

**VOLUNTEER**

**HANDBOOK**

**(October 19, 2023)**

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**WELCOME**

Arkansas Public Theatre thanks you, and wants you to know that your support is vital to the existence of APT. Our future promises greater community development and initiatives, while maintaining our productions’ relevancy in keeping our community lively and inspired.

Please take time to review the information and policies contained in this handbook. If you have questions, please feel free to ask management. It is important for us to gather feedback from our volunteers on their experience and how our volunteer program could be improved.

Arkansas Public Theatre

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[www.ArkansasPublicTheatre.org](http://www.ArkansasPublicTheatre.org)  Arkansas Public Theatre

APT is 501(c)(3) tax-exempt

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**About APT at the Victory**

The Victory Theater was designed by noted Rogers architect A.O. Clarke and opened in December 1927. The theater served as a community gathering place and was renovated several times as a movie and vaudeville theater before closing its doors in the early 1970s.

After a brief stint as a flea market, the Victory Theater became the home of Rogers Little Theater, and they began doing dinner theater.

In 2008, with generous help from the Wal-Mart Foundation, contributions from civic-minded donors and the effort of tireless volunteers, the City of Rogers purchased the Victory Theater with an agreement that it would serve as the long-term home of the theater.

In 2016 Rogers Little Theater moved away from the dinner theater format and was rebranded as Arkansas Public Theatre.

For the past thirty-six years the theater has been a community-based organization that believes in the performing arts as an essential part of a healthy community and economy. APT began as a small theatre group putting on plays wherever the productions were welcome. Each of the previous seasons has shaped the organization into one that presents Broadway-caliber productions with volunteer actors, directors, designers, and technicians.

**Mission**

Arkansas Public Theatre provides live theater experiences for audiences, performers, and students, enhancing the Rogers Historic District and creating a regional destination.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

Arkansas Public Theatre is a haven for everyone to be true to themselves. We recognize and embrace the unique perspectives and contributions brought forth by all, in terms of education, opinions, culture, ethnicity, race, sex, gender identity, orientation, nation of origin, age, language, veteran status, religion, disability and beliefs.

APT belongs to our vibrant, diverse, and ever-changing region. Here we celebrate and elevate all the individuals that comprise our community and value our diverse patrons, actors, production crew and volunteers. This absolute commitment to welcoming and empowering all, not only makes our organization stronger, but it is the right thing to do.

We strive to actively seek out diverse playwrights and present work that goes beyond entertainment. We are intentional in our efforts to include different cultures and backgrounds in our programming. We feel that an inclusive culture inspires us to expand our horizons, try new things, speak openly and be bold.

[**Language Bank for DEI Terms**](https://www.americansforthearts.org/about-americans-for-the-arts/cultural-equity/language-bank)



**Front of House Production**

Administration Acting

Box Office Costuming

Check In Hair & Makeup

Concessions Lighting and Sound

Facility Maintenance Props

Marketing Sets

Usher Stage Manager

There are so many ways to volunteer and support APT while sharing your interests and talents. Training is available and hours are flexible. Every bit of time given helps in both productions and front of house. As they say, it takes a village, it really does. Volunteering is also a great way to make new friends and be a part of something big. Join our community theatre family.

Join us for some of our scheduled gatherings where we will come together for fun and sharing of ideas and information regarding our programs, protocols, and culture.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Below is a basic list of the many roles to be played in this community theatre. Some are specific to productions, other to operations. All of them are important and work together. Find one or more that speak to you. Do you know someone who would be interested? Share these opportunities with them.

**Acting** – APT has an 6-show season every year with auditions for each one, usually on a Monday evening with callbacks the following Tuesday if needed. Audition packets are available prior to the auditions on the website for all plays and musicals. Acting in an APT production is at least a two-month commitment.

**Administration** – Organizational support, writing, spreadsheets, data entry, proofing documents, answering phones, and other various office work. This work usually takes place during the weekdays at the office or anytime from home.

**Box Office** – Tickets sales at an event. Ticketing system knowledge is a must. May require working in ticket booth for up to an hour at a time. Required to arrive 30 minutes before doors open for show.

**Check In** – Checking in patrons and making sure they know their seat number as they arrive. Basic ticketing knowledge is preferred. Will be standing for over an hour at a time. Required to arrive 30 minutes before doors open for show.

**Concessions** – Snack and beverage sales. Must be 21 years of age to sell alcohol. Required to arrive 30 minutes before doors open for show. Restocking for intermission if needed. Preshow stocking may require carrying product up to 30lbs.

**Costuming** – Assisting with tailoring, repairs, laundry, research, and shopping for show costumes and accessories. Sewing skills preferred. Design skills a plus. Work depends on show and assistance needed. Flexible hours depending on show.

**Facility Maintenance** – Building upkeep and cleaning. General maintenance and handy skills preferred. Work depends on project or duties. Flexible hours.

