



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

# **Volunteer Manual**

The 34th Annual  
Virginia Film Festival  
October 27-31, 2021

**Volunteer Kick-Off and Training**  
Format + Date + Time TBA

**Post-Festival Volunteer Thank You Party**  
Format + Date + 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 important encounters every VAFF patron experiences when they choose to attend our events: with the box office staff, with the front of house staff, and with 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 a dark, non-graphic shirt or a VAFF legacy shirt, your 2021 Virginia Film Festival Volunteer Badge and a face mask covering your mouth and nose (you will be provided a VAFF face mask or may choose to wear your own. You can also wear the VAFF mask over your own).** Badges and face masks will be distributed at your first shift. Please note exceptions: if you are working during **the Opening Night Gala**, please wear all black with your volunteer badge and mask.

### **2. COVID-19 Vaccination**

We require all volunteers to show proof of being fully vaccinated prior to each volunteer shift. Alternatively, volunteers can submit religious or medical exception form AND provide a negative PCR test taken 72 hours prior to each volunteer shift. All volunteers are also required to wear masks during shifts, regardless of vaccination status.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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.

### **5. 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.

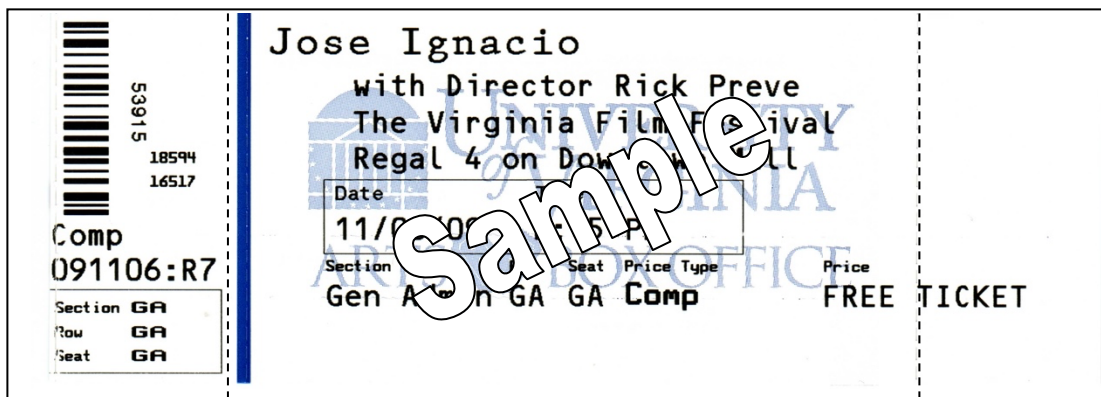
**Parking for Culbreth shifts** is available for free at the Culbreth Road Garage across from the Culbreth Theatre.

## SCREENING VENUE USHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Our volunteers may be stationed at the door of the theatre to **tear or scan tickets**. Please check the correct performance and date before you scan or tear each ticket. For ticket scanning, your venue manager will train you on site on how to use the scanners. For ticket-tearing, VAFF tickets are perforated on both ends. Tear off the end with the bar code and keep it.

Our ushers 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.

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 our audiences are encouraged to vote after each eligible screening. In 2021, we are moving our Audience Award voting to electronic voting only and will no longer hand out or collect paper ballots. Our patrons may ask our volunteers about the voting process, and our venue managers will advise ushers on site on how to direct patrons to vote.
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. **Enforcing COVID-19 Policies:** The Paramount Theater requires all patrons be vaccinated, and masks be always worn properly over the nose and mouth inside the building except for when eating or drinking. Checking vaccination cards will be done by RMC Events staff upon entry. Culbreth Theatre and Violet Crown require masks be always worn properly over the nose and mouth inside the building except for when eating or drinking, regardless of vaccination status. If a patron is not properly wearing their mask, give a firm but friendly reminder to pull their mask up over their nose, or provide a mask to them to wear.
7. **Assisting patrons:** Assume people with disabilities are independent and capable and don't assume what kind of help someone needs. If someone requests assistance, believe them and say, "How can I help?" If you see a need, ask, "Can I help you?" Speak to the person, not a companion. Be polite and natural. Listen carefully and patiently, and don't interrupt. Accommodate requests or ask a house manager for guidance.
8. **Food and Drink:** At Violet Crown 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.
9. **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.
10. **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.
11. **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.
12. 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.
13. **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.
14. **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.
15. **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.
16. If you are going to be **unable to work** your shift, be sure to contact our **Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@virginiafilmfestival.org](mailto: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. If you are able to find a replacement, even better, as last-minute replacements are often hard to enlist. 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 of alcoholic beverages 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 dress in all black while working the Late Night Wrap Party. There should be no drinking of alcoholic beverages 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**

We will be hosting a series of panel discussions on Friday of the Festival at the CODE building on the Downtown Mall. 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.

These panel discussions are free and open to the public.

## **DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES**

While driving for the VAFF, please wear your badge, your face mask, 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.**

## **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](http://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.

## **2021 SCREENING & EVENT VENUES**

### **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.

Masks are required to attend all Culbreth Theatre screenings, regardless of vaccination status.

### **The Paramount Theater**

**215 East Main Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/s51AKTuwCTBgueC47>

Masks and proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test are required to attend all events and screenings at The Paramount Theater.

### **Morven Farm**

**600 Morven Dr  
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

### **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. 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.

Masks are required to attend all Violet Crown screenings, regardless of vaccination status.