



The Center for the Arts

Volunteer Handbook

Roles
Duties
Guidelines

The Center
for the Arts
is a cultural
& educational
organization
that promotes
and presents the
literary, visual
& performing arts
for the enrichment
of our community.



OUR MISSION

The Center for the Arts has truly become the hub of arts for Nevada County.

We are committed to bringing a diverse array of programming to Western Nevada County including music, dance, theater, film, visual art, comedy, youth arts education, and literature.

We manage and maintain a multi-use 21,000 square foot facility in downtown Grass Valley that includes an intimate 314-seat main stage theater, two visual art galleries, classroom space and a 90-seat black box theater.

We provide marketing and production services to support local artists and arts organizations, and we collaborate with area nonprofits to provide event services and fundraising support.



Dear Volunteer,

It is with great pride that we welcome you to The Center for the Arts volunteer program, and we are pleased that you have decided to join us.

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of this organization.

You support us in many different areas: in the theater, the gallery, fundraisers; acting as ambassadors as well as members, donors and patrons. It is a rewarding experience to be part of our Center. Our program is designed to offer our volunteers a wide range of opportunities, allowing each of you to fulfill your personal goals and interests. We respect and welcome the unique qualities each of you bring to our organization and the positive impact we can have on our communities.

Our volunteers' dedication is of the utmost importance.

Whether you've been with us for years, or whether you're just joining us, we want to make sure you have the information you need to feel comfortable and serve our patrons in a way that makes their visit with us enjoyable and comfortable.

The following material is an overview of guidelines, policies, basic information and emergency procedures. Please read the manual carefully, and review it before each shift or new project. Feel free to contact us if you have questions about any of the enclosed information. **Thank you for your dedication, time and energy!**

Sincerely,

Julie Baker, Executive Director

“The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature, and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up.”

Former Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan

YOUR MISSION

The mission of volunteers is to serve the patrons of The Center for the Arts in such a way that they have a safe and enjoyable experience, and to serve The Center in a way that it helps it to grow and prosper.

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

Serving The Center provides volunteers an opportunity to witness first-hand the success and influence of our unique venue. Volunteers may also receive work references and fulfillment of volunteer hours as schools or employers may require them. Those who volunteer have the opportunity to provide support for arts and education in their community and a chance to meet others who hold their dedication in high esteem; they receive special awards and recognition at events given in their honor. Most importantly, volunteers receive self-satisfaction in knowing that they are providing a valuable service to our community.

Earn Credits Toward FREE Center performances.

It is one of the ways in which The Center says “thank you” for contributing in such a vital way to the Center’s mission and team.

For each shift worked, earn 1 to two 2 show credits, (depending on the position worked.)

5 credits = 1 free show ticket

Track your volunteer credits with a Volunteer Team Member Card (Vcard). Present it to the House Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, or designee prior to the end of each volunteer shift. Volunteer sign-up sheets must be signed prior to start of shift.

The Volunteer Member cards contain spaces for tracking 20 shifts. The Vcard can be redeemed any time after 5 volunteer shifts have been worked, or can be saved and redeemed for multiple tickets, in increments of 5.

The Center makes every effort to fulfill volunteer requests for earned compensation tickets. Please be advised, however, that show tickets may not be available for a specific show due to availability and other restrictions.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

We regularly select a volunteer of the month, and the benefits include: special parking pass at The Center for the Arts for the duration of their month, and one ticket to the show of their choice

We rely on
your service
to make
these shows
happen!

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Volunteer, please remember:

- To assure patrons that any problems or concerns that they have will be addressed.
- To allow people their personal space. Please do not touch patrons unless absolutely necessary.
- Talking, surfing, or texting on cell phones is not allowed during your volunteer shift except in case of an emergency.
- To eat and drink only while not attending to patrons. Non-alcoholic drinks and snacks are available for purchase.
- Volunteers may not drink alcohol at any time during their shift (as per our ABC license).
- To refrain from gossip or socially inappropriate remarks or jokes while on duty.
- To honor confidentiality regarding the talent, patrons, volunteers, and financial details within The Center.
- Constructive feedback about our organization is appreciated when offered privately to the Volunteer Coordinator or House Manager.
- To demonstrate respect for the direction and decisions of Staff and Lead Volunteers.
- We are here to be of service to our patrons. Please smile and make yourself available to answer questions. Thank our patrons for their attendance.

