

**Edmonds Center for the Arts**  
**Volunteer Job Descriptions & Guidelines (2015 -16)**

**Our Mission Statement:**

VISION: A vibrant community in which the performing arts are woven into our daily lives and valued for their power to entertain, educate, and inspire.

MISSION: To celebrate the performing arts, strengthen and inspire our community, and steward the development and creative use of the ECA campus.

**Our Mission as ECA Volunteers:**

As a cultural resource for the entire region, your Edmonds Center for the Arts inspires creativity, learning and growth through performing arts presentations, community partnerships and educational outreach programs. It is the sincere desire of the ECA to offer our patrons a very positive experience, and superior customer service. We can not do any of this without you. Our volunteer staff is our most precious resource, and we greatly appreciate the time and dedication each one of you provides to the ECA. The ECA asks that all of our volunteers try to be flexible and team-orientated, with a “can do” attitude. We hope to continue to build a team of volunteers that can approach our challenges in a positive way, and help us to constantly improve and grow your Edmonds Center for the Arts. In an effort to keep our volunteer staffing at necessary levels, and in order to attract and recruit new volunteers, we encourage you to spread the word about volunteering here at the center. If you know anyone who might be interested in volunteering, please have them contact Jim Kristian or our volunteer office. ([jjim@ec4arts.org](mailto:jjim@ec4arts.org)) ([volunteer@ec4arts.org](mailto:volunteer@ec4arts.org))

**Time Commitment:** We are happy to have you as a volunteer, so the amount of time you decide to commit is up to you and your schedule. Signups for upcoming performances and events occur every two months, so we ask that if you commit to an event, you do everything possible to be there. We know your time is valuable, so we attempt to reward your volunteer activities at the center with tickets to upcoming events, and a nice volunteer appreciation party at the end of each season where we get to thank you personally. Additionally, we may offer a few other small perks for individuals who can help us staff some of the less well known events throughout the year. One of the best perks of being an ECA volunteer is

knowing that you are an integral and active part of bringing quality performance art, entertainment, and educational outreach to your --- communities. Without you and your continued support, we could not do what we do.

**Dress code:** White tops and black bottoms (pants or skirts), or similar are requested. Black shoes are preferred. Ties are optional. Volunteers will also be provided with ECA name tags which are stored in our front of house pantry. **These should remain there after your shift, so please don't take them home.** These general guidelines are designed to provide some consistency to our volunteer team, and make them more identifiable to our patrons. Our Event Mgt. staff will wear other appropriate and slightly more formal attire, also in order to be easily recognizable to our patrons.

**Parking and Security:** Volunteers are asked to park on the streets surrounding the theatre in order to allow spaces for patrons to park in our lot. Unfortunately, our lot does not even come close to providing the number of parking spaces we would need to accommodate our patrons during a busy event, so we ask for your help and cooperation in saving the available parking for our paying customers. Since you will be here approximately 60-75 minutes before any event, there should be plenty of parking on the street. If you have a physical condition that requires you to park closer to the center or in the ECA parking lot, by all means please do so. When returning to your vehicle, please be sure to walk with a partner for safety reasons. If you need assistance getting back to your vehicle, contact the manager on duty to arrange for help. Please also remember NOT to bring any valuables with you (purses, wallets, and anything else of value) to your shift at the ECA, as our pantry area is not locked or secured and is basically an extension of our public lobby. We have no way of monitoring this room or guaranteeing the safety of your belongings, so please don't bring them with you. If you forget and do show up with something that needs to be secured, one of our event managers will lock your items up in a secure area.

**Time of arrival:** Volunteers should arrive approximately 60-75 minutes before the actual start time of an event. This will give everyone plenty of time to learn the details of the show, their assignments, set up, and receive

any special instructions. Upon arrival, we ask that you help with the preparation and distribution of programs for that event, and assist with any last minute setup for our concessions and bar areas. If you are scheduled to work the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> performance of a larger event and the theater and concessions areas have already been set up, then arrival 45 minutes prior to the start of the next performance should be adequate.

