



**VIRGINIA
FILM FESTIVAL**
A PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Volunteer Manual

The 32nd Annual
Virginia Film Festival
October 23-27, 2019

Volunteer Kick-Off and Training

Monday, October 21, 2019

Culbreth Theatre | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Post-Festival Volunteer Thank You Party

Date + Location + Time TBA

This manual is prepared as a guide to the function, policies, and procedures for Virginia Film Festival Volunteers. It is expected that all volunteers familiarize themselves thoroughly with the contents of this manual.

THE ROLE OF A FILM FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER

1. To Serve the Public

We are here to serve our patrons! As an usher, house manager, or event volunteer, you are considered the public face of the VAFF. Your job is to greet, welcome, and help our patrons enjoy our events. There are three things every VAFF patron experiences when they choose to attend our events: the box office staff, the front of house staff, and the event itself. There should never be any reason why any patron is dissatisfied with either the box office or the front of house staff. If they did not like the film or did not enjoy our event, that largely is out of our control, but a patron should not utter a negative word concerning their treatment by the box office staff or the front of house staff.

2. To Represent the Festival

As a VAFF volunteer, you represent the good name of the producing organizations- both the VAFF and the University of Virginia. In your work for the VAFF, you project an image to the public with your demeanor and attitude while on the job. The image that we ask you to project is one of professionalism, with small-town friendliness while having consideration for our patrons. Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

3. To Enforce the Policies of the Festival

As a volunteer, you are required to enforce the policies of the Festival with regard to monitoring entry into our events. The enforcement of policies should always be done in a professional and friendly manner.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

1. Dress Code

For all volunteer shifts, please wear your 2019 Virginia Film Festival Volunteer t-shirt with your Volunteer Badge. This will make you recognizable to patrons. T-shirts and badges will be distributed in-person at the Volunteer Training and Kick-Off. Please note exceptions: if you are working during **the Opening Night Gala**, please wear all black with your volunteer badge.

2. Conduct Code

All volunteers are expected to treat patrons and fellow volunteers with courtesy and respect. We expect you to use proper language at all times. The answer to a patron's questions should never be "I don't know." If you do not know the answer, find a manager or staff member who can answer the question. If no staff or manager is present, take the patron's contact information so that we can follow up with the patron later.

3. Tardiness

Please report 15 minutes before your shift to your house manager. Transition between shifts can get a little tricky if there's a lot going on at that moment, so please welcome new volunteers reporting to work and help them get settled until the manager can greet them.

4. Commentary Code

All volunteers are expected to refrain from openly criticizing our events, films, staff, and guests in public. To this end, you are encouraged to review our Program so that you can speak knowledgeably when answering patrons' questions.

WHERE TO PARK FOR YOUR SHIFTS

Parking for downtown volunteer shifts is available at the Water Street Parking Garage and Market Street Parking Garage. The Festival has set up an account at the Market Street and Water Street Garages. Your venue manager will have parking validation passes on hand to give you at the end of your shift to charge your parking fees to the Virginia Film Festival account.

Parking for Culbreth shifts is available for free at the Culbreth Road Garage across from the Culbreth Theatre.

Parking for Newcomb shifts is available for free at the Culbreth Road Garage across from the Culbreth Theatre and a short walk to Newcomb Hall. If for any reason you cannot make the walk from Culbreth Road to Newcomb, please park in the Central Grounds Garage and see your house manager for a code for parking, which will charge your parking fees directly to the VAFF.

Ample parking for PVCC, St. Anne's-Belfield, and Heritage Center shifts is available for free in each venues' parking lots.

