

APT Volunteer Usher Guidebook

Please read this guidebook in its entirety before starting your usher agreement form. We encourage you to refer to it as needed throughout the season.

Volunteer ushers are an integral part of the American Players Theatre experience. You will work with front-of-house staff on the welcoming, guidance, safety and comfort of all patrons. At APT, we strive to ensure that every patron has an extraordinary experience – and our ushers are key to that effort.

We ask for, and appreciate, your adherence to our policies, procedures and protocols. They are all designed to serve this agenda.

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APT's Core Values were developed within our company to guide the work of staff, volunteers, and community members – no matter what role they play. This document will keep changing as our understanding of our values grows.

APT VALUES

How we treat each other MATTERS. How we work with each other MATTERS. How we make ART matters.

Over time, we've found some ideas that help us bring our best selves to our work at APT. They aren't the only ideas, and they may change over time. These ideas, today, seem to be our best expression of who we want to be.

We believe that EACH member of the APT community plays a vital role in creating a unique and personal experience for our audience.

We aim to be clear on APT's mission and how each of us contributes to that mission.

We work to make everyone feel welcome.

We believe that a rich diversity of people, ideas and experiences gives us strength.

We strive to create an environment of trust.

We treat each other with respect and kindness.

We depend on each other for clear, honest, and responsible communication.

We value the learning that comes from difficult conversations.

We listen to what is being said and to what's NOT being said.

We encourage each other to express ourselves. There is no question we can't ask.

We embrace individuality and personal strengths.

WE ENDEAVOR TO CREATE A SPACE WHERE PERSONAL AGENCY THRIVES.

We each take personal responsibility for the quality of our work environment and the work environment of others.

WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR WORK & HOLD OURSELVES TO A HIGH STANDARD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

We find joy in challenging ourselves to do better.

WE RELY ON EACH OTHER TO ASPIRE TO THESE VALUES & FORGIVE EACH OTHER WHEN WE FALL SHORT.

WE BELIEVE THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN.

This is what we know to be true: The "magic" of APT doesn't just happen. It's hard work. And it's on purpose.

Core Values

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Over time, we've found some ideas that help us bring our best selves to our work at APT. They aren't the only ideas, and they may change over time. These ideas, today, seem to be our best expression of who we want to be.

- We believe that each member of the APT community plays a vital role in creating a unique and personal experience for our audience.
- We aim to be clear on APT's mission and how each of us contributes to that mission.
- We work to make everyone feel welcome.
- We believe that a rich diversity of people, ideas and experiences gives us strength.
- We strive to create an environment of trust.
- We treat each other with respect and kindness.
- We depend on each other for clear, honest and responsible communication.
- We value the learning that comes from difficult conversations.
- We listen to what is being said and to what's NOT being said.
- We encourage each other to express ourselves. There is no question we can't ask.
- We embrace individuality and personal strengths.
- We endeavor to create a space where personal agency thrives.
- We each take personal responsibility for the quality of our work environment and the work environment of others.
- We take pride in our work and hold ourselves to a high standard of accomplishment.
- We find joy in challenging ourselves to do better.
- We rely on each other to aspire to these values and forgive each other when we fall short.
- We believe that there is always more to learn.

This is what we know to be true: the "magic" of APT doesn't just happen. It's hard work. And it's on purpose.

Contact Information

- Scheduling your shifts; cancelling with **advance** notice

USHER COORDINATOR: Grace Vosen (rhymes with “frozen”)
ushers@americanplayers.org
608-588-7401 (APT Front Desk)

Grace can only be reached Monday-Friday, 10 AM-4 PM. Please note that Grace is also the full-time administrative assistant for APT. Allow time for her to reply with her other ongoing duties.

- Cancelling on **short** notice

BOX OFFICE: 608-588-2361

Do not contact Grace if issues arise on evenings and weekends. She will not be able to see the message and get it to the right staff members.

- Who you will work with on show days

HOUSE MANAGEMENT OFFICE: 608-588-9204
House Manager: Dan Hemming
Other house staff will also work closely with you during shows.

- Number your friends/family can call in an emergency

HILL THEATRE INFORMATION BOOTH: 608-588-9269
An emergency number to reach ushers and patrons during shows.