PLEASE REMEMBER; when you have arrived for a shift, signed in, received your assignment, obtained your nametag, received the shift briefing, and stationed yourself in the lobby; you are now on duty, so we ask that you be ready and available in an area close to where your assignment is for that event. Begin greeting patrons, answering questions, help other volunteers or ECA staff where help is needed, and be in a general state of readiness for the upcoming event. Seating in the lobby is minimal, so please insure that our patrons can use that available seating as they arrive. It can get crowded and noisy as patrons arrive, so if you are not close to your stations when needed, it becomes difficult for the manager on duty to track you down at what might be a critical moment. This is also particularly relevant from a safety and security standpoint. If you are not there and something unexpected happens, no one will know. Whenever possible, we'll place chairs in your work areas for your convenience, and folding stools are available in our FOH pantry that can be used inside the theatre when regular seating is not available. Please be aware of our patrons; don't place a stool or stand in front of seated patrons, and don't stand in our side boxes.

**Food and drink:** Food is not currently allowed in the auditorium; however drinks of any kind are permitted inside. Since glass bottles and cans are not permitted in the theatre, it is a function of both our ticket takers and concessions workers to insure that bottles and cans don't enter the theatre. This means if you're working in our concessions areas, you should always offer a cup for bottled or canned beverages so that the contents can be transferred into the cup prior to the patron re-entering the theatre. We also suggest that our ticket takers have a few new beverage cups on hand at their doors just in case someone shows up with a bottle and wants to enter the theatre. We've found that glass bottles and cans can be disruptive if dropped during a performance. We also use "different looking cups" for alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic beverages, so we can

immediately tell if someone we suspect might be under legal age is violating state alcohol laws. (Clear cups are used for alcoholic beverages, and opaque cups are used for non-alcoholic beverages)

The food and beverage policy can change slightly from one event to another, and the Patron Services Manager should advise you of any changes to this policy during your team meeting. We ask all of our volunteers to enforce these rules but please be considerate when advising our customers of violations of our policies. If you note that someone is violating any of our policies and you are uncomfortable enforcing it, notify the manager on duty and he/she will work with our patron to resolve it. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide free food or drinks to paid or volunteer employees due to the ongoing cost involved and the nature of our non profit status, so please respect the property of the ECA accordingly. **The exception to this is coffee which we freely offer to all employees during events.** We also provide a really nice catered dinner party for all of our volunteers at the end of our season. This is our small way of recognizing your contributions and achievements, and a fun way of saying thanks for all you do.

### **House Policies:**

**Late seating:** Once the show has begun, all patrons arriving late should wait until the first break in the performance to be seated. (Patrons can still be seated during our opening speech or in the case of an opening musical prelude) Once the show has begun, you would ask patrons arriving into the theatre to stand off to the side, inside the theatre until there is an appropriate break in the performance, at which time they can make their way to their seats. **If you are inside the theatre, please make sure that you have a flashlight ready as you will need them once the house lights go down.** The House Manager will provide guidance on this policy during your briefing, and there may be exceptions depending on the individual event.

**Photography & Recording:** ECA policy states that photography and recording of any event is prohibited and most visiting artists request that we enforce this policy. There are however many exceptions to this policy, and you should receive more specific instructions during the team briefing from your Event Manager.

Rental Clients often waive this policy, and will allow guests to take pictures during their events. **Flash photography is always prohibited** but many clients may opt for a “no obnoxious photo policy”. In that case, when approved by the Event Manager, it simply means that a patron who takes out a phone or camera and takes a quick non-flash picture, and promptly puts it away, should be fine. If a patron is disrespectful or distracting to other patrons, we should take corrective action, or advise your event manager so he/she can do so. An example of this kind of behavior might be a patron who takes out a phone and is talking, texting, or keeps their phone display lit for an unacceptable period of time, or attempts to take a lot of photos becoming a distraction for the people around them.

