

Front of House Manual For Volunteer Ushers



ARONOFF CENTER
MUSIC HALL

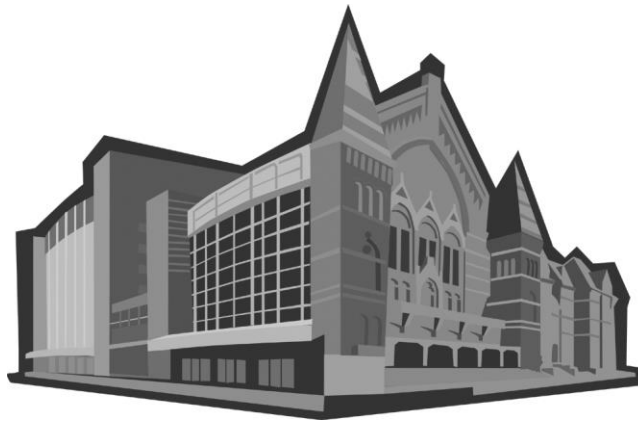
Revised: January 2022

This manual, and subsequent policies, supersedes any previous CAA manuals and policy to date.

Please see current Aronoff Center and Music Hall manuals for detailed specifics for each building



ARONOFF CENTER MUSIC HALL



www.CincinnatiArts.ORG

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Contents

- THE CINCINNATI ARTS ASSOCIATION..... 3
 - Mission Statement 4
 - The Aronoff Center for the Arts 5
 - Music Hall..... 7
 - Front of House Guest Service Philosophy 8
 - Facility Rules for Guests..... 10
 - General Service Guidelines..... 11
 - Potential Situations and Solutions 13
 - Guests with Disabilities..... 15
- Usher Information 18
 - Usher Mission Statement 18
 - Becoming an Usher..... 18
 - Usher Position Description 19
 - CAA Expectations of Ushers 20
- DRESS CODE..... 21
 - CAA supplies the following 3 items: 21
 - Unacceptable Accessories:..... 22
- Arrival..... 22
 - Usher Performance 23
 - Leave of Absence 23
- Benefits 24
- Calendar..... 25
- Event Types..... 25
 - Regular Events:..... 25
 - Gold Sheet Events:..... 25
 - Lottery Events:..... 26
- SCHEDULING OF EVENTS..... 27
 - Scheduling 2 or more people: 28
 - Back Up List..... 29
- Early Scheduling (prior to an event posting)..... 29
 - Blue Sheet Event Passes (blue sheets):..... 29
 - “Call in” Sign-ups: 30
- USHER SCHEDULE CHANGES..... 30

Finding a Substitute	30
No Shows and Cancellations	31
FACILITY RULES FOR VOLUNTEERS.....	31
Electronic Devices:.....	32
Family Contacting Volunteers:.....	32
Theater Etiquette:.....	32
Merchandise.....	33
Solicitation Policy:.....	33
Respect:.....	34
Access:	34
SEPARATION.....	34
EMERGENCY INFORMATION.....	35
Injuries and Accidents.....	35
*** <i>Inclement weather and fire evacuation routes and procedures can be referenced in both the Aronoff Center and Music Hall portions of the volunteer manuals.</i>	35
HOW TO READ TICKETS.....	36
Cincinnati Arts Association Staff.....	39
Volunteer Engagement Office.....	39
Theater Term Glossary	40



650 WALNUT STREET
CINCINNATI, OH 45202-2517
CINCINNATIARTS.ORG

Welcome!

On behalf of the Cincinnati Arts Association, it is my pleasure to welcome you as a new volunteer. You are joining the ranks of nearly 1,000 other dedicated and talented individuals who contribute to the vital operations and administration of our organization .

The Cincinnati Arts Association strives to provide high-quality programs, guest service and first-class venues to the Greater Cincinnati community. As a volunteer, you become an active participant in, and ambassador for, these valuable services.

We are proud of our many accomplishments. On an annual basis, we engage nearly 90,000 school children through CAA's arts education programs in our venues and in the schools. The Weston Art Gallery is among the finest visual art spaces in the Tri-state, and is consistently recognized for its excellence and focus on local and regional artists. Our presenting seasons bring some of the world's most exciting, diverse and intriguing artists to the Tri-state. And, our nationally-recognized, state-of-the-art facilities – Music Hall and the Aronoff Center – are the finest performing arts facilities in the region, each serving 400,000 - 500,000 guests annually.

Thank you for your commitment and for investing your valuable time with us. We are delighted that you are joining the Cincinnati Arts Association family, as we continue to bring the best of the arts to Cincinnati audiences. I look forward to seeing you at the theater!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen A. Loftin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Stephen A. Loftin
President and Executive Director

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in our program and assisting us in fulfilling our mission.

The impression an audience member receives upon their arrival is key. A thoughtful and respectful staff is one of the more lasting impressions guests take away from their visit to our venues. Attending a performance at the Aronoff Center or at Music Hall should carry with it a sense of occasion, a feeling of “going out on the town.” It is you who make it possible for the guest to have a truly enjoyable event by a nice word or an extra service. It is you who bring a “Cincinnati Welcome” into the theater, providing an atmosphere conducive to the fullest experience of live performance.

The Front of House Staff is comprised almost completely of volunteers. The time and service you offer helps to keep the arts and entertainment alive in the theaters and within the community for you, your neighbors and visitors to the Greater Cincinnati area. Without hours of service from dedicated individuals, or the excitement you share when discussing the performances with your family, it would be difficult for many to enjoy the entertainment that is regularly presented in Music Hall or the Aronoff Center.

Thank you for being part of our volunteer team, and sharing your enthusiasm for the arts with your neighbors and guests in Cincinnati. We're glad you're here!

Front of House Staff

THE CINCINNATI ARTS ASSOCIATION

You have joined the Cincinnati Arts Association (CAA), a not for profit organization which manages the rental use and maintenance of the Aronoff Center and Music Hall. CAA corporate offices are housed within the Aronoff Center.

The Aronoff Center is a state-owned building and CAA manages its use as well as manages the use of Music Hall (city owned). While CAA focuses on maintenance and rentals of facilities, it also strives to provide quality entertainment as a presenter, and offers an excellent Education Program to the region.

The purpose of the manual is to share policies, procedures and requirements for volunteers at CAA.

Mission Statement

As the region's premier promoter of the arts and entertainment, is to use its expertise as a manager, presenter, and educator to:

- Offer a broad range of high-quality performing and visual arts programs
- Develop diverse audiences
- Foster an appreciation of the arts and understanding of their forms
- Encourage the use of facilities by local and regional arts organizations

We meet our goals through our many departments. Whether we are presenting a show or marketing our clients' events to different neighborhoods, developing diverse audiences with different cultures and communities within the city, working with local schools or regional artists through our Education department, or offering volunteer guided tours of the theaters or Gallery, we are always striving to present CAA in its most positive light.

Education and Community Programs

Since its inception in 1995, the Cincinnati Arts Association's (CAA) Education and Community Programs have reached more than 1.5 million people and have promoted learning through the arts by developing opportunities that are diverse, multi-disciplinary, and accessible to all ages and cultural groups. CAA's Community Arts mission is to educate, inspire and serve the Greater Cincinnati Region through engaging arts programs. CAA believes that all arts that are high quality need to be interactive and engaging as well as accessible and, when accomplished impacts human development and rejuvenate and nurture creativity. Through projects with artists, arts organizations and cultural institutions, CAA promotes the arts as an integral part of our community.

- **SchoolTime Performance Series** – consists of main stage performances given during regular school hours. Performances and presentations are designed to enhance school curricular requirements. This program serves various ages and multiple disciplines.
- **Artists on Tour** – an interactive arts program that brings the finest local teaching artists directly into schools or community centers and supports the curriculum and school schedules.

- **Overture Awards** – a competition to recognize, encourage and reward excellence in the arts among the Greater Cincinnati's high school students. Its mission is to encourage arts education as an integral part of students' education, and to create an environment that encourages ongoing training in, and appreciation of, the arts. The program annually awards \$4,000 scholarships to six area students for use toward any educational need. Additionally, 18 finalists are each awarded \$1000 scholarships. Students are nominated by their schools to compete in one of six areas: **Creative Writing, Dance, Instrumental Music, Theater, Visual Art, Vocal Music**
- **Cincy Emerging Arts Leaders** – an extension of the Emerging Leaders Network of the Americans for the Arts and is administered by the Cincinnati Arts Association. It supports the professional development needs of arts professionals in the Greater Cincinnati area.
- **Arts in Healing** – an initiative based on the principle that exposure and participation in the arts are transformative. Infusing the arts in both traditional and non-traditional setting while securing creative arts opportunities for our community to explore, discover, experience and discuss the arts as an active part of their healing ongoing wellness.
- **Special Projects** – A significant part of what CAA's Education and Community Relations Department accomplishes can be attributed to the development of community partnerships, which enables CAA to develop youth, artist and family workshops, performances and festivals that are held throughout the community. A key component to CAA's efforts is its Building Diverse Audiences Advisory Committee (BDAAC), which works with the education program to build cultural diversity and arts awareness in our community.