- Trading shifts/finding substitutes for Hill shows

HILL SHOWS GOOGLE GROUP: apt-ushers@googlegroups.com
Use this email to post sub or trade requests for Hill shows only. All Touchstone requests must go through Grace (see contact information above).
The direct web link to Google Groups is: groups.google.com

Volunteer Usher Duties and Requirements

- Physical requirements may include:
 - Carrying up to 15 pounds
 - Walking up and down staircases
 - Standing for at least 30 minutes
 - Reading tickets both on paper and on patrons' cell phones
- Ushers must be 15 years of age or older.
- Ushers must be comfortable interacting with the public in a welcoming manner.
- Ushers are expected to stay through the entire shift: orientation, performance and all assigned tasks. Orientation is mandatory even if you have ushered before.
- APT reserves the right to terminate volunteer ushers if deemed necessary.

We strive to make our volunteering opportunities accessible to everyone. If you require accommodations to be able to volunteer or have questions about opportunities, please contact us so we can work together to accommodate you in this or another assignment.

Aisles

Aisle ushers stand at the top of the aisles and hand out programs, answer questions (or direct patrons to the info booth), keep glass bottles out of the theater and guide patrons to their seats. If a conflict arises, such as duplicate seating, ushers are expected to alert the info booth or find the House Manager.

Concessions

The concessions stand often needs help pre-show and/or during intermission to retrieve refrigerated items and pour hot drinks. A separate orientation is given for this immediately after the usher orientation for each show. Concessions ushers are appointed by the House Manager and need to be able to follow directions, be quick on their feet and work well in a team. Concessions ushers do not handle money.

Bathrooms

When we have a full house up the hill, we ask a female-identifying usher to be in the women's bathroom to help guide patrons to open stalls during intermission.

Tickets

Ticket ushers stand at the front door of the Touchstone Theatre or, occasionally, at the top of the path of the Hill Theatre to scan tickets, greet patrons and direct patrons to the proper aisle. Please check the date, time and performance on the ticket as thoroughly as possible, and most importantly verify the patron is at the correct theater (Touchstone vs Hill). Ticket ushers should be able to read small print on tickets.

When scanning tickets, ushers should politely direct the patron to the proper aisle as listed on their ticket. For example: “Good evening! Let’s see... you’ll be going to Aisle Three, which is one more aisle to the right. The 200s are on the left-hand side. Enjoy the show, and don’t forget to turn off your cellphone!”

Touchstone Stage Monitors

For certain shows in the Touchstone, the House Manager may assign ushers to “guard” the stage area to protect the safety of patrons and crew. Ushers assigned to this duty should be able to be politely firm with patrons.

Lost and Found

After a performance, all ushers are expected to help look for litter and lost items.

Volunteer Basics

Attitude and Conduct

Our volunteer ushers work very closely with our patrons and are expected to reflect APT’s core values of patience and courtesy in their interactions with both staff and patrons.

Attendance and Punctuality

It is vital that ushers arrive on time and ready to work. At the scheduled usher arrival time, the Assistant House Manager or House Manager will lead a mandatory orientation about that day’s performance. If you arrive late to this orientation, you may not be permitted to volunteer.

Cancellations

Plan to contact APT staff (see page 4 for information) as soon as you learn about a conflict with your ushering shift. If you find your own substitute for a Hill show, you must communicate this change to Grace as soon as it is finalized.

Arrival Time

The arrival time in your usher reminder email is the time when you should be in the theater lobby ready to work. This is always one hour before the performance start time. Please note that from the parking lot, the Hill Theatre is a 10-minute hike uphill and the Touchstone Theatre is roughly a 5-minute walk.

For example, if the show time is 7:30 PM, your orientation starts at 6:30 PM. You should arrive in our parking lot no later than 6:20 PM for a Hill show and 6:25 PM for a Touchstone show.

Ushers who need a ride from the parking lot need to communicate this to an APT staff member ahead of time. The patron shuttles start running too late for you to make it to orientation.

Hill Shows Google Group

The Hill Shows Google Group is an online forum for ushers to connect with each other about ride shares, switching usher dates or ideas related to ushering at APT. Any changes or swaps need to be communicated to APT staff. Do not expect that someone else will take care of this for you. The person who started the conversation should plan to communicate the change to APT.

To be added to the Google Group, email ushers@americanplayers.org.