**Customer service expectations:** It is our sincere desire to maintain exceptional customer service standards at all times and we believe this is what separates us from other venues. **We call it the “ECA Experience”.** Here are some suggestions to assist you in providing great customer service to our patrons.

- Present a warm and friendly demeanor.
- Always be ready to assist a patron or to seek additional help from a staff member if you are not sure how to resolve an issue. Our box office always has a 2 way radio on hand and is able to contact our event managers quickly if an issue arises, so feel free to communicate issues through our box office if the event manager is not readily available.
- Help us solve problems when you are comfortable in doing so; I always try to go “above and beyond” to help the ECA and exceed the expectations of our patrons.
- Please be ready to provide a warm greeting to all ECA patrons when they arrive. We take pride in our recently renovated facility and want to make all of our patrons feel at home here.
- Please thank our ECA patrons for attending as they leave.

## **ECA Volunteer Job Descriptions**

We appreciate and understand that you are volunteering your time and resources to be here, so if any functions of your volunteer jobs are uncomfortable, please let the Patron Services Manager know so we can resolve any issues.

Please arrive 60-75 minutes prior to curtain for each event and attend the pre-event volunteer briefing. Job assignments are available next to the sign-in forms at the beginning of your shift that allow you to see which job or area you've been assigned to for that particular event . If you are uncomfortable with a job assignment, please let the manager on duty know so that they can attempt to reassign you to another position. Upon your arrival, volunteers will be asked to assist with pre-event projects such as:

- Program folding and stuffing.
- Preparing main concessions area for pre-show sales.
- Preparing merchandise and other concessions or bar areas.
- Any other task that might be relevant to the upcoming performance.

Typically, the lobby will open at least **90** minutes before any event. The house (doors to the theatre) will normally open **30** minutes before the start of the event. If you see something that might require the Event Manager to delay a performance or event, please get that information to that individual as soon as possible.

### **Event Duties:**

**Ticket-Takers** will either tear tickets or use a laser scanner to “scan in” patrons. They will then prompt patrons through the doors to the auditorium. This involves greeting them, answering questions, and normally directing them to another volunteer inside the auditorium who will assist them in finding their seats and provide them with a program. Information on how to use scanners is posted in our pantry area, and additional training is always available by contacting our Patron Services Manager. **During busy performances it's important to keep the line moving or it will back up into the public areas creating quite a traffic**

**jam, so if scanning equipment malfunctions or if you get behind, we will always revert to tearing tickets to keep the line moving.** It is our policy to never sacrifice customer service while resolving a technical issue and ticket stubs can always be scanned in after the event begins. It's also helpful (and a time saver for you) to "scan in" patrons who are waiting in line prior to the doors opening. You can usually ask the last person you've scanned in to advise you of that as they approach the door so you'll know where you left off. Normally, we will have 1 or 2 ticket-takers at each of the 4 doors to the theater. The ticket takers should also monitor "what's coming into the theatre" to make sure our house rules are being followed. If you see something that doesn't belong inside, please politely inform our patrons of our policies and if possible, offer a satisfactory alternative to satisfy their concerns. **Ticket takers should remain close to their assigned doors throughout the event** to insure that late comers or patrons who need special assistance or instructions can be adequately taken care of. Additionally, in the case of an event that requires a manual ticket count (this is uncommon and will only happen during rental events) ticket takers should gather all of the tickets from their ticket kiosks about 10-15 minutes after the intermission and bring them to the front of house pantry, where they need to be counted and entered onto the daily ticket tracking report. Once this report is complete, it can be turned over to the manager on duty.