Please only commit if you can attend.

Cancelling at the last minute or not showing up at the event puts a huge burden on the staff and other volunteers.

- **Arrive on time** for your shift.
- **Dress** according to the volunteer dress code including a volunteer nametag.
- **Sign in** at the beginning of your shift and receive any items necessary for your position.
- **Listen to** the House Manager's orientation prior to each show.
- **Attend to your duties** and stay until your shift is completed.

Dress Code

- Always arrive dressed neatly and ready to begin your shift.
- Clothing must be clean and allow you the physical comfort to perform your duties.
- Most theater events require solid black or black and white attire (no prints), unless otherwise stated. Your shoes must be comfortable.
- Per our insurance, **STRIKE** volunteers must wear close-toed shoes.
- Ball caps or other informal headgear are not allowed.

SCHEDULING

Most positions are filled on a first come, first served basis. Watch for emails requesting volunteers and respond accordingly.



Last minute openings can be found on our Volunteer Facebook page: [facebook.com/The-Center-for-the-Arts-Volunteers-581016445245305/](https://www.facebook.com/The-Center-for-the-Arts-Volunteers-581016445245305/)

You are asked to arrive 90 minutes prior to show time to receive your assignment, assist with set up and attend the House Manager's orientation. Some events will have a different schedule and requirements, so flexibility is essential. Please arrive on time, and if you must leave early, communicate first with the House Manager.

This policy is a reflection of how important and integral our volunteers are to the continued success of The Center and how serious we take that commitment.

Cancellation Policy

Our volunteers are critical to the safe and successful operation of The Center for the Arts.

We respect and value your commitment of time and service and we want you to also value your commitments to The Center.

Cancellations and no-shows put a huge last minute burden on the staff and your fellow volunteers. A shortage of volunteers can make a shift difficult and less enjoyable for other volunteers, patrons, staff, and the artist. The success of the Center depends on the support and reliability of its staff and volunteers.

For these reasons, we must advise you that a volunteer with 5 cancellations within a 12 month period may have their volunteer status suspended for 1 year, and will be required to renew their volunteer training, if they wish to return as a volunteer.

If you miss an event or cannot maintain your commitment, and believe you have extenuating circumstances, please send an email to the Volunteer Coordinator if you are cancelling 48 hours prior to the show. If your cancellation occurs within 24 hours of the show, please notify the House Manager or Box Office.

Exceptions to the policy are considered by the Volunteer Committee on a case-by-case basis. Please know that we appreciate your volunteer spirit and the time that you spend with The Center.

GENERAL INFO

Please read and familiarize yourself with the following procedures and information:

- Please do not park in reserved parking spaces behind The Center.
- Wheelchair access to all areas of the theater is accessible through the Granucci Room in the front of the building and through the rear doors of the theater. The staff and production parking lot contains two handicapped spaces, and the upper public parking lot contains one space.
- Restrooms are in the hallway just off the lobby. A drinking fountain is located near the restrooms.
- There are no public phones in the building.
- For lost and found items, patrons can visit or call our office at 274-8384, Tues - Sat, 12 - 5pm. Outside those hours, patrons can leave a message.
- Latecomers will only be admitted to the theater during designated late seatings. These times are determined by the current production company and are chosen to minimize disturbance. The House Manager will take the lead in determining the seating of late patrons.
- No flash photography. All other photography is at the artist's discretion. You will be informed at the House Managers meeting before the event.
- Patrons and volunteers are asked to turn off or silence cell phones and other electronic devices during the show.
- Purchased drinks and snacks are permitted in the theater unless otherwise announced by the House Manager. Alcohol is never permitted outside of the building. Please request that patrons to leave their drinks inside if they leave the building.
- State law prohibits smoking in the building.
- The Green Room for most artists is located across from the men's restroom. The Green Room may be locked during the show to ensure the security of the artist's possessions. It is not open to the public. Volunteers may not enter the Green Room without permission from the House Manager.