SCREENING VENUE USHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Our volunteers may be stationed at the door of the theatre to **tear tickets**. Check the correct performance and date before you tear the ticket. Tickets are perforated on both ends. Tear off the end with the bar code and keep it. You are responsible for managing the entry doors during events. **One ticket must be taken for each patron entering the theater.** This is a Fire Code regulation at all venues. Exceptions are only made for VAFF staff or any discussants or guests speaking at a specific event. At the start of your shift, the theater manager will fill you in on any reserved or late seating procedures for that site. *Note: we use electronic ticket scanners at the Culbreth Theatre and your venue manager will train you to use these onsite.*

Tear off this end →



2. Please know that a **VAFF badge is not a ticket**. A badge alone does not allow a patron access to a screening or event. All patrons must present a physical ticket for the current screening before being allowed to enter the screening venue, due to fire code regulations. Please direct any badge holder without a ticket to the venue's box office.
3. Most of our films are eligible for our **Audience Award**, and your venue manager will have **ballots for you to pass out as patrons** enter the theater and to collect as they exit. Our volunteers should never use the term "survey," and we discourage only saying "please remember to vote" when referring to the ballots with patrons. Rather, "Would you like to participate in our Audience Award voting?" or "Please vote for your favorite film" or "Please rate this film as part of our Audience Award competition" should be the standard line when handing out ballots. When collecting ballots "may I have your ballot?" or "please drop your ballot here" is the preferred language to use.

4. Volunteers may also be stationed inside the theatre to **greet patrons**. Our screenings are general admission, so it is not necessary to direct patrons to specific seats. If an event includes reserved seats for VIPs or filmmakers and guests, make sure that other patrons do not claim them so that they can remain available. You should also keep an eye on empty seats. In the event that a screening is packed, help late arriving patrons find empty seats. Make sure nobody sits or stands in the aisles or rear of the theater, as this is a fire hazard.
5. Volunteers may be asked to help with **crowd control and line management**. Be friendly and assertive, not timid; try to handle problems tactfully and with a smile. If you run into problems, ask your venue manager for help. During a sold out screening or event, please make sure coats and purses are not filling up empty seats.
6. **Be alert** for people who may need extra assistance—people on crutches or in wheelchairs, elderly patrons—and please offer your assistance to help them.
7. **Food and Drink:** At Violet Crown, Vinegar Hill, STAB, Newcomb, PVCC, and Paramount, food is allowed in the theater. However, no food and drink (except water) is allowed inside Culbreth. If patrons are unwilling to follow venue rules, report them to the house manager.
8. **Answer Questions:** Patrons will ask you many questions (“Don’t I get the other half of the ticket back?” “I just bought this coffee...can’t I take it inside?” “Where’s the bathroom?”) Again, the answer to any and all questions should never be ‘I don’t know’. If you do not know the answer to a question you are asked, refer the patron to the house manager. It is important to be friendly and helpful when dealing with patrons.
9. **You may be asked to act as backstage/audience crew** for pre- and post-film discussions. The house manager may require assistance moving chairs and microphones onto the stage prior to or immediately following the screening. In addition, during post-film discussions, ushers may be asked to carry hand-held microphones through the audience to catch audience questions.
10. **Clean up** the house between shows. This involves picking up papers and trash, and the VAFF will provide plastic gloves for this task. It is important that all aisles and rows are clear after every show. If someone has spilled food or beverage, please contact the venue’s staff for cleaning support.
11. At the beginning of your shift, the venue manager will inform you of your duties in the case of a **fire or other emergency**. Remember, the patrons will be looking to you for help so be sure to remain calm.
12. **Can volunteers watch films during their shifts?** This is entirely up to each venue manager as different screening venues have different needs during and between screenings. Please check in with the venue manager to ask if he/she needs help with anything before entering the theater to watch the screening. If you do watch a film during your volunteer shift, you are still very much on duty. Please watch for problems like hairs in the picture, picture out of frame, subtitles too low, the sound or picture going off, etc. If you notice any issues inside the theater with sound, picture, audience, etc, please quickly alert the venue manager. If patrons enter the theater in the dark after the screening has begun, please assist them in finding seats. And keep in mind that the venue manager may have to pull you out of a screening if the need arises.
13. **It is important that we treat our Industry guests with respect and consideration.** Our volunteers are part of the protective wall between our guests and those who might crowd them, hound them, or start waving screenplays. It is not appropriate for Festival volunteers to engage in behavior even closely resembling harassment.
14. **If you notice any problems with the venue’s facilities** (i.e. bathroom issues, paper towels need to be restocked, etc), please let your venue manager know immediately.
15. If you are going to be **unable to work** your shift, be sure to contact our **Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@virginiafilmfestival.org**. Please give her enough notice so that she will have time to find a replacement. Please do not cancel your shift unless it is an emergency. We depend on you!

