

THEATER VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES



Washington, DC International Film Festival

❖ What To Expect

As a volunteer, you are the public face of Filmfest DC. Volunteers are usually the first and sometimes the only member of our staff that a patron will meet. You will be interacting with guests throughout your time at the festival; welcome them with a smile and be helpful. If you encounter a question you cannot answer or a situation you cannot easily resolve, make sure to find a Filmfest DC staff member who can assist them. Maintain a calm, professional, and friendly demeanor and treat each patron as a VIP.

We are counting on you to work your shifts. Volunteers are usually scheduled for 2 shifts, but depending on needs you may be scheduled for more if you are able. Once you confirm your schedule, we will do our best to ensure that you enjoy your volunteer experience. There are over 300 volunteers working during the festival, and we need to be able to rely on you to be responsible and to show up on time. As our thank you for completing two full shifts, you will receive one free ticket to a regular screening of your choice.

Scheduling: *Generally*, shifts start one and a half hours before the first screening. This allows time for everyone to assist with setting up before the crowds arrive. Tickets go on sale **one hour before the start of the first film** of the day. Your focus at the theaters is your volunteer job. **If there is a particular film you want to see, do not volunteer during that shift.** Most shifts can be up to 4 hours long and involve a lot of standing. Weekday shifts are in the evening. Weekend shifts are afternoons or evenings.

Before you come: Please familiarize yourself with the films that will be screened at your venue. Check the Filmfest DC program online to learn about the film descriptions, start times, running times, countries of origin, etc. Make sure that you know how to get to your venue and allow ample time for taking public transit or finding parking. Review the attached list of volunteer roles to become familiar with the type of work you're likely to do. Bring the phone number of your theater manager with you in case you need to call them on the way. Two volunteer orientation meetings will be held before the festival. We encourage every volunteer to attend one, whether you are a returning or a new volunteer.

Attire and Personal Belongings: Please wear your Filmfest DC volunteer T-shirt during each shift. **No jeans with holes, leggings, or flip-flops please!** Also, leave valuables at home or keep them with you at all times. We cannot ensure that there will be a secure place for personal belongings at a venue.

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Arrival: Please be punctual. Plan to arrive at the theater a few minutes before your shift begins and report directly to the Filmfest DC Theater Manager. They will confirm your volunteer role and give you a Filmfest DC T-shirt, if applicable. Please wear the T-shirt you receive on all shifts. If you have a volunteer T-shirt from a past festival feel free to wear it. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the venue: learn the location of the bathrooms, seating for people with disabilities, parking and validation, the nearest Metro station, the nearest ATM, etc.

Customer Service and Difficult Situations: If you encounter a question you cannot answer or a situation you cannot easily resolve, please refer the patron to the Filmfest DC Theater Manager in charge.

How to claim your free tickets: As our thanks for your hard work, you will receive one free ticket to a regular screening of your choice for each two shifts you complete. To claim your tickets, you must email volunteer@filmfestdc.org at least **two days in advance with the information about the film of your choice**. Your name will be placed on a comp list at the theater, and **you must pick up your ticket at least 15 minutes before the start of the film; otherwise it will be released for sale.**

❖ Ticket Information

General Ticket Information: All tickets are general admission. Except for special events, all tickets cost \$14, whether they are purchased at the theater on the day of the film or ordered in advance through www.filmfestdc.org. (The cost for each special event is listed in the Filmfest DC program.) For same-day tickets, we accept cash, personal checks, credit cards, and traveler's checks made out to Filmfest DC. Bulk ticket discounts are also available through www.filmfestdc.org-- see below. General admission discount tickets are also available to members of the DC Film Society for \$10. Members must show their DC Film Society Membership card and are allowed to purchase two discounted tickets.

Same-Day Tickets: Each venue sells tickets to films shown at that theater on that day. Tickets go on sale one hour before the **first** film of the day. You cannot sell tickets to films at other theaters or on other days.

Advance Tickets: Advance tickets are available online and must be paid with a credit card. **You cannot purchase tickets online for a film that is being shown that day.** When patrons purchase tickets online, their name will be put on a "will call" list at the appropriate theater. They will give their name and show ID on the day of the show to claim their tickets.