The Aronoff Center for the Arts

Opened in October 1995, the Aronoff Center is a special part of the Cincinnati community. State Senator Stanley Aronoff, for whom the building is named, assisted in securing state funding (\$40 million of the needed \$82 million) for construction. The State of Ohio owns the building itself and the Cincinnati Arts Association (CAA) is responsible for managing the Aronoff Center on behalf of the state, and also Music Hall which is owned by the City of Cincinnati. The mission of CAA is to bring first class entertainment onto its stages while promoting the arts. In addition to all of the organizations that rent these theaters, CAA is also a presenter. We work to bring the best of Broadway, ballet, children's programs, theater, concerts, and a host of locally and nationally produced events to Cincinnati.

3 independent performing arts spaces:

The **Procter & Gamble Hall**, a 2719-seat venue, has a fully equipped stage, and state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment to handle the largest of stage productions. This modern facility is the home for the Fifth Third Bank Broadway in Cincinnati and Cincinnati Ballet productions. As well as many other one-night concerts, comedy, and public performances. The main entrance is on Walnut Street.

The **Jarson-Kaplan Theater**, a 437-seat venue, combines full production capabilities with superb acoustics, excellent sight lines and comfortable seating. The Jarson-Kaplan Theater hosts a wide variety of gatherings, including seminars, conferences, and stage presentations. Among the local organizations which call this theater home are Contemporary Dance Theater, Exhale Dance and Cincinnati Music Theater. The main entrance is on Walnut Street.

The **Fifth Third Bank Theater**, seats up to 150 in a flexible configuration to fit different needs. With full lighting and sound capabilities, this space is ideal for experimental theater, business conferences or receptions. Cincinnati Playwrights Initiative presents in this space along with numerous other local arts groups. The main entrance is on Main Street, at the corner of Seventh Street.

Visual Arts: **Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery**, a 3,500 square foot area spanning two floors, is on the corner of Walnut and Seventh Streets. This versatile space provides a downtown exhibition venue while supporting the development of professional and emerging artists of the region.

The Weston Gallery is Cincinnati's premier art space for the latest artist projects, collaborations, site-specific installations, and new commissions and is located within the Aronoff Center for the Arts. The Weston Art Gallery is a staging ground for the most intriguing visual art of the region. Exhibitions feature painting, sculpture, prints, photography, textiles, independent video, performance, installations, and electronic media. Up to ten diverse exhibitions are programmed annually in the gallery's 3,500 square foot museum-quality space.

Additional spaces within the Aronoff Center include a full service box office, rehearsal hall, meeting and reception rooms and an expansive lobby. All spaces within the Aronoff Center are available for rent for corporate business and private social functions.

Resident companies for the Cincinnati Boy Choir and Broadway in Cincinnati have offices in the Aronoff Center.

Music Hall

Cincinnati's Music Hall was built in 1877. Exhibition halls were added to the north and south of the auditorium, and for decades Music Hall served Cincinnati as its first convention center, hosting industrial exhibitions, car shows, horticultural exhibits, and countless other events and activities. The Ballroom was added in 1921, and became well known for big band dance events. Music Hall is a National Historic Landmark, and home to the nation's fifth oldest symphony orchestra, second oldest opera company, and the longest running choral festival in the Western Hemisphere – the May Festival. We are fortunate to have the support of The Society for the Preservation of Music Hall, a non-profit organization dedicated to the past, present and future of this unique theater complex.

7 unique rental and performance spaces:

The **Springer Auditorium** is known the world over for its extraordinary acoustics and its lavish old world decor. With its plush seating for 2,555, it serves as home for the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops, Cincinnati Ballet, Cincinnati Opera and the May Festival Chorus. In addition, Springer Auditorium hosts a large number of touring performances, concerts, graduations and awards ceremonies.

Directly adjacent to Springer Auditorium is the main lobby area or **Edith B. Lindner Foyer**. The two-story ceiling make it one of the most beautiful and unique event spaces in the City. The Foyer can comfortably accommodate up to 200 guests for a dinner, dance, or wedding, and more for a cocktail party or reception.

P&G Founders Room, located between the Lindner Grand Foyer and Springer Auditorium, provides guests with a furnished space to relax before, during, or after a performance. A live audio/video broadcast of the stage is available in this space.

Wilks Studio, is a multi-use space that can serve as a rehearsal room or event space for weddings, receptions, fundraisers, meetings, or other gatherings. Located in the North Hall Concourse on the Balcony Level.

Taft Suite, located at the southwest end of the South Hall Concourse, is an event space with exposed brick and a waterfall ceiling that is used for smaller social or business events.

Corbett Tower, located on the east end of the Gallery Level, has been transformed through the restoration of its original cove ceiling, featuring an elegant stencil design. Windows formerly bricked-shut have been reopened

and their intricate tracery patterns have been meticulously recreated. Corbett Tower also showcases the three beautiful crystal chandeliers which were formerly located in the Edith B. Lindner Grand Foyer. This third floor reception room provides a unique setting for a wide variety of events. With seating for up to 250, Corbett Tower is frequently used for pre and post-concert functions, as well as for weddings, receptions, grand dinners and parties.

One of the most versatile spaces in Cincinnati, the **Music Hall Ballroom** is the second largest meeting space in the city, encompassing nearly 20,000 square feet. The Ballroom can accommodate up to 1,200 based on event requirements. It is frequently used for large receptions, exhibitions, fashion shows, class reunions and breakfast, lunch and dinner gatherings. It can also be used for stage performances and lectures. In 1998, a \$1.8 million renovation of the Ballroom was completed, featuring many architectural artifacts salvaged from Cincinnati's Albee Theater. The most recent addition to the Ballroom is the Mighty Wurlitzer organ, also from the Albee, which has been completely restored to its original grandeur.

Resident companies Cincinnati Opera and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra have offices within Music Hall.

Front of House Guest Service Philosophy

The focus of the Front of House must be directed to the needs of our guests, so that their experience is enjoyable and they return. Volunteers provide a key link to the guests, representing everything that the Aronoff Center and Music Hall strives for patron excellence. Volunteers are expected to smile, present themselves professionally and courteously, speak positively about all events and guests, show respect to all cultures and people, and strive to make each guest's experience memorable and positive. Ushers must provide accurate and timely information while making the guests feel special.

Staff and Volunteers of CAA who have contact with the public must always have *the guest's needs* and *CAA's reputation* uppermost in their mind. This is our guest service philosophy.

What is a Guest?

L.L. Bean says this about **guests**: *A guest is not dependent on us...we are dependent on them. A guest is not an interruption of our work...they are the purpose for it. We are not doing the guest a favor by serving them...they are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.*

Disney found four (4) things **guests** most want, listing most important first, which is not the order in which we typically might think:

- **To Feel Special**
- **Be Treated as an Individual**
- **Respect Their Children**
- **Knowledgeable Staff**
- CAA's guests are: the production companies, the artists, and the ticketed guests. Our goal is for them to remain happy and return to our facilities often.

What is Customer Service?

"Know what your customers want, even before they do." – Disney Institute

Customer service is **customer focused**. It is an attitude of providing exceptional service that permeates every facet of an organization, radiating out to every person utilizing the facilities. This focus, which you embody when volunteering, is how the Aronoff Center and Music Hall want to be perceived. As an usher you help us to achieve this goal.

Feeling special/Being treated as an individual is based in the guests' perception. Staff and volunteers should always be asking "**How am I being perceived?** Might someone not return because of an action I'm doing or from something I'm saying?"

Remember that experiences start at the door.

As an usher at the, I agree to follow this Theater Etiquette:

- I will minimize my movement in and out of the theater, or up and down from my seat since it is distracting.
- Comments about the show or guests will always be positive, no matter my personal opinion. I am representing CAA and the production on stage.
- Use of flashlights is for guest assistance in and out of the dark theater and emergencies; I will **never** aim the light at the stage or use it to read the program or look at a watch.
- I will refrain from whispering, except when necessary, as it is distracting and often heard by guests
- I will hold discussions longer than a sentence or two in the corridor or lobby.
- I will refrain from having my cell phone with me when volunteering in the theater.
- I will be aware of my surroundings at all times and proactively respond to potential issues before they become issues.

- Anytime the house lights come up, I will stand and be ready to assist guests.
- Anytime a guest is in the lobby, I will stand upright, not leaning, ready to assist.

Facility Rules for Guests

Guests attend events at the Aronoff Center and Music Hall under the fundamental assumption that they will enjoy the performance. This assumption extends to their expectation that they will also enjoy *the experience* of attending the event. The entire front of house staff is dedicated to ensuring the facility delivers a quality experience.

Implicit in the staff commitment to deliver an enjoyable experience is a requirement that guests adhere to policies established by the building and/or the presenter. Many of these may be posted in the lobbies to alert the guests or announced from stage prior to curtain. Because all of the facility rules can't be communicated to each guest as they enter, the front of house staff, including volunteer ushers may sometimes need to share and enforce them.