TICKETS

- The Box Office hours are Tues - Sat, 12 - 5pm, and until after intermission during most productions.
- Tickets are available at Briar Patch in Grass Valley, or can be purchased online: thecenterforthearts.org.
- No patron may enter the Main Theater without a ticket. All children, including babies, must have a ticket. Fire codes determine occupancy, and whether a child sits in a seat or a lap does not matter according to the law.
Direct any questions to the Box Office.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Veterans Hall Will Call

You will work (seated) in the Box Office, usually OUTSIDE, until relieved by the House Manager. Patrons who have ordered tickets over the phone or online have tickets waiting for them in “will call”. Tickets are organized alphabetically by last name in envelopes and are pre-paid. When the patron arrives, they will ask for their tickets by their last name. Give the tickets to the person, welcome them to the venue and direct them to the line for entrance into the theater. If their ticket is not in the will call box, refer them to the Box Office Manager to check in the system. Assure them the situation will be handled. If a patron does not have a ticket, you will use the Scanner to look up the patron’s name and stamp or wristband them for entry. Please know that you are often our patrons’ first impression of The Center. **Please make eye contact, smile, and greet them warmly.**

Ticket Taker

Ticket takers need to remain at their post until relieved by the House Manager. At some shows you will be on duty for the entire show. At other shows, we need you to remain at your post until the end of intermission. Take the ticket(s) from the patron, use the provided scanner (similar to an iPhone), and return the ticket to the patron. If a patron does not have a ticket, you will use the Scanner to look up the patron’s name and stamp or wristband them for entry. Please know that you are often our patrons’ first impression of The Center. **Please make eye contact, smile, and greet them warmly.**

All volunteers are encouraged to bring reading glasses, if needed. Most positions require reading fine print.

Lobby Greeter

Lobby Greeter will remain in the lobby during the performance to greet our patrons and answer any questions they may have. Please ask patrons if you may help them. Familiarize yourself with The Center’s upcoming events, and be available to help refer them to a staff member if they want to become a Member of The Center. Please be pro-active. Lobby greeter stays until after show and hands out flyers to patrons as they leave and thanks them for coming.

Please make eye contact, smile, and greet everyone warmly!



Ushers

Ushers are on duty from the time the doors open until the show ends and all patrons are safely out of the theater. This job requires a lot of standing and walking, both on flat floor and up and down stairs. It also requires a lot of attention and diligence. In the event of emergency, it requires the ability to move quickly yet calmly up and down stairs to guide people out of the theater or assist anyone who is injured. If the performance is not sold out, ushers may sit down, but must continue to be alert for anything or anyone who might need their attention.

Tips for Ushers

- Help patrons find their seats.
- Make sure patrons move to the row's center, especially during full or sold out shows.
- Make sure patrons are safe on stairs, inclines, and pathways.
- Use your flashlight to provide enough light to walk safely.
- Watch possible medical or physical emergencies among the patrons.
- Ensure that patrons do not take chairs from the storage areas, especially during dance concerts.
- Assist safe exits during emergencies.
- Gently remind patrons that shoes must be worn at all times.

Start of Show: Both the front and back entrances should be watched. If patrons enter from the back, please escort them to the front lobby. Be sure to check to see if they are with the performers, as then they may need to be directed to the Green Room. Other volunteers, staff, or board members may also be using the back entrance as well. Please familiarize yourself with special circumstances for the evening per the House Manager.

Seating: Be sure that you know whether the seating is general admission or reserved. During some performances, patrons will have assigned seating and they will need to be directed to their assigned seats. Some seats may have been reserved for friends or family of the performers or our Encore Club Members.

You will be given a flashlight to assist people in locating their seat. Be aware that there is a slight rise upon first entering the dance floor. One person should be at this rise to forewarn patrons. There should also be an usher at the head of each staircase at all times to assist patrons during the event.

Late Arrivals: For most performances, there will be latecomers, typically 5-15 minutes into a show. If it is a seated show, please wait to seat the patrons until the end of the song or act, depending on the preference of the artist. The House Manager for the evening will go over any specific seating procedures if requested by the artist(s).