**Hair and Makeup** – Assisting with hair and makeup design, shopping, and execution. Keeping supplies clean, sterilized, and organized. Hair and makeup experience preferred. Cosmetology training is a plus. Flexible hours depending on show.

**Lighting and Sound** – Assisting in setting up, research, and execution of light and sound cues for shows and other events. Experience preferred. Training available. Work depends on show and position commitment.

**Marketing** – Assistance with graphic design, social media, press releases, photography, video content, merchandising, communications and more. Various editing software knowledge and experience a plus. Flexible hours.

**Props** – Assisting in research, design, creation, shopping and procuring of various props needed for shows. Flexible hours.

**Sets** – Assisting with set design, construction, painting, and decorating. Research, shopping and procuring of furniture and other set dressing.

**Stage Manager** – Assisting actors during rehearsals and shows with props, costumes, mics, cues and set movements. Required to be at stage rehearsals and performances 30 minutes prior to show time.

**Usher** – After patrons have checked in and been given their seat number, ushers are to guide them to their seats and inform them about intermission if there is one, show run time, bathroom locations, concession availability and anything else that would be helpful to them before the show. Also, to make sure patrons are following fire code and not moving seating around. Required to arrive 30 minutes prior to doors opening.



**POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**How to Volunteer**

For show days go [www.ArkansasPublicTheatre.org/castingandvolunteering](http://www.ArkansasPublicTheatre.org/castingandvolunteering%20)  and sign up for the performance you wish to work at. If you cannot attend for some reason after you have signed up, please contact the theatre manager as soon as possible and let them know so they can try to replace you. For other types of volunteering contact theatre staff directly.

**Volunteer Perks and Benefits**

When volunteering on show nights you will be allowed to see the performance for free if there are seats available. You can also volunteer just to usher or do concessions even if you don’t want to see the show. The manager will tell you where you can sit. Generally, it is in the back or the balcony, but you may be asked to fill in the audience. Be enthusiastic and responsive as an audience participant.

**Matching Funds**

During the summer Walmart makes a grant through GivePulse matching eligible volunteer hours by community members or associates equal to **$10 in honor of each volunteer hour**, up to a maximum total volunteer matching amount of $1,000,000.

Documenting our volunteers hours is very important data to share with our sponsors, partners and often grant applications.

**General Expectations**

Your good health is vital to a successful production. If you are ill do not come in.

Good hygiene. Please be neat and clean. Please dress for the job you will be doing.

Volunteers who are impaired in some way, drug use, intoxicated, etc., are a danger to themselves and others. Please do not come to work unless you are ready to work safely.

If you make a mess, clean it up!

Tend to restrooms if they need anything or inform a member of staff.

Stay hydrated! Keep a reusable water bottle labeled with your name on it. There is a water fountain located next to the men's restroom on the first floor.

APT staff are not responsible for your belongings. Remember where you put them.

**Show Nights**

Volunteers are the first smiling, welcome faces of the theatre as patrons enter. We want to put our best foot forward, make the patrons feel how happy we are to see them and that we are excited to show them what APT can do.

 The APT relies heavily on its volunteer staff and appreciates their assistance with the various aspects of helping the theatre operate smoothly. Please remember volunteering is still doing a job and if you volunteer you need to show up and do that job.

Theatre doors open an hour before show starts. Sometimes, you will be told they are holding a little longer for one reason or another. Some performances begin in the lobby and once the doors close, outside patrons will not be admitted until the manager says it is alright.

On an average performance we require a minimum of 6-8 front of house volunteers, apart from special occasions or if we have concession servers.

**If you didn’t sign up to volunteer please don’t just show up without knowing you are needed.** Go to the volunteer page and sign up. That way we will know how many volunteers to expect. Having 10 people show up when only 6 volunteered and are plenty, just adds to the crowd in the lobby. We appreciate all the volunteers, but if all the volunteer slots for a performance night have been filled then please volunteer for another night. There is almost always another performance that will need help.

All volunteers will sign in when they arrive and out when they leave so that their hours may be clocked for grant purposes. New volunteers will be given a lapel pin that says ‘volunteer’. Regular volunteers will have a pin with their name on it. Please wear the pin in a visible place so that patrons will know you are part of the theatre staff.

New volunteers must be at the theatre ½ hour before the doors open so they can be shown their duties. Regular volunteers need to be there 15 minutes before the doors open.

**Check In**

Volunteers will include at least one person designated as ‘check-in’. This person stands at the podium and checks in patrons as the arrive. Others with the appropriate app on their phone may step in as needed if the lobby becomes busy. **Please do not stand in front of the podium or block the doors.** Stand by the concession stand and direct patrons to you if it becomes busy. Once it slows down go back to your regular duties.

Volunteers who are ushers will stand behind the check-in person so that you can be called up as needed. Do not stand randomly in the lobby visiting. You are here to help the patrons. If you do not hear what the check in person said, ask them again. Refer any issues with tables or seating to either the manager or the check in person.