Ushers should ask guests to comply with the following rules one time and one time only and then ushers should seek help from the paid staff. If the inappropriate behavior continues, contact your Floor Supervisor (FS) immediately; they are typically in their lobby unless working with a guest. If not immediately available find the FS on the next floor, or find an Usher Captain to radio the paid staff or contact a bartender to call for help.

CAA does not expect its volunteers to take abuse from guests, so please seek help immediately if needed.

- Video, or audio recording devices are not allowed to be used inside the performance halls. These may remain with the guests, but inside a bag, coat or pocket.
- Cameras may be used in the theaters pre-show and at intermission, but not during the performances. When you see cameras out, please approach the guests to politely remind them that no photos can be taken during the show and phones should be silenced as well. The MOD will indicate exceptions if or when appropriate to you at the MOD meeting.
- Cellular phones, and other electrical devices should be in the off or silent mode during performances.
- Weapons of any kind are not permitted into this public assembly.
- All refreshments purchased at the Lobby Concessions are allowed in the theater, unless the production company dictates otherwise. No other food beyond these items may be brought into the lobbies or theater.

- Box seat ticket holders may enjoy food and beverage purchased through the Aronoff Center at their box seats.
- No smoking of any kind is permitted in CAA facilities unless as a part of a theatrical production.
- Coats or objects hung over front rails or box edges in the theater are fire hazards and are not allowed. Please actively ask that they be removed when you see them.
- Loud talking, crying babies, or disruptive guests may be asked by paid staff to leave the theater. Please inform the Floor Supervisor of continuing disruptive behavior after you've asked for it to stop. The Floor Supervisor decides on and supervises all movement of guests.
- Backstage areas are off limits to guests and volunteers.
- Everyone, including children, must have a ticket to enter the theater.

The manner in which theater policies are communicated to guests is critically important. Ushers must be polite, clear, and firm while doing their best to avoid guest confusion. When a guest becomes upset, no matter what the circumstances, it's best to apologize for the situation, and immediately seek assistance from the front of house staff.

Please note that an ushers' responsibility for enforcing the facility policies ends after they have asked the guest once to stop the behavior observed. If the inappropriate behavior continues or the guest becomes argumentative, find your Floor Supervisor immediately and request their assistance in addressing the situation.

Floor Supervisors are typically in the lobby unless working with a guest. If not immediately available find the FS on the next floor, or find an Usher Captain to radio the paid staff or contact a bartender to call for help.

CAA does not expect its volunteers to take abuse from guests, so please seek help immediately if needed. Ushers always are considered to be on-duty and should represent CAA in a respectful, tactful, and polite way.

General Service Guidelines

Guest service not only extends to our guests, but also to other staff and volunteers. CAA prides itself on offering excellent guest service as well as developing diverse audiences. Often CAA produces events which highlight different cultures, and invites communities into the facility who may be unfamiliar with the theaters.

This also means that there will be many cultures and people within our facilities, who may be unfamiliar to volunteers. ALL guests, regardless of

nationality, race, perceived sexual orientation, gender, disability or socio-economic income level are to be offered first class service while inside our buildings, regardless of individual feelings.

There are three classifications of guest service:

- **Expected Service** is when the guests' basic expectations are met; i.e. giving accurate and complete directions with a smile.
- **Tragic Moment** is when we have guest service failure; i.e. directing someone to the wrong side of the theater for their seats, or ignoring them when in the lobby. Our goal is to avoid these at all costs.
- **Magic Moment** is where we have not only met, but exceeded the guests' expectations; i.e. helping someone who is ill until their family can be with them, or anticipating a need such as where the water fountains are if they need to take a pill.

Magic Moments do not have to be large gestures, and in fact are sometimes acts that you might forget, but that the guest will remember. Our goal is for a positive and memorable experience for all guests. At the very least we want to provide them with expected service and always strive to offer magic moments in our theater so guests enjoy their live theater experience and return again for more.

Remember, you may be the only staff person a guest encounters, and it is imperative that guests take away a positive experience. As a valued representative of CAA your pride in your role as a volunteer enhances the quality of entertainment and service CAA provides. These guidelines are to be followed while volunteering.

Body Language:

- Begin and end every guest interaction with direct eye contact
- Face guests when they are interacting with you
- Smile and sincerely welcome guests to the facility
- Match facial expressions to words (i.e. concern shown when concerned, etc...)
- Exhibit good posture (no slouching, no leaning on railings or walls, no crossed arms)
- Read guests body language as well; note if they are frustrated and respond suitably
- Approach those who look lost or confused and ask "May I help you?"

Appropriate Tone of Voice:

- Should be calm, sincere, and light
- Should offer a suggestion to help, rather than condemnation
- Should never infer disgust, unhappiness, sarcasm

- Should relay to guest that their concerns are being handled seriously, even if volunteer or staff person personally finds the concern superfluous
- Should express concern, respect and attention

Employ Active Listening:

- Face guest and acknowledge what is being said with a head nod, or verbal “ok”
- Restate concerns/comments so that you have understood them correctly
- Offer solutions; if you cannot offer solutions, relay that you will bring the issue to the attention of your supervisor
- Thank the guest for bringing the issue to your attention
- Afterwards, follow up to insure guest needs are met

If you seek first to understand, it is easier to be understood. A way to do this is to employ active listening. We realize that most of your interactions with guests will not be long enough to employ all these skills; however, we'd like you to keep these in mind when interacting with anyone at the facilities.

Another way to show respect and authenticity is to employ **T.A.C.T. (Talk After Careful Thinking)**. This allows you to think about what the guest is actually asking, without any other extraneous filters from you or the guest. Once you are sure there are no biases or filters changing how you view the guest or the question asked, then you can answer their question politely and positively.

At the end of each guest encounter, thank the guest for attending. Without the guests, there is no Aronoff Center or Music Hall.

Potential Situations and Solutions

If a guest becomes argumentative or you are unsure how to respond, find your Floor Supervisors (FS). They are typically in their lobby unless working with a guest. If not immediately available find the FS on the next floor, or find an Usher Captain to radio the paid staff or contact a bartender to call for help.

In a time sensitive serious situation (ill guest/security issue) *when no one with a radio or access to a phone is available*, call over the rail to the Event Guard on the marble of the P&G Hall to get help to you NOW (only time sensitive AND serious situations).

Whenever a guest is injured, or ill, no matter how slightly, it **MUST** be reported immediately to the MOD or floor supervisor. **Only the Security Desk staff will call 911** and coordinate emergency responders when necessary, and staff will complete the necessary paperwork afterwards.

Situation	Solution
Guest comes on wrong date/time	Get FS to assist.
Guest does not like seat or location	Get FS to assist in reseating if possible.
At curtain, guest is waiting for friends in line at Ticketing Services	Politely offer for them to go inside & that you'll seat friends when they arrive.
Guest's seat behind large wheelchair or view obstructed	Get FS immediately to assist in reseating if possible.
Guest unable to access seat due to Medical Necessity	Get FS immediately to assist in reseating.
Guest (or guests child) is loud or disturbing other guests – <i>do NOT wait for nearby guests to complain. Be proactive!</i>	Politely ask guest to quiet down; if guest cannot quiet child, suggest that they move to lobby until child is quiet. If behavior persists, immediately get FS.
Guests shown to seats and other guests already occupying seats	Double check date/time; then check row & seat on both tickets. If correct, fold seated guests tickets & find FS immediately; if incorrect, reseat accordingly.
Camera flashes or recording devices noted (some shows allow cameras; MOD will advise when allowed)	Stand close to aisle & get attention of guest to discourage use; if behavior persists, advise FS immediately
Guest comments that theater is too hot or too cold; sound is too loud or too low	Advise guest you will alert staff; relay their concern to FS immediately with location
Guest wants to go backstage to give flowers or note to actor	Offer to take item for them, explaining house policy. Give any items to FS
Guest spills drink, gum found on seat, or other maintenance issue noticed (broken seat, light out, etc...)	Notify FS immediately; they will contact housekeeping or engineering to rectify
Guest enters with baby in arms & only has ticket for one person	Seek FS immediately; guest will need to purchase inexpensive ticket (i.e. last row of balcony) for child & FS can assist
Guest drapes coat over railing	Politely ask guest to remove coat, or offer to take to coat check; explain that it violates fire code

Any other situations that you are unsure of how to handle, please seek your Floor Supervisor quickly for assistance.

Guests with Disabilities

At CAA, we are committed to providing all our guests with a comfortable and enjoyable experience. We also recognize that the key to good guest service is to see the **person** with whom you are interacting and to communicate appropriately.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) mandates reasonable accommodations be made for all guests in public facilities. The following guidelines are a resource for you to provide every guest with quality service and attention.

