



## VOLUNTEER USHER GUIDELINES

### MINIMUM COMMITMENT

- **By agreeing to join the volunteer program, ushers commit themselves to a minimum of one performance per production, a total of six performances per season.** This does not include special performances (The Second City, Reduced Shakespeare), at which you may also have the opportunity to volunteer your services in exchange for seeing these additional shows.
- Any usher not able to fulfill a commitment must find a replacement from the pool of participating Public Theater ushers. A Swap List, containing the contact information of your fellow ushers, will be provided at the start of each season. **Ushers who are not currently in our database are not permitted to usher, regardless of their experience at other local venues, nor can we allow family or friends who are not already Public Theater ushers to stand in for you.**
- Individuals who know in advance that they will have protracted getaways or other conflicts that will keep them away for the entire run of one or more productions in a season should not agree to join for that season.
- Any usher who is unsuccessful in finding a replacement through the Swap List must contact House Management to make alternate and mutually agreeable arrangements.
- Ushers should inform House Management, with as much notice as possible, of any emergency or illness that will prevent them from fulfilling their obligations. Such ushers will receive an **excused absence**. Excused absences are limited to family or work emergencies and illness.
- Ushers are permitted one **unexcused absence** per season. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, vacations, other ushering commitments, birthdays, weddings, etc.
- In order to be as fair as possible, **we do track ushers who cancel, arrive late, or miss their assigned dates.**
- Ushering for the Public is a mutually beneficial trade: Ushers provide us with about one hour of work per performance and we provide you with an opportunity to view a performance with a ticket value of between \$30.00 and \$50.00.

### **SCHEDULE CONFLICTS & SWAPS**

- **Should a conflict arise with a scheduled ushering date, your first mode of recourse should be to utilize the Swap List to contact fellow ushers who may be available to swap dates with you.** When it is possible, informing House Management of an intended swap via phone call or e-mail is much appreciated.
- Only once you have exhausted, without success, the alternatives offered by the Swap List, you should notify House Management by phone or e-mail of your un-resolvable schedule conflict and provide an alternative date(s) on which you are available. House Management will reply to confirm if the suggested date is mutually agreeable. **This is only permitted once per season, otherwise you will be removed from the volunteer usher list.**
- We understand that last-minute conflicts might arise nevertheless and prevent you from attending. Whenever possible in this event, it is still helpful to inform House Management of your impending absence. Some of these absences (such as those resulting from inclement weather) may even be regarded as “excused.”

### **ARRIVAL**

- You must arrive, sign in, and be prepared to work one hour prior to curtain time. Volunteers arriving late (less than 45 minutes prior to curtain) may or may not be used at the discretion of the House Manager. Late ushers who are not used will not be permitted to attend the performance free of charge.
- Any usher reporting for duty intoxicated will not be permitted to usher.
- Upon arrival, while waiting for the pre-show meeting and the commencement of duties, ushers are entitled to one complimentary cup of coffee or soda. This complimentary drink may only be claimed prior to the curtain and may not be granted at intermission, post-show, or once the House Manager’s meeting has started. Cookies, candy, and additional beverages are not complimentary.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

- You should treat all Pittsburgh Public Theater patrons with excellent customer service. If a disagreement with a patron should arise, you must notify House Management immediately. Because our patrons’ satisfaction is of top priority, their needs must be met first.

### **DUTIES**

- Ushers are volunteer members of the Front of House Staff and are directly responsible to House Management while on duty. Ushers are considered on-duty from the time that they sign in until House Management dismisses them.

- You should be willing to work any duty assigned—ushering on any floor, scanning tickets, or stuffing programs. Additional duties may include, but are not limited to, the following: resolving minor seating problems, notifying House Management of disturbances or emergencies, assisting House Management in emergency evacuation, and locating latecomers' seats at intermission.
- Ushers are welcome to occupy any available seat in their assigned section designated by House Management, after all patrons—including walk-in and standing room only—have been seated. A Front of House Staff person will inform you of when you may sit. Should the House be full, a Standing Room space will be made available. Under no circumstance can the start of the performance be delayed due to ushers searching for better seating.
- You must return to your assigned area during intermission to assist patrons with any reseating issues or other questions and/or to guard the stage.

### **SCANNING TICKETS**

- All volunteer ushers will be trained in the use of N-Scan ticket scanners, with the expectation that all ushers will be able to use them. However, ushers who are not capable of operating the devices may be asked to move to a different location or fulfill a different ushering duty to keep seating delays to a minimum.
- A ticket scanner “Cheat Sheet” is available at all entrances to the theater. If (and when) ticket errors occur, refer to this sheet before proceeding.
- If a ticket scanning error occurs that requires the attention of House Management, do not leave your door unattended. Please seek out a member of the front of house staff or send another usher to find the House Manager on duty.
- Do not leave the device unattended for any reason. If you must leave your designated area, the device should be given to another usher or a front of house staff person. Devices will be collected by front of house staff at the beginning of each performance when you are allowed to take a seat. If ticket stubs have been collected, these must also be given to the front of house staff person.
- Please use discretion with the information displayed on the scanner screen, as the person who purchased the ticket (whose name will be displayed) may not always be the person handing you the ticket.
- Remember that you are a representative of Pittsburgh Public Theater and that you must conduct yourself as such, even when the devices are being difficult. House Management is nearly always within reach and most issues can be quickly resolved. Don't be discouraged!

### **DRESS CODE**

- Ushers are asked to wear dark-colored clothing and should avoid wearing noisy jewelry.
- Additionally, please adhere to the following guidelines:  
Women: Dresses, skirts, or dress pants. We ask that you avoid wearing blue jeans.  
Men: Dress pants with dress shirt, sport coat, or sweater. Likewise, blue jeans should be avoided.
- You must wear a Pittsburgh Public Theater ushering pin and return it after the performance has ended.

### **BUYING EXTRA TICKETS**

- You may purchase tickets to all Pittsburgh Public Theater performances at 50% off the ticket price, **excluding Saturday evening performances**. You may receive a \$5.00 discount per ticket on Saturday evenings. These discounts do not apply to performances of The Second City or Reduced Shakespeare. There is no limit to the number of tickets you may purchase at the discount.
- If a friend or family member accompanies you to the theater, they are required to purchase a ticket at the Box Office to see the show. You are not permitted to bring a guest with you to watch the performance for free.

### **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

- Family members or friends may use the contact number below when an usher must be contacted during a performance. This phone will be answered one hour prior to curtain and until the end of the performance.

### **QUESTIONS**

- Please contact: Trent Wolfred or Laura Greenawalt  
412.316.8200, extension 730  
twolfred@ppt.org / lgreenawalt@ppt.org