If there are any questions you cannot answer please get the theatre manager or whoever is acting in their stead to assist you. It can get confusing sometimes.

**Patrons With Accessibility Needs**

Please pay particular attention to the needs of patrons in wheelchairs, with walkers, or who otherwise need special assistance. Wheelchair seating is available, please see the house manager for assistance in the area.

Assistive Listening Devices will also be available to patrons with auditory needs. Please ask Front of House staff or House Manager for assistance with these devices.

**Concessions**

Volunteers must show proof of being 21 years of age and sign an alcohol awareness form. Concession volunteers are responsible for drink sales, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, checking ID’s, and food sales. Checking out customers correctly, and restocking inventory if needed.

The concessions close 10 minutes before the show starts unless the manager informs you otherwise. There are occasionally times when concessions will stay open throughout the performance and there are shows with an intermission where the stand will re-open for 15 minutes. If you need to know before you volunteer please call the theatre and check before you volunteer.

**Dress Code**

To contribute to the atmosphere that these are indeed the quality performances the patrons are expecting, we request that all volunteers dress in a manner consistent with proper hygiene, safety, and good taste. Preferred front of house attire is black and white, business casual is fine.

This includes

* Button up/blouse/polo
* Dresses/skirts
* Slacks/dress pants
* Dress shoes/heels/nice tennis shoes (should be comfortable)
* Sweaters

Please refrain from wearing the following:

* Jeans/shorts/athletic attire
* T-shirts (APT t-shirts are okay)
* Flip flops or similar footwear

When in doubt wear black on black!

This, plus your badge, will help patrons know who is associated with the theatre and who can help or answer questions. We want to project a professional image to our patrons and community partners.

There are exceptions, such as dressing to follow the theme of the show, ex: Rocky Horror, or something like that. Sometimes show t-shirts or other items are available to volunteers to wear which is fine. Dress for the job you will be doing on non-show days.

**Photos & Recording**

The images of productions are the property of APT. Toward that end, APT zealously protects what images and when the images are broadcast in any medium.

Video or images of any APT play rehearsal or performance taken may **NOT** be broadcast in any form other than within private cast/crew groups to be used for rehearsal purposes (this excludes any private groups created on Facebook or Instagram; example, a video of a dance rehearsal).

**Harassment**

APT is an open, safe, welcoming organization. Please be aware of your actions and words towards others. We embrace diversity and encourage everyone to be themselves but require everyone be treated with consideration and respect.

We will not tolerate the use of inappropriate language or comments that would make anyone involved in the production uncomfortable. In the case of children cast in the show, you will be recused of your role/position if you use profanity in the presence of young actors.

If you feel you are being deliberately harassed or put in an uncomfortable position by another member of staff, production, volunteers or patrons by their words or actions, please report it to the theatre manager or another person in a position of authority. Behavior such as this will not be tolerated**.**

We will not tolerate physical altercations or inappropriate touching of another person. Remain pleasant even if the patron is not. Get the manager immediately.

**Background Check**

Depending on what capacity that you will be volunteering, you may be asked to submit to a background check, which may also include Child Maltreatment Check. All cost will be paid by APT.

**Event Cancellation**

In the rare case of inclement weather or a facility issue, an event may be cancelled. You will be contacted via email and possibly by phone if cancellation takes place.

**Emergency Situations**

In the event of an emergency please follow the directions you are given by a person in authority to ensure everyone’s safety.

**Fire**

Any staff member or volunteer who sees flames anywhere in the facility should pull the nearest alarm box handle and immediately call 911 and apprise the emergency officials of the exact location and nature of the fire. The House Manager should then be notified. Once the building has been evacuated, staff and volunteers will post themselves at all entrances to make sure no one enters the building until it is deemed safe.

**Tornado**

Watch: The House Manager will check the weather conditions with the NOAA Weather Radio prior to a performance or another type of event. The NOAA radio is located at the front desk. Signs will be placed in the Lobby to alert patrons of severe weather. Sign will read: “Should severe weather occur during the performance; patrons will be notified as to where to go.”

Warning: Check with the House Manager. Advise patrons that a tornado warning has been issued and to go to the basement.

**First Aid and Medical Emergencies**

We have several first aid kits throughout the building. In case of a medical emergency, notify the House Manager immediately.

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**VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT FORM**

**2022**

I have read, understand, and agree to the policies and expectations outlined in this handbook.

As a volunteer for the APT, I understand that I am representing the theatre when I am there and will present myself in the manner of dress and decorum expected. I will treat the staff, production people, other volunteers, and patrons with respect both in word and action and will expect the same in return.

I will use the volunteer web page to sign up prior to a shift and contact the theatre if I cannot make the shift I have signed up for.

I will sign in when I arrive to clock my hours and I will sign out when my shift is completed.

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Name

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Signature Date

116 South 2nd Street, Rogers, AR 7275 Manager@ArkansasPublicTheatre.org 479-631-8988