- Treat everyone as you would like to be treated.
- **Offer** to assist first and only *assist when asked*.
- Communicate clearly and straightforwardly.
- See the person who has the disability as a person, not as a disability.
- Speak to the person at their appropriate age level; avoid "talking down."
- Be patient.
- Ask how you may address the guest whenever possible and speak directly to the individual, not to a companion or an interpreter.
- Introduce yourself, using a normal tone of voice.
- Treat adults as adults.
- Use first names *only if* that familiarity is extended to everyone present.
- Be considerate. It might take extra time for a person with a disability to respond.
- It is okay to ask the guest how to best assist them, as their needs and expectations will be unique.
- If you receive a request for assistance which you cannot fulfill, be polite in explaining why you cannot help.
For instance, ushers should not assist persons with disabilities in using the restrooms.

Persons who use a wheelchair or other mobility assistive device

- Keep in mind hovering around the person and offering unsolicited help indicates the assumption of inability, and most likely will upset the guest. Guests may appear to struggle in your eyes, but are doing fine in theirs.
- Don't take offense if the person declines help, politely or otherwise.
- Leaning or hanging on a person's wheelchair is an invasion of that person's body space.
- Whenever possible, allow a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches to keep them within reach.

- Transfers into or out of a wheelchair are beyond the expectations of CAA volunteers and any requests to do so should be declined politely.
- Consider distance, weather conditions, and surfaces such as stairs, curbs, carpeting, or inclines when giving directions.

Persons with hearing loss

- Be flexible in your language. If the person has difficulty understanding you, you may try to rephrase your statement. If the difficulty persists, stop repeating and write it down legibly.
- Face the guests as often as possible.
- Be a lively speaker. Use facial expressions that match your tone of voice and use moderate gestures and body movements to aid communication.
- Under the ADA, working dogs are allowed in with the guest. Please avoid petting the animals unless the guest invites you.
- Sign language interpreters can be requested through box office when purchasing tickets (must be requested at least one week prior to opening night) or sign out an Assisted Listening Device (see Guest Services day of performance). These services are free.

Persons with low vision or blindness

- Ask if help is required.
- When giving assistance, allow the person to take your arm - do not pull the guest along.
- Be alert to any steps or changes in level, and explain the upcoming changes.
- Be alert to any changes in lighting and explain the changes.
- Use specifics such as *left or right, forward or backward*.
- Under the ADA, working dogs are allowed in the facility with the guest. Please avoid petting the animals unless the guest invites you.
- Always walk on the side of the guest, away from the assisting dog.
- Guide the guest to the appropriate seat and place their hand on the arm of the seat.
- Let the person know when you are ending the conversation or moving away.

Persons with communication disabilities

- Give your complete attention to the guest.
- Avoid correcting, finishing sentences, and speaking for the person.
- Allow extra time. Give help when needed.
- Keep your manner encouraging. Maintain gentle voice and facial expressions.
- Ask questions that require short answers or, when possible, a nod or shake of the head.

- Admit if you have difficulty understanding. Repeat what you *do* understand, then allow the person to repeat the misunderstood portion of the exchange.

Persons with developmental disabilities

- Give your complete attention to the guest.
- **Showing** is more effective than *telling*.
- Tell/show the guest what is *expected* instead of what is not allowed.
- Keep your manner encouraging. Maintain gentle voice and facial expressions.
- Exceptions to the rules should be based on reason and necessity.
- Admit if you have difficulty understanding, and ask questions.
- Repeat what you *do* understand, then allow the person to repeat the misunderstood portion of the exchange.

USHER INFORMATION

Usher Mission Statement

Ushers are enthusiastic hosts and ambassadors for CAA; making a connection with Aronoff Center and Music Hall guests while identifying and anticipating their needs and exemplifying our desire to serve.

Becoming an Usher

The impression a guest receives upon his or her arrival is key. A thoughtful and respectful staff is one of the more lasting impressions taken away from the CAA event. Attending a performance at the Aronoff Center or Music Hall should carry with it a sense of occasion, a feeling of “going out on the town.” It is the Ushers who make it possible for guests to have a truly enjoyable event by providing a friendly greeting, accurate directions or an extra service.

We recognize that all ushers must be well trained before the necessary confidence can be exhibited to achieve good guest service. The usher-training program is incremental, which allows learning to occur over time. CAA Staff provide the information and are available to answer questions, **but it is up to the volunteer to make time to learn the information.**

Usher applicants are asked to an interview with CAA. Upon successful completion of the interview, applicants receive a Front of House manual, and quiz. Applicants must schedule online and attend one (1) orientation.

All ushers must complete the four-part training program to be ACTIVE ushers:

1. **Online Application and Digital Information Session**

Interested individuals must complete an online application and view the short Information Session video prior to signing up to attend a program orientation.

2. **CAA Program Orientation**

Orientations are typically held bi-annually. These orientations offer an overview of the commitment required of an usher, and an in-depth look at the volunteer program. At the conclusion of the orientation, the prospective usher can then schedule for step 2, Volunteer in Training.

3. **Volunteer In Training (VIT)**

The prospective volunteer must complete two events as a Volunteer-In-Training. A VIT is paired with a training buddy (an experienced volunteer). Upon completion of these two VIT events, ushers receive an official volunteer name badge and may schedule future events along with the rest of our active volunteers, except for Lottery events until the Emergency Procedure Training is complete.

4. **Facility and Emergency Procedures Training**

After completion of the general orientation, we hold a specific training to review evacuation routes, and severe weather procedures. All new

ushers must attend within 3 months of the general orientation date to remain active. Only those who have completed this training are able to work lottery events.

Active ushers may be asked (or choose) to participate in the following:

1. Refresher training at the beginning of each season (General Orientation).
2. Mid-season training (Emergency Procedures Training)
3. Other trainings as determined by CAA staff (i.e. Usher Recharge session)

The **Emeritus Status** is for volunteers who are no longer active in our system. Volunteers who meet specific criteria and are extended an invitation to participate may remain involved as an Emeritus Volunteer. Only those volunteers who are invited may be designated as Emeritus.

Usher Position Description

Position goal: To provide excellent guest service to our guests and visitors while being an ambassador for CAA and promoting its resident companies.

Position responsibilities in performance/event capacity:

- to thoroughly understand emergency procedures and to assist in case of an emergency
- to thoroughly understand the house layout, seating charts and to correctly direct guests
- to carry out duties as assigned per performance or event; including but not limited to program stuffing and distribution, ticket taking, ushering, greeting, directing guests, working in coat-check, candy sales, and assisting guests with special needs
- to be available to guests before, during and after performances and events
- to report any and all problems to the Floor Supervisor – immediately!

Position requirements:

- Able to work any level (balcony, loge, orchestra) of any theater equally well
- Able to be flexible in nightly position assignments
- Able to stand for long amounts of time (up to 5 hours) to ensure guest safety
- Available to volunteer **at least 10 hours** per month, each month, totaling 85 hours in a season; otherwise will communicate any needed changes to volunteer office
- Able to access computer regularly to schedule shifts

- Able to address guest issues in the theater quickly and effectively
- Able to show enthusiasm for guests, resident companies and for CAA consistently
- Able to offer smiling, welcoming, and accurate service to guests
- Able to work with a broad range of people and show respect for all cultures
- Able to speak and understand English
- Able to read and follow directions
- Able to work independently or as a team member
- Able to read and comprehend seating charts and tickets
- Able to communicate clearly and instruct guests through theaters correctly
- Able to remain calm under pressure and seek help as needed
- Must attend all initial orientation and training sessions
- Able to arrive at call time consistently
- Able to accept constructive criticism
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Interest in performing service to the arts community

Physical demands:

Ability to negotiate stairs easily and be comfortable with heights, often in dim lighting

Ability to stand/be on feet for lengthy amounts of time (up to 5 hours or more)

Ability to quickly lead guests down stairs and out of building during evacuations

Ability to see and read tickets to direct guests accurately, often in dim lighting

Supervised nightly by:

Manager on Duty, Floor Supervisors, Usher Captains and Volunteer Manager

CAA Expectations of Ushers

- A commitment to a minimum of **85 hours (spread throughout the season** – hours start when you enter the building and end when you leave) at either/both facilities. Aiming to work 2 per month, calendar permitting, will keep you on track. You are encouraged to surpass this minimum commitment. A season for our purposes is September 1 through August 31 of any given year. It is NOT a calendar year.
 - Please note that many organizations around the city utilize the same software to sign up for shifts, and if you volunteer for another organization using it you will see hours all in one place.
- Each season volunteers usher **2 Gold Sheet Events** (see section entitled “Gold Sheet Events” below under EVENT TYPES)

DRESS CODE

It is very important to note that there is never an exception to this dress code. If you arrive for your shift without the proper attire, **you may be dismissed from the shift.**

Ushers must supply the following attire:

Solid Deep Black skirt or tailored dress slacks (unacceptable attire: jeans (anything with rivets or exposed zippers), leggings, tight fitting "legging-like" dress pants, leather or Capri pants, shorts or skorts) Skirts if worn, should be within 1 in of the knee or longer and deep black. Beige or black stockings should always be worn with skirts

Solid Bright White, collared dress blouse buttoned to the collar bone ironed & worn tucked in (please, no polo style shirts).