Be Alert: If there is a disturbance in the theater (i.e. crying baby, loud talking, cell phone, or inappropriate camera use), politely deal with the matter. If you receive a negative response, please locate the House Manager to further handle the matter.

After the Show: Remain at your post until all guests have left the theater. Help to clean up trash and recyclables from the theater. Turn lost and found items into the House Manager.

Accessibility: The Center for the Arts prides itself on providing entertainment that is accessible to all. If you receive a question regarding accessibility, please refer the patron to a staff member; additionally, you may refer them to the Patron Service Manager, whose card is available in the lobby.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS



Bar Set-Up & Cashiers

Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) law states that there may be NO ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION by any volunteers while on shift. Failure to adhere jeopardizes The Center for the Arts' ability to serve liquor and may result in suspension of volunteers caught drinking on shift.

There may be two bars open during performances - one in the lobby and one in the Prospector Lounge on the far side of the theater. Regulations and service times of these bars vary depending on the performance.

Bar Set-Up

This is a pre-show position.

- Set-Up volunteer must be able to lift a minimum of 25 lbs and arrive with their own transportation.
- Set-Up volunteers are responsible for assisting the manager with preparing and stocking bar(s) for show time tenders. This may include trips to the grocery store.
- Volunteer shifts may be as short as 45 minutes or as long as 1.5 hours depending on needs. Volunteers are asked to come focused and prepared to work. Volunteers are asked to be communicative and helpful, checking in with manager on duty when tasks are finished so that they may be assigned their next task.
- Duties of bar set-up are subject to change on a daily basis, depending on the particular needs for that night. Flexibility and willingness to help as needed is a must!

Bar Cashiers

Cashier is responsible for:

- Taking orders
- Entering all orders in Square Cash Register
- Calling out orders to respective positions
- Handling all monies
- Ushering the next customer forward and keeping the line moving at a steady pace.
- Only the cashier, lead or bar manager should be handling money unless another cashier is designated by either lead or bar manager.
- All tips must be kept separate from sales / bank at all times. In the event that change is needed from the tip jar, the exact amount must be exchanged from bank drawer in order to maintain correct numbers.
- Reconcile the bar bank and tips with Bar or House Manager at the end of the night.

**Never leave
the bar or
cash box
unattended.**

Bartenders

All bartenders must be over 21 years old. By law, each bar requires two attendants. You may be asked to stand for long periods. The bar may be open during an entire event. Check before the show with the House or Bar Manager for the length of duty. This job requires serving of consistent, quality cocktails and mixed drinks, opening and serving bottles of beer and wine, some lifting, stocking of ice, cups, and other necessities for your station, cutting of fruit for mixed drinks, and pre- and post-shift inventory.

Beer and Wine Servers

- Beer and wine servers are responsible for paying close attention to cashier and customers, serving beer and pouring wine to order.
- Beer is served in a plastic cup or can. NO GLASS.
- Servers are responsible for preparing chilled bottles of water upon request, drying off with a clean towel prior to serving.
- At the end of your shift, clean and break down your station, disposing of melted ice, and wiping tabletops with disinfectant.

Cocktail Servers

- Cocktail servers are responsible for making all mixed drinks and spirits off of our simplified menu. Experience preferred, but we are always happy to train! We have four cocktail trainings per year. The best way to learn is to start with beer and wine serving or cashiering.
- At the end of your shift, clean and break down your station, disposing of melted ice, and wiping tabletops with disinfectant.

Inventory: Volunteers are asked to keep a tidy workstation, maintain recycling of bottles, cups, and paper accumulated during your shift, and be able to confidently multi-task. If you notice that we are running low on any items for the bar, please notify the Manager on duty. Please do not open more than one bottle of wine per type serving. We offer our patrons the option of two types of red and two types of white wine. Unlike most alcohol, wine is not servable after a few days of corkage. The majority of The Center's bar loss is due to wine being unnecessarily opened. Please be mindful of the inventory.

Tips: All tips are considered a donation to The Center and are put in a separate facilities account to help us improve our bar and concessions experience for both our volunteers and patrons. If you have any questions about this fund, please ask your Bar Manager.

