete duties assigned
- Continuous complaining and/or lack of cooperation
- Eating in view of patrons
- Refusing to help with end of night cleanup

Immediate Dismissal

- Arguing with patrons, staff, or other volunteers
- Consuming alcohol at the event
- Admitting patrons without a ticket
- Physical violence and/or verbal abuse

** Should a volunteer be immediately dismissed and removed during an event a meeting will be set up by a staff member and a member of the liaison committee to discuss the incident.**

SCHEDULING

A list of scheduled shows will be emailed to all volunteers two weeks prior to the sign up date. Only choose shows from the current fall or spring session

Sign Up Date

A sign up date will be emailed to all active volunteers. No sign ups will be accepted before the date specified.

Sign Up Medium

E-mail (preferred)

In person (1 week prior to sign-up date) if the volunteer does not have access to a computer

Events

You may email requests of as many shows as you like within a given session

Use a numerical ranking system (**number 1 being your top choice**)

The ranking system does not guarantee you will be scheduled for all performances requested

All volunteers are required to sign up for one **community show in the fall and two **community shows** in the spring. Community events will be labeled "community" in the sign up email**

The number of volunteers scheduled will depend on the type of show and selling power. The volunteer coordinator reserves the right to remove and add volunteers from the schedule as needed

Added Events

If new shows are added to the season schedule before sign ups, the volunteer coordinator will request all volunteers resend their preference list.

If new shows are added to the season, a sign-up e-mail will be sent out to all volunteers.

Confirmation

To confirm events, a volunteer will receive a confirmation e-mail from the volunteer coordinator.

If a volunteer does not have access to a computer, the volunteer coordinator will call the volunteer.

CANCELLATIONS

Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator ASAP if you need to miss an event. If the notification is a week before the show, an email will suffice. Email cancellations will not be accepted the day of the event.

Please call (607) 277-8283 ext. 898 or (607) 229-5461. Excessive tardiness will result in your removal from the volunteer team. **At the volunteer coordinator's discretion absences will cause removal from the volunteer corps.**

NOTES

Volunteers have the opportunity to see most of the shows they are scheduled to work.

Volunteers are unable to earn hours or credit for shows if they

- Arrive after the call time
 - Please have a viable excuse for the House Manager or please email House Manager if you know you're going to be late prior to the day of the show
- Did not sign-in/out with the head usher
- Did not participate in the end of show clean up
- Are asked to leave by management

COMPLIMENTARY TICKET REQUESTS

Requests for comps will begin on a start date specified by the Volunteer Coordinator. No requests will be accepted prior to the date specified.

A volunteer needs to have worked a total of 25 hours at the State Theatre before being approved for 1 complimentary ticket. Please email your volunteer coordinator in order to know how many hours you have accumulated.

The State Theatre has a minimum of 8 complimentary tickets for any State Theatre presented show & 4 complimentary tickets for any show where the theatre has been rented by an outside promoter. In some cases, where the show has not sold out, the State Theatre may be able to distribute more complimentary tickets to volunteers; this would occur approximately 1 week before the day of the show. Tickets can be picked up at the State Theatre Box Office the day of the performance, unless the volunteer has indicated to the volunteer coordinator that they wish to pick them up earlier.

Complimentary tickets are given out on a priority scale based on the number of hours a volunteer has worked at the time of the request. Each request will be separated by show.

Ushers will be allowed to purchase tickets for individual shows for the upcoming season the day subscriptions go on sale.

Current volunteers will take precedence to non-current volunteers when requesting complimentary tickets.

CONCESSIONS POLICY

All volunteers are welcome to coffee and hot water for tea, which can be taken from the urns at the concessions stand.

All volunteers will be allowed (if they so choose) water before doors open.

All volunteers will be allowed (if they so choose) 1 free Ithaca Bakery cookie and 1 free bag of popcorn once intermission has ended and the second act has begun.

All volunteers will be allowed (if they so choose) to purchase any candy, chips, soda, etc at full price.

As in years past, if a volunteer is not working concessions they must ask a concessions volunteer for a certain item.

FEEDBACK

New Ideas

- Please use email, set up a meeting, or call the volunteer coordinator with new ideas. For your ideas to be heard effectively, give feedback in the ways suggested above, instead of verbally at an event.
- Liaison Committee
 - Volunteers may discuss their concerns with a committee member or members and request a member to speak on their behalf at monthly meetings. The volunteer may also speak with all committee members by requesting (through the volunteer coordinator) to be placed on the meeting's agenda.
- Evaluation
 - At the end of the season a self evaluation will be given to all volunteers to discuss the volunteer's progress and program feedback.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

History of the State Theatre of Ithaca

- The State Theatre of Ithaca is a 1618 seat venue.
- It was built in 1915 and was originally the Ithaca Security Company auto garage and dealership.
- The State Theatre opened its doors on December 6, 1928 and we celebrated our 80th anniversary December 6, 2008 with a concert by the Squirrel Nut Zippers.
- We are the last of Ithaca's 17 historic theatres.
- The State Theatre of Ithaca is owned and operated by The State Theatre of Ithaca, Inc., which is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization.

State Theatre Operations Information

- The season runs from September through June and approximately 80 events are scheduled each year. Because the theatre has no air conditioning, there are few events in the summer.
- Every person, regardless of age, must have a ticket to enter the theatre. Children (2 and under) are allowed into the theatre with a complimentary ticket. If a patron does not have a ticket for every person in their party, please send them to the Box Office.
 - Each person is required to have a ticket because, for safety reasons, we need to know how many people are in the theatre.
- Photography and sound recording is not allowed at most events. The house manager will inform staff and volunteers of the specific policy for a given event. If volunteers witness picture taking or recording when it is prohibited, they should notify security and the house manager. Never confiscate the personal property of a patron.
- Smoking is not allowed in the theatre. If you see someone smoking inside the theatre, ask him/her to extinguish the cigarette. If the patron continues to smoke inform security. Smoking areas are available outside the theatre.
- Office telephones are not available for personal use.
- If given gratuity, volunteers are asked add the tip to the tip jar. These funds are used for volunteer celebratory events throughout the year.
- After three months lost and found items are donated to charity.