Sleeves must cover the armpits, and must be free of any colored detailing. For warmth, white turtlenecks or t-shirts may be worn underneath the white blouse only. Sweaters or Blazers are prohibited. The dress shirt collar must accommodate the men's style tie, which is given to you.

Solid Black dress shoes - must be safe on steps (no sport shoes, Crocs, very high heels, open-toed or thong type shoes)

Solid Black socks/hosiery - must be worn at all times; beige or black stockings. Sock should cover you entire foot and ankle.

Flashlight: The flashlight is used to assist guests in the dark theater and for emergencies. It should be pocket sized, have a single bulb and be bright enough to see in pitch black theaters. When escorting a guest to and from their seat, ushers should point the beam at the guest's feet to minimize distraction and assist them. It should never point at the stage, be used for reading programs or looking at watches.

- Barrel LED flashlights (with multiple bulbs) are unacceptable because they are too bright.

CAA supplies the following 3 items:

1. **Vest:** All vests hanging are owned by CAA and **MUST** be returned to the Volunteer Room with all the pockets emptied of all items. Volunteers may purchase their own vest by filling out an order form from the Office, accompanied by a check or money order. Vest price is \$35, make check out to CAA.
2. **Name Badge:** CAA issued name badges must be worn at all times and are part of the uniform. A badge with your first name will be provided to you, and if lost, a replacement badge can be purchased for \$5.00 from the Volunteer Office.

3. **Tie:** A green zipper tie is given to all ushers and is part of the uniform. This is the only tie that should be worn with the white collared dress shirt. The tie should go under the collar of the shirt, and must be worn close to the neck.

Unacceptable Accessories:

- Fanny packs
- pins or buttons unrelated to the Aronoff Center and/or Music Hall
- **Electronic devices** on your person while volunteering in the theaters.
- Hats or bandanas
- Sunglasses

Pins: Volunteers may choose to wear up to three **(3)** Aronoff Center and/or Music Hall related pins or badges on their vests, in addition to their name badge. This includes any awarded stars for years of service.

Appearance: Hair and jewelry should be neat, discrete and tasteful. Clothing should be professional looking (neat, tucked in and pressed.) Makeup should be minimal and in good taste. Good general hygiene is encouraged. Excessive perfume can be problematic for guests, staff and other volunteers; please be mindful. Facial piercings are limited to no more than one. If tattoos are visible, must be non-offensive. No face tattoos permitted.

*Reasonable accommodations can be made on a case-by-case basis

Arrival

CAA could not possibly function without a Front of House volunteer staff.
Thank you in advance for your promptness and courtesy.

All volunteers must arrive *and check in* at the time stated on the "start time" on www.myvolunteerpage.com for the given event. The arrival time varies for each event but is usually 1 - 1 ½ hours before curtain. Consistent tardiness (more than 4 instances) will not be tolerated, regardless of whether a call is made. The MOD meeting starts within 5-minutes of your stated call time, and imparts critical information you must retain to assist guests accurately; it is fundamental that you be on time to participate in the meeting.

Arrival times are set based on pre-performance needs to allow Ushers ample time to:

- Receive specific instructions about the evenings' events within the facility
- Participate in stuffing programs
- Become familiar with floors and assigned positions (reviewing seating layout as well as emergency exits)
- Perimeter typically opens one hour prior to curtain and ushers must be in position

If you are going to be late, it is important that you notify the volunteer information line as soon as possible so that we know to expect you. Please leave your cell phone number so we may return your call. If you have not called and arrive late, you may be unable to work.

AC: 513-977-4117 ext 4 or **MH:** 513-744-3417

Please keep in mind the Front of House Staff reserves the right not to accept a volunteer who arrives late.

Usher Performance

The Floor Supervisors review all ushers' guest service performance yearly, and records of these observations are maintained by the volunteer office. The Volunteer Office checks all volunteer activity records, and evaluations.

Volunteers who are below minimum requirements receive a letter, reminding them of policy, placing them on probation, and requesting a personal review of time commitments. If volunteers receive this letter twice, they are unable to volunteer in the program.

Usher Feedback: Staff knows that we cannot see every good action or questionable act and a mechanism has been created for you to share your experiences. Volunteer ushers can give feedback on other ushers or staff on any shift they work. To be accepted the information given needs to be specific, and include **names, location, specific actions** and any witnesses when possible to the event (good or questionable). For providing feedback ushers earn 1 hour toward the yearly requirement, unless entered incorrectly/incompletely.

1. Click on the Hours tab
2. Choose log new hours
3. Choose the Activity from the drop down menu under the header HOURS titled "Event Feedback." If you do not see that, click on the red box marked "active" and try again
4. Enter the date that you volunteered and 1 hour
5. Enter detailed and specific feedback then save

Leave of Absence

If you are unable to volunteer for a calendar month or more, you can request a leave of absence. The Volunteer Office will provide credit for the month(s) you were unable to work, so that you do not need to make up hours. A Leave of Absence may be taken for a period between 1-6 months, but no longer than 6 consecutive months and can be taken retroactively. Please contact the Volunteer Office to be placed on a Leave AND to be taken off a leave.

- If you are unable to volunteer for a period longer than six months consecutively you will be placed back on In Process status, retraining as determined by the Volunteer Office will be needed to return to *Active* status.

Benefits

Other than seeing performances when ushering an event, sharing their passion for the arts by becoming ambassadors for CAA and assisting all communities in enjoying and appreciating the arts, it's our goal to provide the following benefits for ushers:

- **Raffle:** Each month you volunteer, you are entered into the raffle. Winners are notified.
- **Party:** CAA staff and Board of Trustees host an annual volunteer recognition party to honor all the active Aronoff Center for the Arts and Music Hall volunteers.
- **Hours Reward System specifically for Ushers:** Hours over the required 85 are rewarded with special tiered perks within a season. A season goes from the first of September through the end of the following August (9/1/21-8/31/22 is an example of a season). Perks are awarded at the beginning of the following season (i.e. late in the month of September)

106-134 hours	2 blue passes
135-175 hours	2 blue passes 1 Gift certificate 3 Free parks 1 Private theater tour either Music Hall or Aronoff Center for 5 (does not include backstage)
176-299 hours	3 sign ups over the phone Vest (or Prize Voucher) 5 free parks 1 Private theater tour either Music Hall or Aronoff Center for 10 (does not include backstage)
300 and more	5 sign-ups over the phone 1 year membership to CAA Vest (or Prize Voucher) 8 Free parks 1 entry into the end of season viewing suite raffle at
Aronoff Center	\$25 gift certificate to Box Office

- **Invitation** to dress rehearsals by local performing companies; you must show your nametag.
- Occasional ticket discount offers, emailed notification

- Special viewing of the exhibitions in the Weston Art Gallery with the Director before usher shifts: 10-minute Tours are available ½ hour prior to your arrival the first Wednesday and second Tuesday of every Broadway in Cincinnati performance.
- Invitation to special tours of the facility, when available.

Calendar

All volunteers receive a digital calendar of events, *which is subject to change*. This calendar can also be found online and is updated in real time, www.tinyurl.com/CAACalendar

- Weekly updates are emailed to let ushers know of any changes to the Events calendar or irregular event posting dates.
- Changes to the calendar are also posted as they become known. It is wise to check the schedule on www.myvolunteerpage.com regularly as well as the newspaper or on our website www.cincinnatiarts.org

Event Types

Regular Events:

All events will be available on www.MyVolunteerPage.com.

All **Aronoff Center** events will be posted and available on www.MyVolunteerPage.com one month prior to the opening date of a show at **Noon**. For example, *Evita* opened September 6 and ran through September 18. At noon on August 6* we made available **all** the dates for the entire run of that show. Events will be listed under theater, and then by name and can be sorted chronologically on the website if desired.

***All events will post on weekdays, and none on the weekends (Saturday or Sunday).** Up to date calendar with posting schedule found online:

www.tinyurl.com/CAACalendar

Gold Sheet Events:

To assure proper staffing and guest service levels for every type of show presented, it is mandatory for volunteers to usher two Gold Sheet Events per year. Examples of these events might include: events with unknown content, events with potentially offensive content, shows occurring on holidays or events with extremely early or late arrivals/endings.

When scheduling on www.myvolunteerpage.com the words "Gold Sheet" will be printed on them after the show title to distinguish them from other events (i.e. "Nutcracker – Gold sheet"). On the newsletter calendar they will have "**-GS**" listed after the event title or specific event time.

The Volunteer Office will track the number of gold sheets worked, and that number will appear on the qualifications page of the My Profile tab online within 2 weeks of the event worked.

Lottery Events:

Typically a few very popular one night events are held in the Procter & Gamble Hall or Springer Auditorium. Because there are nearly 800 ushers who might enjoy filling one of the limited number of spots available for these shows, a system was created for all active ushers to sign up. *Volunteers in Training are not included in this system, nor are those who have not completed the Facility/Emergency Procedures Training* (In the volunteer calendar, these are listed as "Lotteries".)