Serving Guidelines

- Ask for ID of anyone who appears to be under the age of 30.
- Only 2 alcoholic beverages sold per sale per person.
- We have the right to refuse service to anyone at any time. If a patron appears to be intoxicated or does not seem fit to drive, please notify the House or Bar Manager.
- If a patron is dissatisfied, please remain calm and respectful to the patron, and refer them to the House Manager. Alert the Manager of any complaints or issues when possible.
- While we appreciate our bartenders' ability to befriend patrons, we ask you not converse while a performance is in process, particularly in the Prospector Lounge.

Detailed Bar Volunteer Handbooks are available upon request as well at cocktail / bar training sessions.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS



Concessions

You will be handling money, stocking inventory, and retrieving items from the refrigerator for the patrons. Sometimes you will be asked to help set up prior to doors opening. You will need to count change expediently, and at the end of the evening, reconcile the cash box, clean up the area, and help close the concession stand. You may be standing for long periods of time until relieved by the House Manager and then again during intermission.

Concessions may be open during an entire show if it is a dance concert. You will be given a cash box prior to the doors opening. Please count the start bank and confirm.

You will serve non-alcoholic beverages such as water, sodas, coffee, tea, light snacks, and candy. Make note of what items we should stock or what patrons suggest. After items have been put away, please wipe down counters. Your shift is over when all the concessions area has been cleaned and the items are put away.



Security

You will be standing or sitting at one of the designated stations beside the stage, back door, or Green Room.

Please remain at your assigned station until after the show has ended.

Be pleasant but firm when keeping an area secured.

Please assist Ushers as needed. Familiarize yourself with any special requests by the artist.

Be alert to any disturbances and remain calm and professional. Do not touch patrons, except when it is completely unavoidable. Please get the House Manager or a staff member if a situation escalates.

House Manager's Assistant

Assist House Manager during the three hours prior to show time by answering phones, creating signs, helping with set up and other duties as needed.

Green Room Strike

Your shift begins when the show ends and the artists have left the Green Room. This can be up to an hour after the show end time and usually takes approximately one hour to complete.

You will assist the House Manager by removing items from the Green Room such as food, linen, dishes, etc. Wash any dishes and glasses and put away coffee maker, mirrors, etc.

Saturday Gallery Attendant

Sit in the Center lobby for a 2.5-hour shift on Saturday afternoon. Greet our patrons and answer any questions they may have. Assist with light office duties as assigned.



GUIDELINES for PRODUCTION VOLUNTEERS

In addition to the general volunteer guidelines in the first part of this handbook, the following information pertains specifically to those volunteers working on the stage crew.

Length of Service

Production Volunteer calls can vary in length, anywhere from about three hours to about six hours (with appropriate breaks.) Generally, there are three segments in each production volunteer period of service—set up, show and strike. You might be asked to be present for one, two or all three of these segments, depending on the show and its requirements, as well as on your stamina and level of commitment. If you are involved in the set-up process, it would be best to also work the strike, since you will already have some familiarity in handling the specific equipment being used on the stage for any given show. All Production Volunteers are welcome to watch the show they are volunteering for, and seats will be provided in the back of the platform seating area house to the right of the tech table.

Signing up to Work an Event

Generally speaking, call times for events requiring production volunteer help are issued by the Production Assistant via email on Tuesdays following the weekly CFTA production meetings, and everyone on the production volunteer email list will receive these periodic notices. A description of the job and an email contact are included with each request for production volunteers. If you cannot work a particular show, you are not required to respond to the email requests. However, if you would like to help for a particular show, you must respond to the email contact provided, and this contact will usually be the Production Assistant. If you are already signed up to volunteer for front-of-house duties for a particular show, you cannot also be part of the production crew for that show.

Signing in at an Event

At each event, one of the Center's rooms is designated as a Volunteer check-in room, and this is usually the Conference Room. The main offices, including the Box Office, are considered off limits to all volunteers unless they have been invited to enter those spaces for some specific purpose. The reason for this is that staff members are focused on projects that require a great deal of concentration, and idle conversation in their office spaces can provide a sizable distraction for them.

Name Tags

A Center nametag will be provided for you and should be worn whenever you are on duty as a volunteer. If you work several shows, a nametag will be at the Center for you when you arrive each time. Otherwise, you can take a blank name tag and fill in your name.

