



# stages theatre company

## VOLUNTEER USHER FRONT-OF-HOUSE STAFF GUIDELINES

**POSITION TITLE:** Usher Volunteers (Front-of-House Staff)

**PURPOSE:** To provide quality assistance and service for the safety and comfort of the audience of Stages Theatre Company.

**COMMITMENT:** Volunteers need to arrive at the theater 45 minutes before curtain and supervise the performance through the entirety of the production. Volunteer ushering requires you to be on your feet and able to move up and down stairs. Some light lifting may be required. Time commitment is usually 3 hours per shift.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** For the safety of everyone involved, ALL USHERS MUST BE 12 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER and demonstrate effective customer service skills. Stages Theatre Company relies on ushers in emergency situations, and strives to have the safest experience possible. While we appreciate the enthusiasm of those under the age of 12, we feel strict enforcement of this rule is necessary.

**PLEASE NOTE:** ALL Volunteers 18+ must complete a [Child Protection Background Check Download, complete & return to STC](#)

**DRESS:** Volunteers are expected to wear a print-free WHITE or BLACK top and a BLACK skirt or slacks. Stages provides preprinted vests and nametags for all volunteers to wear while ushering.

**CANCELLATIONS:** Ushers are vital for the safety of our audiences. They also contribute to the theatre experience itself. If you have volunteered for a show and find you cannot meet that commitment, please be sure to advise us immediately:

**Less than 48 hours in advance** - Box Office 952.979.1111 (press 4 during greeting)  
**More than 48 hours in advance** – Erica Skarohlid, Volunteer Coordinator 952-979-1113  
([eskarohlid@stagestheatre.org](mailto:eskarohlid@stagestheatre.org))

It is acceptable to leave a message at one of these numbers.

**SCHEDULING & ATTENDANCE POLICY:** We understand conflicts & emergencies arise, however, 2 no-shows to scheduled usher shifts could result in removal from the volunteer program. We rely on our ushers to be present and up to the task at hand for entire shift providing excellent customer service to our patrons.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Upon arrival at the theater, volunteers must check in with the House Manager. They can be found in the lobby of the Hopkins Center for the Arts and will assign duties and conduct training as needed. **Two types of performances require two types of ushers.**

1. **SCHOOL MATINEE USHER** – Priority for ushers for these performances is the efficient and orderly seating of school groups. Ushers must be proactive with these groups, actually entering the rows to assign specific seats to specific students, then moving to the next row.

This is best accomplished by staying one row behind those students currently filing into seats, anticipating the end of a row, then identifying the first student to enter the next row. Some teachers may assist, some may be completely passive, so it is up to the usher to see that the job is accomplished quickly and efficiently. (Without actively seating these groups, students tend to saunter, be hesitant about sitting down, trade seats or argue about who is sitting where. This may result in holding the curtain or seating of groups after the play has begun.) At the end of the play, ushers assist with the orderly exit of groups, row-by-row.

## 2. EVENING/WEEKEND USHER POSITIONS

- a. **Ticketer** - This position is stationed at the main-floor or balcony entrance. The primary responsibility of this position is to confirm that all persons entering the theater have a ticket. Children two and under seated on their parents' lap are the only exception. This position will also tear tickets; the long portion of the stub is returned to the patron and the short portion should be pocketed for delivery to the house manager (this is our only way of doing an accurate house count).
- b. **Program Distributor** - The program distributor works alongside the Ticketer to ensure that all ticketed patrons are provided with a playbill for the performance.
- c. **Seater** – This position is responsible for directing Stages patrons to the correct seats. This means leading customers to their correct row and seats in most cases. In many other cases, it may simply mean verbal directions. This position is responsible for reporting any seating problems or discrepancies to the House Manager.
- d. **Observer/Greeter** – The Greeter will have a smile and a welcome for arriving audience members. Directions to will call and/or the theatre entrances will be a portion of the Greeter's task. During the performance, the observer's task is to remain visible and available to patrons. The observer generally stands near the wall on either side of the theatre near the back, in position to be spotted by customers who may need assistance. Observers always have a working flashlight in hand.

**During the show:** All volunteer ushers are expected to attend the performance for which they are scheduled to work. If not assigned as observers, while in the theater they are asked to assist latecomers with seating, report audience distractions to the House Manager, and assist observers as they address patron needs. Upon the performance's end the usher staff assists in clearing the theater and picking up refuse.

**Post-show duties:** After the audience has departed, ushers are expected to make a pass through the theater to pick up refuse, ruined programs, etc. Other post-show duties (as determined by the house manager) include distributing marketing items to exiting patrons and ensuring the line to meet the cast is forming in the correct location and in an orderly fashion.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION:** If the Theater needs to be evacuated during a performance, volunteers are asked to assist patrons in exiting the theater. Patrons are directed to the parking lot behind the movie theater. Once the House is cleared, please go to the parking lot. It will then be determined if the performance will continue.

**BENEFITS:** Every time you usher you receive a voucher good for ONE (1) ticket to any Mainstage OR JC Studio performance (excluding Theatre for the Very Young), with a limit of six tickets per household per production. Due to the unique nature of the production & limited capacity, vouchers will not be accepted for a Theatre for the Very Young performance. Volunteer Usher Vouchers expire one year after the performance ushered. Vouchers will be distributed by the house manager after each performance.