- Once ushers have confirmed 2 lottery events in a season, they are no longer eligible to enter the lotteries. Working as a substitute does not count towards this total. Those who were confirmed and needed the sub (i.e. someone subbed for them) will have that confirmation count towards their total of 2 lottery confirmations.
- Ushers may click on the box which states "sign up" & save. Nothing will show up in your assignments until winners are chosen – if you win. The system limits us to allowing 250 ushers to enter the lottery.
- BUDDIES: Only 5 pairs of partners allowed per lottery. You both must be signed up for the event. BEFORE the event is chosen, someone must tell the volunteer office that you & your friend would like to work together if one person is chosen.
- Two weeks from the posting date (so if it's posted on the 5th, on the 19th), you check your "assignments" tab -the only place a lottery winner can tell if they were chosen **IS ON** the assignments tab.
- If you are chosen, you have 7 days to confirm the event on your "assignments." If you have not confirmed the event by then, we will remove you and schedule someone else.
- IF YOU NO LONGER CAN WORK the event, **decline it**. DO NOT find a sub, as the office will pick more winners. The only time you need to find a sub as a lottery winner is IF YOU HAVE CONFIRMED already - this is true of any event.
- We will NOT email winners - you need to check your assignments tab.
- If a lottery is not filled with lottery winners within 5 days of the event itself, the event will be opened up to anyone who would like to work. Those who won and confirmed prior to the event opening will have it count toward the 2 lotteries for the season. If the event is opened and ushers sign up during that specific time frame, this confirmation of lottery will NOT count toward their 2 for the season.

Active Volunteer Usher sign-up procedures: Active volunteers sign-up for events on the www.myvolunteerpage.com website.

- **For those without their own computer:** Computers are available in the Volunteer area or in the Volunteer Office, when the Volunteer Office is open. Please call the Volunteer Office Staff to set up a time prior to coming downtown. Enter the CAA Administrative Entrance on 7th street and take the elevator to Floor 3 to find the Volunteer Office. Most public libraries around the Cincinnati area have computers as well.
- Ushers must be diligent in checking for openings and available to work alternate dates & times other than first choice preferences.
- Each volunteer is expected to work a minimum of 85 hours (about 16-19 shows) a season (beginning September 1 through August 31) – there are typically enough events for ushers to work more than 85 hours.
- *Hours are logged by the office within 7 days of the show.* Ushers do NOT need to log hours for events.
- A confirmed event is always the ushers' responsibility until it is handed off to another usher AND the office knows about it.
- Scheduling is first come first serve. It is also an honor system – please do not abuse it. **In the first week after a posting, sign up for ONE event date - ONE only!** If you wish to work more than one shift for an event (in P&G or Springer), please wait at least one week from posting so that everyone has the chance to work these events.
- You may **not** sign up to work more than **ONE** shift in the smaller theaters on any run of a show– unless we specifically ask for more help; this does include Education shows.

SCHEDULING OF EVENTS

It is your responsibility to schedule yourself for the minimum (85) required hours.

Please note that many organizations around the city utilize the same software, and if you volunteer for any other organization using it you will see shifts and hours all in one place. Only shifts worked as CAA go toward the 85 hours expectation. You can filter out CAA hours only on the Reports tab, entering the current season dates and running the report.

1. Go to www.myvolunteerpage.com and input your Username and Password

Once logged on, you will see 7 tabs across the top of the window.

(Home) (Opportunities) (Schedule) (Hours) (Reports) (Contact) (My Profile)

2. Scheduling takes 2 steps: 1) signing up AND 2) confirming it

STEP 1: Signing up:

1. **Choose Opportunities Tab:** The events available will be listed by theater.

- a. **If volunteering for another organization**, you will have to filter the page to only show shifts for CAA events. At the top of the page, choose the organization you'd like to see using the drop down box.
- b. Ensure no filters are chosen at the top. If there are, remove them & filter again.
2. **Choose Event name**: on the underlined event title & a new page will open
3. **Date Chosen**: Scroll down to the list of dates available
 - a. Click in the box next to the event date/time you want – NEVER choose "select all" – ever.
4. scroll to the bottom right of the page and hit save

Please note: scheduled does NOT mean confirmed; ushers may only work confirmed shows.

STEP 2: Confirming:

1. **Choose "Assignments"** tab
 - a. Once "Assignments" opens, scroll down to the show you just scheduled.
2. **Click on "Confirm"** (Click "OK" on the box that pops up)
3. **SAVE**

Those who have NOT CONFIRMED 10 days prior to the event date for which they are scheduled will be removed (i.e. on the 5th unconfirmed ushers will be removed for the 15th)

Ushers are responsible for checking the website, especially prior to coming downtown, for correct arrival times, scheduled events and available events. The office will not schedule any usher over the phone.

Scheduling 2 or more people:

Ushers may schedule as many people as they would like, but they will need usernames and passwords of all their friends they are scheduling. To sign two (2) people (or more) up:

- sign in as you and schedule yourself for the desired event (**do NOT confirm** yet, otherwise you're confirmed and there may be no more spots for your friend)
- sign out as you
- sign in as your friend
- schedule your friend for the same date/time as you & confirm them immediately
- sign out as your friend
- sign in as you and confirm yourself

SAVE every change you make. Write down usernames and passwords (yours and everyone else's) and keep in a safe place!

Back Up List

If there are no available spaces on an event, don't give up. You can:

1. Mark yourself as "add me to the backup list" in the box on the top left of each event dates/times page. The office will email those marked usher's first for cancellations.
2. Check the schedule on www.myvolunteerpage.com regularly. If someone declines the event, you may be able to pick up opened shifts.
3. Shifts may open up all the time, and most likely 10 days before the event shift.

When signing-up for events, remember that only active, fully qualified ushers may volunteer at performances. There may be times when your qualification levels are lowered, depending on your communication and activity level.

Early Scheduling (prior to an event posting)

The following are perks that are given to ushers that go above and beyond the call of duty.

Blue Sheet Event Passes (blue sheets):

A Blue Sheet can be earned by working certain events that are harder to fill, and a Blue Sheet is a perk for working these events. The Blue Sheet is an event pass that allows you to schedule and confirm for any event, provided the following are met:

1. The volunteer office receives the pass at least **1 weekday before** the event is **posted**.
2. The pass is received in the volunteer office BEFORE the deadline stated on the pass.
3. The pass is received no earlier than four (4) months prior to an event posting.
4. The event is not already filled with early sign ups.

Some general guidelines to using the passes:

- Blue Sheets are good only for one volunteer and are **not** transferable to another volunteer.
- If used for a Lottery event, the pass guarantees a confirmed spot on the Event Usher Roster. (ie: you do not have to participate in the lottery process itself, when the event is posted, it will show as confirmed in your schedule). Passes can be mailed or dropped off to the office; Blue Sheets received for events more than 4 months out will be returned.
- Once an usher receives a Blue Sheet, the usher is responsible for keeping track of the Blue Sheet. Requests for replacements of lost Blue Sheets will not be honored.

- If an usher cancels the event for any reason, the Blue Sheet will not be returned.
- It is up to the volunteer office to determine when a Blue Sheet is to be reused.
- If an event cancels within a week of the date for which a Blue Sheet was used, the Blue Sheet will not be returned. Ushers will receive hours for the cancelled event.

“Call in” Sign-ups:

At the end of a season, we offer rewards for those who work above the required number of hours; one reward is a phone sign-up. These are like blue sheets BUT, you don't have to worry about getting a piece of paper in to the office. The timing of use of a phone sign-up is up to the individual. Remain aware that some events fill quickly with any early sign-up; phone sign-ups do not supersede, but fall I within, scheduling procedures.

For the **Aronoff Center**: Only 20 Early Sign-ups are accepted per event date in the P&G; 4 accepted in the JK per event date; 2 accepted in the 5/3 per event date.

For **Music Hall**: Only 20 Early Sign-ups are accepted per event date in the Springer Auditorium; 4 accepted in the Ballroom per event date.

We limit the number of “early sign-ups” we accept (Blue Passes & Phone sign-ups) to keep the process fair for everyone.

USHER SCHEDULE CHANGES

1) Unconfirmed event: decline the event in the “Assignments” tab. This releases you from your commitment.

2) Confirmed event: you are **expected and you cannot change your schedule**. Contact the office immediately and follow the outlined steps below:

Finding a Substitute

- A) Contact the Volunteer Office (more than two (2) days prior to the event), by calling 513-977-4117 ext. 4 for the Aronoff or 513-744-3417 for Music Hall. Last minute (day of the event & 1 day prior) cancellations should be called in ONLY. (see C below)
 - An email will then be sent from the office to those volunteers who indicated “add me to the back-up list” about the opening.
- B) **If last minute** (day of the event or 1 day prior) or **an emergency occurs** so that you cannot work, please call the **AC** Volunteer Message line: 513-977-4117 ext. 4 or **MH**: 513-744-3417. *Emails are NOT acceptable for last minute cancellations and will count as a no-show regardless.*

- C) **Join CAAusher Freelist** and communicate directly with other volunteers to find a sub well before the event or even last minute. This is a wholly free and maintained by volunteers listserv to send and receive emails from other ushers. To join, go here (do not click “donate”): <https://www.freelists.org/list/caaushers>

Substitutions: Subs should be called in to 977-4117 ext. 4 for the Aronoff or 513-744-3417 for Music Hall, so we know whom to expect.