Dress Code

Although there is no formal dress code and The Center does not provide uniforms, all black attire is preferred for show calls, and we request that you at least wear a black shirt or blouse, so that you can be easily identified as a production volunteer during an event. Gloves and closed-toed shoes are required to minimize the possibility for injuries to your hands and feet.

Punctuality

Barring any unusual circumstances, it is important that you arrive on time and remain until the work is complete. Should it become necessary for you to leave early, please let your supervisor know before leaving. Allowances can be made for volunteers having to alter their arrival times based on work commitments and personal schedules, but any differentiation between the call time and the actual arrival time of a volunteer should be discussed when responding to the event notices.

Stage Protocols

While you are in service to The Center as a production volunteer, basic stage protocols must be followed. These include:

- **Knowing and following basic stage directions**, i.e., stage right, stage left, upstage and downstage.
- **Refraining from initiating idle conversation** with performers or visiting production personnel. Exchanging pleasantries with the visiting crew and tour manager are completely acceptable, but initiating idle chatter with them is not considered professional. Before a show, performers are generally focused on preparing for their performance, and it can be disconcerting to have to switch that focus in order to deal with someone else's personal issues and stories. As a member of the technical staging crew, you are there to serve them in the most efficient way possible, and provide them with the best possible environment in which to perform—not to try to get them to be your friend or autograph your program.
- **Staying out of the Green Room** unless instructed by the Stage Manager to enter for a specific purpose. This space belongs to the performers during their occupancy at The Center, and their privacy must be respected.

Com Line Etiquette

If your job entails using the com line, always be direct and professional with your comments. Idle chatter can make concentrating and focusing on the show for the crewmembers on the other end of the line more difficult.

Attitude & Focus

Working on the stage crew is a specialized endeavor requiring a positive demeanor and clear thinking. Personal issues and problems are best left at the door before beginning your work, and a positive attitude is most important—particularly when you are working with a visiting tour manager and road crew who are “road challenged.”

Chain of Command

Generally, you will be taking direction from the CFTA Stage Manager, Audio Engineer or Lighting Technician, who are all working with the visiting Tour Manager. The Stage Manager has ultimate authority regarding activities on the stage during the set-up, the show and the strike. Any complaints or concerns about personnel—Center staff, performers, tour managers or visiting technical crew—should be taken up with either the Stage Manager or the Production Assistant.

Physical Limitations or Impairments

Physical limitations or impairments will be taken into consideration by the Stage Manager, Audio Engineer and Lighting Technician when assigning tasks.

Safety

As with most organizations, safety does come first at The Center, so please remember these points:

- **Be sure to lift properly**, and ask for assistance when moving drum risers, heavy road cases and other equipment.
- **Gloves are recommended**, and closed-toed shoes are a must when working on the stage, to minimize the possibility of injuries to your hands and feet.
- **Occasionally decibel levels can be quite high** during sound checks, and you are not expected to remain in the room if the sound levels are extreme.
- **The ADA lift** should only be operated when a trained staff member is present, and it should never be used for storing or moving freight or road cases.
- **Never run** when moving about the stage—always walk.

MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For events at venues other than The Center, you may have opportunities for other volunteer work not previously listed. These opportunities each have separate and specialized requirements that will be explained at the time they are assigned. They are summarized below.

Ambassador

Be The Center's representative! Work a booth at a farmers market, fair or event; speak to a group; attend a concert or other events. Primary duties are to sell memberships and promote the various activities at The Center. You must be knowledgeable about The Center's events, our membership benefits, be familiar with a short history of The Center, and be able to convey why The Center is important to the community.



Clerical

Duties such as folding table tents or programs, addressing envelopes and other office assistance.

Street Marketing

Distribute flyers and other materials in surrounding areas or at street events. Take surveys and hand out promotional materials.

Fund Development

Cultivate major donors, assist with grant writing, sponsorship development, and administrative tasks.



Special Events Team

Experienced servers will assist at Encore Club events, CFTA Annual Meetings and Galas. Must be over 21.

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The Center for the Arts
314 West Main Street
Grass Valley
California 95945
530.274.8384

thecenterforthearts.org