Dress Code

All volunteer ushers are required to wear the provided smock and nametag during the performance to be easily identifiable to both patrons and staff. Otherwise, ushers for the Hill Theatre should dress comfortably for the weather. Please note that APT does not provide rain gear for volunteers, but ponchos are available to purchase in the Gift Shops. We recommend shoes that cover the toes and are comfortable to hike in. Please refrain from wearing strong fragrances, as some patrons or staff may be sensitive.

Storing and Securing Belongings

Ushers may store belongings in assigned usher seats or in the Information Booth (Hill) or House Manager's office (Touchstone). Items stored with house staff cannot be accessed until after the performance. Cell phones must be turned off until the performance ends.

Usher Seating

Seating options are at the discretion of the House Manager and will be listed at the orientation meeting before the performance. Ushers are expected to remain in assigned seating. Violation of this policy may result in usher termination.

Before the Show

There is a lot of activity before the theater opens for seating. Ushers must stay in the lobby while actors and technicians are present in the house or on stage. A house staff member will let ushers know the appropriate time to set down their belongings. When seating begins, ushers are expected to be ready at their posts.

Intermission and Post-Show

Please be respectful of our patrons during intermission and provide assistance as needed. After the show, all ushers are expected to help pick up any discarded or lost items in the house before leaving.

Food and Beverage

Ushers may enjoy food and beverages until patrons arrive. All food and drink consumption must cease while greeting and assisting patrons. Consuming alcohol while ushering is not permitted.

Working with the House Managers

The House Manager or Assistant House Manager will alert ushers both when the house is about to open and when they may be seated. For safety reasons, please do not open ropes or seat any patrons until asked by the HM/AHM. Should any issues or questions arise during the ushering shift, ushers are encouraged to seek out the HM/AHM. At the end of the show, please do not leave without checking in with the HM/AHM.

Weather

Ushers play a key role during inclement weather (see page 13)! Please keep in mind that we rarely cancel a performance ahead of time. While we assume ushers will make every effort to arrive for their scheduled shift, we fully expect volunteers to put their safety first regarding the weather.

Feedback

Volunteer feedback is important to us. Make sure that you update us on any changes in contact information so we can have clear communication throughout the season. If you have comments, ideas or issues at any time, please email ushers@americanplayers.org.

Termination of Usher Status

Although we hate to do it, if a volunteer fails to attend two usher assignments with no prior warning and/or fails to uphold the rules and values presented in this handbook, they will no longer be allowed to usher.

APT House Rules and Policies

No Carry-ins

Carry-ins of food and drink are not allowed in the theater, with the exception of bottles of water. Drinks purchased at the concession stand may be brought into the seating area Up the Hill and in the Touchstone, but no glass bottles are allowed. Drinks in glass bottles can be poured into a cup before entering the theater. Cups are located at Concessions or the Hill Information Booth.

There are water fountains in the Hill and Touchstone lobbies.

No Video or Photos of Any Kind

Photos and videos are not allowed in the theater during the performance. If the stage is empty, patrons may take a picture of the bare set. If you see someone taking pictures or recording during the performance or curtain call, note their location as specifically as possible and inform the House Manager or Assistant House Manager immediately.

Late Seating

Patrons who arrive late will be seated at an appropriate interval during the performance at the discretion of the House Manager.

Aisles Must Remain Clear at All Times

Please keep the aisles clear, as they will be used by the actors. Wheelchairs, crutches, bags, etc. must be kept under the seat or in designated areas.

No Infants and Children Under the Age of Six at Performances

If you do notice an infant or small child, please note their location and inform the House Manager immediately.

No Pets

No pets of any kind (with the exception of service dogs) are allowed on the grounds or in the theaters. If you encounter a non-service animal, please note their location and inform the House Manager immediately.

No Smoking

There is absolutely no smoking in either theater. If you see someone smoking outside the designated area, please inform the House Manager or kindly direct the patron to the designated smoking areas.

Weather

In the event of rain, every effort will be made to complete the performance, including playing in light rain. If the show is held due to weather, the decision to play or cancel will be made within 45 minutes following the rain hold. If the show is canceled before Act I is complete, patrons may receive a refund or tickets for another performance in the current season (subject to availability). If canceled after Act I is complete, there are no refunds but patrons may exchange tickets for another performance in the current season (subject to availability). **For ushers, the usher coordinator will reach out with available options if the show is cancelled in the first Act.**

Shuttle

Shuttles to theaters begin 45 minutes before show time and stop 10 minutes before show time. Patrons should be at the shuttle stop no later than 30 minutes before the performance is scheduled to begin. Service begins again at the end of the show. If a patron needs assistance getting down the Hill before the show is over, please locate the House Manager as soon as possible. See page 7 if you are an usher needing a ride up.