No Shows and Cancellations

No-Shows: If a volunteer fails to report when confirmed, and does not notify the volunteer office(s) appropriately (as outlined above), they will be reported as a **no-show** for that event. Any volunteer who has **two** no-shows in a season (i.e.: 9/1/21-8/31/22) may be set back to In-Process status. Volunteer office will follow up to confirm your status of interest and ability.

Cancellations: If you are confirmed and need to cancel you *MUST contact us at least 2 days prior to the show*. As long as the show appears on your Assignments page, we are expecting you to be here so please give us notice if something changes. Any volunteer with **Four** cancellations in a season (i.e.: 9/1/2021-8/31/2022) will no longer continue as an usher until they can complete a future training.

- The Volunteer Office tracks all the events worked, as well as cancellations, no-shows and late arrivals.

FACILITY RULES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Smoking:

No smoking of any kind is permitted in CAA facilities unless as a part of a theatrical production.

Drinking:

Volunteers have a water cooler and soft drink machine in the Volunteer area for their use (Aronoff Center). The volunteer workroom, and/or drinking fountains are the **only place** volunteers are allowed beverages.

- Alcohol, bars, and concessions in the lobbies are for **guests only**.
- Alcohol consumption and being under the influence while volunteering is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Eating:

Volunteers may bring food prior to the MOD meeting or use the vending machine in the area to eat in the volunteer workroom. This is the **only place** a volunteer is permitted to eat anything, unless the Floor Supervisor has relayed special circumstances about the event.

- Gum chewing is prohibited.

Weapons:

Weapons of any kind are not permitted. This includes concealed carry when volunteering.

Breaks:

If you must take a break (less than 10 minutes) please inform your supervisor, and have another volunteer cover your position for you. The volunteer workroom phone is for volunteer use; ushers may ONLY use their cell phones in the workroom. Cell phones are not permitted on your person on the floor.

Electronic Devices:

NO Electronic devices may be on or in use by an usher. This is to maintain the highest awareness of guest needs and also to model excellent theater etiquette for guests, during performances or public events when volunteers are in the lobbies or theaters. Electronics devices include but are not limited to cell phones, iPads, Kindles, laptops, headsets. If volunteers are found to have such items on their persons when on the floor they will be sent home.

Family Contacting Volunteers:

Recognizing that family members or caregivers may have to call volunteers when they usher a performance or event, volunteers may share the security number with family or caregivers: **AC**: 513-977-4128 and **MH**: 513 744-3336. This can be called when the volunteer is required by family and they request the volunteer by name sharing that they are a volunteer. Security will contact the Floor Supervisors who will then find the usher receiving the call.

Restrooms:

At the Aronoff Center, restrooms are available to ushers prior to the MOD meeting near the Jarson Kaplan on the street level. At Music Hall, restrooms are found in the back of the office and to be used pre/post show. Once up on the floor, ushers must be in place to allow the perimeter to open on time. If a break is needed, ushers must ensure their position is covered by another usher before leaving for the restroom. Ushers should wait until all guests are finished using the facilities and avoid standing in line with guests.

Theater Etiquette:

Volunteers are always on duty, and should represent CAA to guests in a knowledgeable, calm, respectful, quiet manner.

- Movement in and out of the theater, or up and down from your seat is distracting, and is to be kept at a *minimum*, especially at side doors.
- Comments about the show or guests should always be positive, no matter your personal opinion. Remember you are representing CAA and the production on stage

- Use of flashlights is for guest assistance in and out of the dark theater and emergencies; they should **never** be aimed at the stage or used to read the program or look at watches
- Whispering is distracting and often heard by guests; please keep it to a minimum
- Discussions longer than a sentence or two should always occur in the corridor.
- Cell phones should never be on an usher's person when volunteering in the theater.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and respond to potential issues before they are problems. Proactive ushers avoid trouble, rather than just respond to it
- Anytime the house lights come up, ALL ushers stand, ready to assist guests
- Anytime a guest is in the lobby, ALL ushers are standing ready to assist guests

Merchandise

Volunteers are welcome to purchase merchandise from the show vendors. However, each vendor and show operate differently and that is something we have no control over. There are some basic parameters which must be followed. When a volunteer is actively ushering a performance they may make purchases at the following times:

- After their shift, out of uniform (plan ahead and put money in your pocket to avoid needing to go downstairs fully after check out)
- When patrons are around please wait for them to make purchases first

These times and instances are prohibited:

- When wearing the vest or name tag (plain white shirt is ok)

Visitor Policy:

Friends or relatives will need a ticket to attend a performance. Volunteers may request an assignment in the vicinity of guest seats, and every effort will be made to honor the request if possible.

Tips:

Tips are graciously accepted from guests, and are expected to be turned in to the Floor Supervisor. Tip money goes into the volunteer party fund.

Performance Attendance:

Volunteers must have a ticket to see a show, unless ushering. "Sneaking in" to a performance is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Solicitation Policy:

CAA volunteers are prohibited from distributing literature or written material of any kind, other than materials authorized by CAA. Unauthorized solicitation is prohibited.

Respect:

CAA involves volunteers and serves guests inclusive of many different communities, gender expressions and cultures. Therefore, a respectful tone, attitude and choice of words should be extended to all volunteers, staff and guests, regardless of personal opinions. Comments made by any member of the Front of House staff which are interpreted in a negative manner will not be tolerated.

Access:

Volunteers are welcome in all areas of front of house and the volunteer area. However, the following areas are off limits to volunteers and guests: all stages, backstage areas, dressing rooms, backstage corridors, and production offices. Being in an unauthorized location is grounds for immediate dismissal.

SEPARATION

A volunteer may be removed from the program immediately, and without warning, for any of the following:

- Disrupting performances (that includes cell phones, moving, or talking)
- Imposing personal, religious or political views on others
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons, or explosives on CAA property
- Engaging in threats of violence, coercion, harassment, or acts of intimidation toward anyone on CAA premises or when representing CAA (includes using obscene or abusive language and acts of indecency)
- Theft from the Aronoff Center or Music Hall, its guests, staff or other volunteers
- Telling sexist, racial, ethnic jokes or slurs
- Accessing restricted areas (such as backstage, on stage, or off limit corridors)
- Repeated violation of volunteer policy/procedures

As a general rule, CAA expects each staff and volunteer to act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable behaviors are noted below.

- Drinking or eating in front of house
- Leaving a facility early without being released by a supervisor
- Spreading rumors and/or malicious gossip; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony
- Observed or reported rudeness or disrespect to anyone on CAA property

- Excessive late arrivals
- Leaving assigned position or failure to be at assigned position
- Presenting self unprofessionally in manner, dress, or attitude

Unacceptable behavior may be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Dismissal

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Injuries and Accidents

In case of an accident, or serious illness, see to the guest's immediate safety first. Make sure that the guest is not in danger of being trampled by other persons, or in danger of causing further injury to themselves or others. Then get, or send for, a Floor Supervisor or the MOD.

Your Floor Supervisor is typically in the lobby of your floor. If they are assisting another guest and are not easily found in the lobby, you have three options:

1. Go to another floor to find Floor Supervisor or Usher Captain with a radio to get immediate help on your floor
2. Have the bartender on your floor call Security to get the Floor Supervisor and other staff to you.
3. In a time sensitive serious situation (ill guest/security issue) *when no one with a radio or access to a phone is available*, call over the rail to the Event Guard on the marble of the P&G Hall or the foyer in Music Hall to get help to you NOW (only time sensitive AND medically serious situations).

Make sure everyone is clear that help is needed immediately for an ill guest.

Whenever a guest is injured, or ill, no matter how slightly, it **MUST** be reported immediately to the MOD or floor supervisor. **Only the Security Desk staff will call 911** and coordinate emergency responders when necessary, and staff will complete the necessary paperwork afterwards.

**** Inclement weather and fire evacuation routes and procedures can be referenced in both the Aronoff Center and Music Hall portions of the volunteer manuals.*

HOW TO READ TICKETS

Certain events will not be scanned. Correctly reading the ticket and properly directing the guest is an important part of the job of all front of house staff.

Important information on a ticket (please note ticket colors & stock will change periodically)

1. **EVENT NAME.** This is located in the middle of the ticket. Make sure the event name corresponds with the event name that you are working.
2. **EVENT DATE/TIME,** located in the bottom of the ticket. It is listed by day, month, date, and year. Time of event is listed closely after the date.

You may encounter some guests will come to the right event on the wrong date. And because we have three theaters in operation at the Aronoff Center, as well as Springer Auditorium at Music Hall, so some will come on the right date but to the wrong theater. Please make sure that you are checking all the information on the ticket.