Will Call Tickets: Please ask for the customer's name and identification, be careful to give them the correct number of tickets, and check off their name from the Will Call list.

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Please note that Will Call tickets have been purchased and can be picked up at any time before or during the show. **Will call tickets may never be resold.**

Bulk Ticket Discount: Patrons can order tickets in increments of ten *in advance only* .

Refunds: Only Filmfest DC Theater Managers can authorize refunds.

Complimentary Tickets: Comp tickets are issued to festival guests, members of the media and volunteers who work two shifts. Comp tickets must be claimed at the Will Call table at least **15 minutes prior to the start of the film** or they will be sold. Check off the name of the person and note the number of tickets given to the patron. If there is a question, please ask the Filmfest DC Theater Manager for help.

Star Passes: Star Passes are given to donors who make major contributions to the Festival. Star Pass holders do not need to wait in line, and are allowed to see any film in the festival, as long as tickets are available. When a Star Pass holder shows his or her pass, check to be sure that their name is on it and then give them a ticket from the comp tickets pile.

Free Events: Free events are available on a first come, first served basis. No reservations are required or accepted. Free events will be listed in the Filmfest DC program.

❖ 2020 Theater Locations

Landmark's E Street Cinema

555 11th St NW, Washington, DC 20004

Metro: Red, Orange, or Blue Line to Metro Center. Theater entrance on E St. between 10th and 11th. Three hours of reduced-rate parking available in adjacent garage with validation Monday through Friday after 6pm and anytime on weekends.

Avalon Theatre

5612 Connecticut Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20015

Metro: Red Line to Friendship Heights; 15 minute walk from station. Street parking available.

Regal Gallery Place

701 7th St NW
Washington, DC 20001

Metro: Green, Red, or Yellow Line to Gallery Place-Chinatown; third level of the complex. Parking garage on-site; entrance at 736 6th St. NW

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❖ Volunteer Roles

These are some of the roles which you may be performing during your shift. Depending on venue size and distribution, some of these roles may be modified or adapted by the Filmfest DC Theater Manager.

Ticket Sellers: Tickets go on sale on the day of the show, one hour prior to the first show of the day at each respective theater. Ask for exact change from patrons, if possible. Let the Filmfest DC Theater Manager know if you are running low on change or if you are close to selling out a show. Always be careful when making change; take your time, but work as fast as you comfortably can.

Will Call: Tickets purchased in advance are listed at Will Call for pick up. Please ask for the patron's name and identification before you give the tickets. Check off the name and number of tickets picked up. You will also be responsible for distributing tickets from the Comp List and Star Pass list if you work this station.

Ticket Takers/Ushers: Tear each ticket, give the patron his or her stub, and retain the other half. People will try to sneak into a film, especially if it is sold out, so **check that the ticket or stub is for the right film, day, and time.** You may have to assist patrons with seating by helping latecomers find seats. Always assume that each show will sell out; most do.

Crowd Control: Be sure that the lobby and entrance of the theater are clear and orderly. There should be two lines: one for ticket buyers and one for ticket holders. These lines should be clearly marked to facilitate sales and seating. If a show is close to selling out or does sell out, you may start a third line for those people waiting for rush tickets (comp tickets to be released for sale). However, there is no guarantee that any tickets will be available. You will have to announce to patrons, "This film is sold out" or "You cannot stand here."

Audience Award: Audiences at Filmfest DC have an opportunity to vote on which film they liked best. The winner receives the Audience Award and a cash prize. All patrons are given an Audience Award ballot as they enter the theater. These ballots are marked by tearing the paper at the appropriate mark, no pens are necessary. Volunteers collect the ballots after each film and tabulate them in order to report the results to the Filmfest DC Theater Manager by the end of each evening.

Sign Up to Volunteer: Go to <http://filmfestdc.org/volunteer.cfm> and submit a volunteer form through the website. You will also receive your schedule and reminder emails before the beginning of the festival.

Volunteer Coordinators for 2020: For questions or scheduling conflicts, please contact Carolina Garzon-Hernandez or Sergio Guzman at volunteer@filmfestdc.org. Looking forward to working with you at Filmfest DC!