Wheelchair Seating

All seats in Row F Sections 5 and 6 as well as seats Row R 319-314 (Section 3) and Row Q 215-218 of the Hill Theatre, and select seats in Row E in the Touchstone Theatre, are wheelchair accessible. This seating can be pre-arranged with the Box Office.

Assisted Listening Devices

Assisted listening devices are available in both theaters. Please direct patrons to the Information Booth in the Hill Theatre or the House Manager in the Touchstone to acquire the device. A T-coil loop system has been installed in both theaters and requires no additional devices for patrons with telecoil fitted hearing aids and cochlear implants. Auracast Bluetooth is also enabled in both theaters. Further questions can be answered at the Information Booth.

Emergency Procedures

In General (continued next page)

- In the event of an announcement to evacuate the theater, volunteers should do so—but assist any patrons with mobility impairments if needed.
- In the event of an announcement indicating an unexpected intermission or temporary hold of the performance, volunteers should return to their posts.
- If a patron needs medical assistance or first aid, volunteers should alert a member of House Staff immediately.
- If a patron disturbs the performance in a manner that requires attention, volunteers should find the House Manager immediately.
- In all instances, volunteer ushers should remain calm and follow the announcements and the House Manager's instructions, placing their own safety first.

- If a volunteer feels they are in a life-threatening situation, they should absolutely remove themselves from that situation.
- Ushers are expected to assist patrons, especially patrons with mobility issues, in exiting the theater. Ushers should make sure to return walkers and wheelchairs to patrons.
- Ushers should not leave the theater without checking out with the House Manager or Assistant House Manager, unless their personal safety is at issue.
- When in doubt, volunteers should return to the Information Booth (Uphill) or House Management Office (Touchstone) for instructions.
- It is always appreciated when volunteers with first aid or other medical training notify the House Manager or Assistant House Manager when they check in, or contact the Usher Coordinator in advance.
- First-aid kits, an AED and a wheelchair are available in both theaters.

Minor Accidents and Falls

Ushers should stay with the injured person and send another usher—or patron, if necessary—to get the House Manager. If the patron insists that they do not need assistance but appears injured, note the patron’s appearance and where the patron is sitting, and report the incident to the House Manager immediately. Should a patron request a bandage or ice pack, those items are available from the House Manager or at the Information Booth in the Hill Theatre.

APT does not give out any over-the-counter medications, but the Gift Shop does have a limited selection for purchase.

Medical Emergency

In case of heart attack, stroke, seizure or other medical emergency, notify the House Manager immediately. If it is during the performance, an announcement will be made to hold the performance and either clear the house or ask patrons to remain in their seats. If possible, the House Manager will move the person either to the lobby or, if the situation warrants, into the Gift Shop. Volunteer ushers are expected to meet a member of House Staff at the Information Booth and await instructions from House Staff.

Tornado Warning

In the event of a tornado warning, an announcement will be made with shelter directions. Ushers should also take shelter in adherence to the announcement, helping any patrons in need along the way. When the warning is over, an “all clear” announcement will be made. In the Touchstone, audience and staff remain inside the theater.

Rain

In the event of a rain delay, an announcement will be made. Ushers may find shelter during the hold, but please assist any patrons with mobility impairments if needed and, if possible, report to the Information Booth for further instruction. In the event of resuming the show, ushers are expected to report back to their posts. House Staff will have paper towels for ushers to pass out to re-seating patrons. If the show is cancelled, ushers are needed to help ensure that patrons leave the theater safely.

AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE’S POLICY and PROCEDURE on HARASSMENT and DISCRIMINATION

Policy

APT is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment because of race, color, religion or belief, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy status, age, disability, military or veteran status, genetic information, or medical history.