PARTY VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Opening Night Gala

Volunteers should dress in all black while working our Opening Night Gala. There should be no drinking during shifts. Be on time, and if you cannot make your shift or will be late, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator ASAP. Duties may include checking IDs, setting up, decorating, cleaning up, checking coats, checking tickets, providing directions, or anything the party planner, host/hostess, or caterer asks you to do. Positions will be distributed more thoroughly on the night of the event.

Late Night Wrap Party

Volunteers should wear your volunteer t-shirt while working the Late Night Wrap Party. There should be no drinking during shifts. Please be on time, and if you cannot make your shift or will be late, please contact Volunteer Coordinator ASAP. Duties may include checking ids, setting up, decorating, cleaning up, checking coats, checking tickets, providing directions, or anything the party planner, host/hostess, or caterer asks you to do. Positions will be distributed more thoroughly on the night of the event.

PANELS & VIRTUAL REALITY LAB

We will be hosting a series of panel discussions on Friday of the Festival. Volunteers will help greet patrons and guests, support transitions between panels, monitor attendance, and work with moderators and house managers to run Q&As when needed.

Now in its fourth year, our Virtual Reality (VR) Lab gives visitors an interactive experience with the newest technology in virtual reality filmmaking. Guests will have the opportunity to choose from a selection of short VR film experiences to view using head-mounted, wearable displays. VR Lab volunteers will help set up and breakdown the lab (consisting of individual VR stations with computers and headsets) as well as run the lab alongside professional VR-trained staff. Volunteers should be comfortable with using a laptop running Windows operating system or be willing to use it. They should also be comfortable when interacting with and helping people don the HMD (Head-Mounted Display).

Our panel discussions and VR Lab are free, open to the public, and located at Common House off the Downtown Mall.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

While driving for the VAFF, please wear your volunteer T-shirt and carry your valid driver's license. You will be dispatched from the VAFF Drivers Suite (location TBD). The Drivers Suite vehicles will be parked in the garage under the Omni. The dispatcher will assign you a car when you have a scheduled run and show you where to sign it out and back in when you return. It is important that you keep to the schedule given you by the dispatcher since your return will be factored in for subsequent dispatches.

The most frequent trips are driving industry guests to and from the airport, hotels, screening venues, and parties. Please be courteous but reserved with our guests. Respect their privacy, and if you engage in conversation, please do not gossip about the people you drive with the public. If our guests have questions or requests you cannot answer, please take responsibility for passing them along as soon as you return to the VAFF Drivers Suite.

Our Drivers Suite Dispatchers will give you more detailed instructions when you report for your shift.

Remember, if you need to reach our Drivers Suite dispatcher, you can call the Omni switchboard on 434-971-5500 and ask for the VA Film Festival's Drivers Suite. You will also be given the direct phone line of the Drivers Suite at the Volunteer Training Session and/or at your first volunteer shift.

FAMILY DAY & YOUNG FILMMAKERS ACADEMY

Our Family Day features free screenings of a family-friendly films, interactive workshops, Charlottesville Symphony's instrument petting zoo, the culminating screenings of our Young Filmmakers Academy, as well as film-related activities and arts & crafts (for details, see virginiafilmfestival.org/familyday). We rely heavily upon volunteers to help staff our Family Day events.

The screenings and events on Family Day and at our YFA Screening have very specific needs that can change each year. Please check in at the Family Day table at the Volunteer Kick-Off and Training to receive additional instructions specific to your assigned role.

BOX OFFICE HOURS AND POLICIES

Please familiarize yourself with the box office hours and policies listed below. These appear in our Festival Program and on our website here: virginiafilmfestival.org/tickets

TRANSPORTATION

Many of our patrons may have questions concerning transportation while attending film festival events. Please refer them to following options available in the community.

YELLOW CAB OF CHARLOTTESVILLE (434) 295-4131

FREE TROLLEY [The CAT Free Trolley services](#) stops around the Downtown Mall and the Grounds of the University every 15 minutes on Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, Free Trolley service is every 30 minutes in the morning, and every 45 minutes in the afternoon. Service Hours are Monday – Saturday from 6:40 AM – 11:37 PM and Sunday 8:00 AM – 5:47 PM. View the route online.