Once you've confirmed the right NAME and DATE/TIME, direct them to enter the theater and to their seats (refer to House Maps for Specific Locations)

- A. **SECTION name** refers to the level of the theater.
 - a. The section name is located on the top line of each ticket.
 - b. The large theaters have different section names:
 - Procter & Gamble Hall: orchestra, loge, balcony, & boxes on all three levels
 - Springer Auditorium: orchestra (terrace- rear of orchestra), balcony, and gallery
 - Jarson-Kaplan Theater: orchestra, balcony 1, balcony 2, & boxes on all three levels
 - 5/3 Bank Theater: Seating is general on one level; there are no sections.
- B. **ROW letter** refers to the rows of seats in the theater.
 - a. Located directly after the section name on the top line of each ticket.
 - b. Row letter tells how far from the stage a guests' seat will be
 - c. All theaters skip row I but run consecutively otherwise.
 - Springer Auditorium: orchestra begins with AA and runs through Y, balcony & gallery begin with row A and run consecutively.
 - Procter & Gamble Hall: orchestra begins with AA and runs through Z, Loge & balcony begin with row A and run consecutively.

Jarson-Kaplan Theater: all three levels begin with row A, boxes are AA-EE on both sides of theater and will be listed R Box AA 2 or as L Box AA 2.

5/3 Bank Theater: Seating is general with no labeled rows.

C. SEAT number

- a. The seat number is located directly after the row letter on the top line of each ticket.
- b. The seats read from house left to house right, as you face the stage.

Springer Auditorium: starts with 101, after an aisle break re-starts with 201, another aisle break re-starts with 301. Box seats located on the South (101 and on) and North (301 and on) sides of the Orchestra. The Balcony and Gallery levels begin with 101 and continue with sections/aisle breaks between 201, 301, 401, 501, 601 through 701.

Procter & Gamble Hall: starts with 101, after an aisle break re-starts with 201, another aisle break re-starts with 301. Continuous rows with no aisles breaks are numbered continuously from 101. Box seats are numbered 1-4.

Jarson-Kaplan Theater: starts with 1 in all rows, box seats numbered 1-10.

5/3 Bank Theater: Seating is general with no seat numbers.

Guests appreciate and expect a confident answer when they have questions about finding their way. Good guest service means knowing how to quickly and correctly read a ticket and direct guests accordingly.

CAA TICKET

Section Row Seat Number

EAG0515E ORCH RORCH T 309 67.00 EAG0515E
 Enter Door 5
 Fifth-Third Bank Broadway Across America
 Presents Legally Blonde
 Procter & Gamble Hall
 Saturday, May 15, 2010 8:00pm
 23 JUL 10
 101524
 EAG0515E 2-HD
 Visit www.CincinnatiArts.Org
 67.00 ADY1
 RORCH
 T
 309
 101524
 REPRINT

Event Date/Time Event Name

Other samples of tickets for different productions and theaters:

CINCINNATI BALLET TICKET

PG1023E ORCH CENTER D 208 68.50 SR4 PG1023E
 SECTION ROW SEAT
 ENTER DOOR 1
 2009-2010 SEASON SPONSOR
 THE OTTO M. BUDIG FAMILY FOUNDATION
 CINCINNATI BALLET PRESENTS
 SWAN LAKE
 with BALLEMET
 PROCTER & GAMBLE HALL, ARONOFF CENTER
 114365 FRIDAY 23 OCT 2009 08:00PM
 NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES
 114365

BROADWAY SUBSCRIBER TICKET

BROADWAY **ACROSS AMERICA**
 CINCINNATI 20th anniversary

WICKED

Wednesday, January 16, 2008
 8:00 PM
 Procter & Gamble Hall
 Aronoff Center For The Arts

Account # [REDACTED]
 Location Row/Box Seat
 CBALC C 136
 Event Code Admission
 CPG8A16E \$45.00

JARSON-KAPLAN THEATER TICKET

JK0514E BAL1 CENTER B 9 0.00 JK0514E
 BAL1 CENTER
 B 9
 14 MAY 09
 5656
 JK0514E 1-C
 Cincinnati Music Theatre
 GYPSY
 Book by Arthur Laurents
 Music by Stephen Sondheim
 Jarson-Kaplan Theater
 Thursday, May 14, 2009 7:30pm
 Ticket Price Includes Facility Maintenance Fee
 Visit www.CincinnatiArts.Org
 0.00 C
 BAL1 CENTER
 B
 9

Cincinnati Arts Association Staff

President & Executive Director of CAA: Steve Loffin

Vice President, Marketing & Communications: Van Ackerman

Vice President, Development: Deborah Morgan

Vice President, Education & Community Engagement: Joyce Bonomini

Vice President, Human Resources: Brenda Carter

Vice President & Chief Operating Officer: Todd Duesing

General Manager – Aronoff Center: Bridget Siedlecki

General Manager – Music Hall: Scott Feldman

Volunteer Managers: Music Hall – Hope Holman, Aronoff – MyKayla Kroeger

Event Managers:

Aronoff Center - Candace LoFrumento, Emma Garry, Jen Picone

Music Hall – Terri Kidney, Kathleen Thomas, Angie Sandmann

House Manager (aka Manager on Duty or MOD): Music Hall – Molly McGraw
Aronoff – Chandler J Hulll

On the day of an event it goes something like this:

- Ushers are checked-in and assisted by the *volunteer* Usher Captains
- Ushers then report to the Manager on Duty (MOD) who addresses the group
- Floor Supervisors (there are several per show, one per floor) report to the MOD, and directly supervise volunteer ushers on their floor
- The General Manager oversees all of those staff members, as well as others in the “family tree” with whom you will work

Volunteer Engagement Office

The Volunteer Engagement Office acts very much like the Human Resources Department of a large company. There are over 900 volunteers at the Aronoff Center and Music Hall, and a small staff to insure information and benefits are communicated. One of the many roles this office serves is to make sure your volunteer experience is a positive one. With this in mind, we believe that our volunteers have the following rights:

- adequate orientation

- training and supervision
- courteous treatment from all staff members and other volunteers
- recognition for your service
- feedback regarding your participation
- opportunity to make suggestions

Personal information changes: If you have a change in name, address or phone number, please change this information on www.myvolunteerpage.com, on the My Profile tab and save it. It is important to communicate these changes to us here, as this is our main database. If help is needed in making changes, please contact the Volunteer Office.

Theater Term Glossary

There are many terms that are used in the theater that seem foreign to many new volunteers. Here's a list of some of the most commonly used terms to help you acclimate to the language of the theater:

Backstage	The area behind and to either side of the stage, not visible to the audience. Backstage includes all technical areas, dressing rooms, hallways and performance-related areas.
Curtain	The time at which a performance is scheduled to begin.
Floor Supervisor	The paid staff representative(s) of CAA who supervises the activities of the volunteers during performances; there is typically one per floor.
Guest	Any visitor, with a ticket or not, within our facility (our home).
House	The area inside the performance hall that includes all audience seating areas; between the doors and the front edge of the stage.
Front of House	All public area outside the performance hall, including lobbies, ticket office, restrooms, concession areas, etc.
Hold	Delay in the curtain time, because the lobby is still full of guests, or the company needs to hold back the original curtain time.

Seating Hold	Also known as Late Seat hold, occurs at the beginning of the performance (usually), as dictated by the company producing the show. FOH staff is not allowed to admit anyone (staff, volunteers or guests) into the house or allow them to leave during seating holds. This means FOH staff cannot open or close doors during seating holds, at any time.
House Directions	House directions are determined by standing in the house and facing the stage. Your left is House Left (HL) and your right is House Right (HR).
Manager On Duty (MOD)	The CAA representative on duty and responsible for all front-of-house (FOH) activities, in any part of the building.
House Staff	MOD, Floor Supervisors, Usher Captains, and volunteers.
Opening House	Opening the doors of the theater to allow the audience members to take their seats.
Hold on the House	Delay in opening the house for guest seating.
Perimeter	The invisible barrier the ticket takers create, preventing guests from entering the lobbies; this does not include the house.
Production Company Theater...).	The company which presents the performance within the theater (Cincinnati Ballet, Contemporary Dance Theater...).
	Cast, crew, props, wardrobe are already created, staged and rehearsed elsewhere and brought to our theaters.
Stagehands	The backstage crew who do all the technical work on a production (lighting, sound, sets, props and wardrobe). All stagehands are members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Union (I.A.T.S.E.).
Stage Directions	Directions from the performer's perspective, standing on stage and facing the house. <i>Stage Left</i> is the performer's left and <i>Stage Right</i> is the performer's right. <i>Downstage</i> is moving toward the audience and <i>Upstage</i> is moving away from the audience.

Stage Manager The person responsible for communication and coordination of all backstage and onstage activities during rehearsal and performance times. Typically travels with the show.

Will Call Tickets which are held at the ticket office for guests who have already paid for them.

Afterward

If all of this seems like a lot of information and responsibility, you're right. It is and it all has to be absorbed. The volunteers are an integral part of the CAA team at the Aronoff Center and Music Hall and share a great responsibility to provide excellent guest service. We're glad you decided to join us. Always keep in mind that because we are a team, anybody and everybody will be glad to help you if you run into trouble. All you need to do is ask!

THANK YOU!!