Continued next page

Definitions of Harassment and Discrimination

Workplace harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on a person's protected characteristic which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environment.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- unwelcome advances, inquiries, comments or attention,
- unwanted touching or physical contact,
- requests for sexual favors,
- vulgar, insulting, or threatening language, offensive jokes, insulting sounds or gestures
- unwanted or inappropriate comments about physical characteristics, clothing or activities
- display or transmission of offensive or inappropriate materials

Workplace discrimination is unfair treatment based on a person's protected characteristic, including differences in hiring, training, application of policies and procedures, or other employment-related decisions.

Other Considerations

- Because people have different tolerances when it comes to feeling harassed, complaints will be evaluated from the point of view of the person making the complaint.
- APT will not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who in good faith report alleged violations of this policy, or who cooperate with APT's investigation of such reports, even if the reports do not reveal any wrongdoing. Any retaliation is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.
- Violation of APT's Harassment Policy is grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination.
- This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and board members and is not limited to incidents on APT property.
- While this policy does not officially cover audience members or others who may be encountered in the course of APT employment, staff members are encouraged to report any harassment or disturbing incidents. APT Leadership will make best efforts to address it and stop it.

Procedure for Reporting Harassment

Step 1: Talk to a Manager

Harassment may be reported to any of the following staff at APT:

Your Direct Supervisor
Your Equity Stage Manager
Managing Director (Sara Young)
Artistic Director (Brenda DeVita)
Production Manager (Laura Arnold)
Operations Manager (Cari Stebbins)
Finance Director (Kimm Tomala)
Associate Artistic Director (Carey Cannon)
Artistic Associate (Alys Dickerson)
Production Stage Manager (Evelyn Matten)
Head of Voice and Text (Sara Becker)
Company Manager (Jane Heer)
Associate Company Manager (Lauren Dochnahl)

If, for any reason, APT staff members are not viable options in reporting harassment, you may contact APT Board members: Leslie Petty (co-chair of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access – IDEA committee) or Sherry Lundell (chair of the HR committee)

Sherry Lundell, Chair, Human Relations Committee: sherrylundell@yahoo.com

Leslie Petty, Co-chair, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access (IDEA) Committee:
lpetty1@madisoncollege.edu

Step 2: The Manager will Consult the Managing Director

Harassment complaints and investigations will be handled by APT's Managing Director. The manager to whom you bring the complaint will notify the Managing Director who will meet in private with the two of you for an initial conversation about the complaint.

Note: If the Managing Director is not available to handle the complaint or has a disqualifying conflict of interest, the complaint will be assigned to another member of

APT's Leadership Team, which includes the Artistic Director, Production Manager, Finance Director, Operations Manager and Production Stage Manager.

Step 3: Choose the Formal or Informal Complaint Process

The complaint procedure allows for two levels of complaint, each with a different resolution path. It is up to the person bringing the complaint to choose the level that feels right to them.

Informal Complaint: The informal complaint process attempts to resolve the issue through mediation. The Managing Director or designee will attempt to facilitate a mutually acceptable resolution between the two parties. This process involves as few people as necessary, with each step being clearly discussed with the complainant and respondent.

Formal Complaint: The formal complaint process involves a thorough investigation and determination of whether the Harassment Policy has been violated. The investigation could include gathering facts and accounts from other staff members and the Managing Director will likely receive assistance from APT's attorney. The formal complaint results in an action plan, and the incident and outcome will be reported to the Governance Committee of APT's Board of Directors. In some cases, APT's Board of Directors may be required to approve or be involved in the process if further action is warranted. Note: At any time, the person bringing the complaint may choose to change from an informal to formal process or vice versa. If circumstances warrant, the Managing Director may determine a formal complaint process is necessary even if the complainant chooses an informal complaint.

Step 4: Investigation or Fact Gathering

Depending on the type of complaint chosen, the Managing Director will gather information from the people involved, or they will conduct an investigation. The process will take place in as timely a manner as possible, and the Managing Director will update both parties regularly on progress and timeline.

Step 5: Resolution/Action Plan and Reporting

For an informal complaint, a course of action is determined and communicated to the parties. For a formal complaint, an action plan is prepared, communicated to the parties

and carried out. Reports are made to and action is taken by APT's Board of Directors as indicated in Step 3 above.

Informal and formal complaints will be documented in writing by the Managing Director and added to the personnel files of the parties.

Your hard work helps keep everything running smoothly and ensures that our patrons have the best possible experience.

THANK YOU!!