2019 SCREENING & EVENT VENUES

Common House

**206 West Market Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/SfQ4m7Nccrk>

Our VR Lab and panel discussions will be held in Common House's Vinegar Hall event space. The main entrance into the event space is located right on West Market Street. VAFF signage will be in place throughout the Festival weekend to direct volunteers and patrons to the proper entrance. Visit <https://commonhouse.com/event-space/> for more information.

Culbreth Theatre

**109 Culbreth Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/pCmaR8KJZPu>

The Culbreth Theatre is housed within UVA's Drama Building alongside two smaller theatres. The traditional proscenium theater is entered from the back of the audience through a set of two doors from the main lobby. The lobby also houses UVA's Arts Box Office. Visit <http://drama.virginia.edu/> for more information.

Jefferson School African American Heritage Center

**233 4th Street NW
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/d8adoGoP48S2>

The Jefferson School African American Heritage Center is located on the 2nd floor of the Jefferson School City Center. The theater can be accessed from the City Center's 4th Street entrance. Visit <https://jeffschoolheritagecenter.org/> for more information.

The Jefferson Theater

**110 E Main Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/xQcmN6xJsZs>

The Jefferson Theater is located right in the heart of the Downtown Mall, with its entrance doors opening directly on to East Main Street. The Jefferson hosts our festive and fun Opening Night Gala each year. Visit <http://www.jeffersontheater.com/> for more information.

Newcomb Hall Theatre

**149 Newcomb Rd N
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/4888PbqHHb82>

Newcomb Theatre is located on the Lower Level of Newcomb Hall on UVA's Central Grounds. There is one main entrance into the back of the theatre from the small lobby space. The main entrance into Newcomb Hall is on an upstairs level and patrons will enter the lobby space by coming downstairs and filing into a line outside the theatre. Visit <http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/eventplanning/newcomb-hall-theatre/> for more information.

PVCC V. Earl Dickinson Building

**501 College Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/tgDZxTdTtUy>

The theatre located at PVCC's Dickinson Building is a large proscenium theater with an entrance on either side of the audience from the large curved lobby area. There is ample free parking in the lot outside the building. Visit <http://www.pvcc.edu/fine-arts-and-performance> for more information.

St. Anne's-Belfield School

**Grisham Hall
2132 Ivy Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/htY7QGwzHco>

The newly built theatre is located at St. Anne's-Belfield's upper school campus off Ivy Road. There is free available parking in the lots next to the theatre. Patrons will enter on the upper balcony level of the building but will be directed downstairs by ushers to the main floor to enter the theatre. Visit <https://www.stab.org/> for more information.

Three Notch'd Craft Kitchen & Brewery

Located at IX Art Park

520 2nd Street SE

Charlottesville, VA 22902

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/cbirrTYhhoB2>

Three Notch'd Brewery will host Saturday's Late Night Wrap Party this year. Located at the IX Art Park, Three Notch'd offers ample free parking in the lots at the IX and on the street along Monticello Avenue. Visit <https://threenotchdbrewing.com/> for more information.

Vinegar Hill Theatre

220 Market Street

Charlottesville, VA 22902

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/pXeBbm3pWPD2>

The newly renovated historic Vinegar Hill Theatre is home to Light House Studio and situated on the Downtown Mall. The small lobby space has two audience entrances in the back of the theatre. Ushers will be asked to queue lines of entering patrons in the lobby and out onto the sidewalk outside. There is an entrance around the back of the building with wheelchair access for any patrons that need it. Visit <http://www.lighthousestudio.org/> for more information.

Violet Crown Charlottesville

200 W Main Street

Charlottesville, VA 22902

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/AkuDAKHIFZ32>

The Violet Crown movie theater is two floors with the main entrance on the bottom floor. All VAFF screenings will be in the upstairs theaters (Auditoriums 4 – 7). The VAFF's main box office headquarters will be located on the bottom floor and patron traffic will be heavy at the entrance. Visit <http://charlottesville.violetcrown.com/> for more information.