**Ushers** will be stationed on the main floor of the theatre, in the main aisle by the sound board, and close to where the aisles intersect. If you are a balcony usher, station yourself a few feet beyond the entrance to the box seats towards the center of the theatre. These volunteers should greet patrons, hand them a program, answer any questions our patrons might have, and direct them to their seats. Depending on the size and scope of any particular event, we may have several volunteer ushers inside the theatre providing these services at the same time. **Important: When practical, in order to provide our patrons the best possible customer service experience, it's always better to walk our patrons directly to their seats. Simply pointing in the general direction of their seats does not provide the patron with adequate guidance. Additionally, do not stop patrons right inside of the entry to the**

**theatre while looking at their tickets or having a discussion with them. With so many people trying to enter the theatre at one time, stopping them there creates a “roadblock” that will quickly back up into the hallway and beyond. Keeping people moving and walking with them works well to prevent that from happening.** Ushers should also monitor “what’s coming into the theatre” to make sure our house rules are being followed. If you see something that doesn’t belong inside, please politely inform our patrons of our policies and if possible, offer a satisfactory alternative. **Ushers should remain close to their assigned doors throughout the event** to insure that late comers or patrons who need special assistance or instructions can be adequately taken care of. Ushers should **ALWAYS** have a flashlight with them to assist in low light situations. This is a matter of safety, so please insure that you have one on hand. These are available on the pantry table next to where you will sign in, and are also located inside of each ticket kiosk.

**Handicapped Assistance Volunteers:** Assisting patrons with special needs is normally a function of either ticket takers or ushers. In a reserved seating configuration, patrons with special needs will have purchased tickets to one of our handicapped accessible boxes, and will present those tickets at doors A or C. (B & D are not accessible to those patrons and involve climbing stairs.) Either a ticket taker or usher should then guide and assist that patron to their assigned seats. In the case of a GA or General Admission event, special needs patrons will present their tickets at either Doors A or C, and can then be escorted to one of our Handicapped Accessible Boxes where they can choose an open seat. Should no open seat be available in one of our boxes, we would then need to determine if patrons seated in that area qualify for use of those seats by asking; “does everyone in this area require the special accommodation that these seats provide?” **IMPORTANT: You cannot challenge whether or not a patron needs those seats. They must volunteer that information.** If no one offers to move, you would need to attempt to reseat that special needs patron into a standard seat. If that’s not possible, you’ll need to ask them to wait off to one side so as not to delay or block access to the theatre, and then find an Event Manager to resolve their situation.

**Food Concessions:** While all jobs at the center are important, these positions assist us in bringing in needed revenue to our nonprofit center for the arts, so these activities are very important. This position will involve direct interaction with our patrons; selling and informing them about the quality products we sell. It will also involve very minor book keeping and keeping accurate counts of the items we sell. The manager on duty will always be in charge of reconciling the proceeds and products we sell at any event, so no major book keeping is involved. Volunteers should (after setting up the concessions area and obtaining a cash bank from the House manager) be ready to sell, as our patrons will often begin purchasing food and drink items as soon as they arrive at the theatre. You will also be trained on the use of a very simple electronic cash register and credit card terminal when working in this area. Please make sure that any item or piece of inventory that makes its way to the lobby sales area has been counted and recorded on our concessions inventory/reconciliation form. This includes all display items and samples. There is also space on the form for inventory that you might add throughout your shift. There are no exceptions to this policy, and continuity is important, so all of us need to use the same method when working in these areas.

**Bar Sales Volunteers** usually consist of (1- 6) bartenders, and a bar cashier. Both of these positions are specialized and will require some additional training. **Licensing by the State of Washington is required in order to serve alcohol, and can be obtained by taking and passing a simple online test. ([www.liquorclass.com](http://www.liquorclass.com))** If interested in becoming certified, please let the Patron Services manager know, and we'll do everything possible to help you to obtain that certificate. Through beer, wine, and mixed drink sales, these positions also assist us in our efforts to support the operations of the center. The bar cashier position supports the alcohol server position by taking payments for all bar sales through the operation of a standard cash register and credit card terminal. If you are interested in this position, please see the Patron Services Manager to arrange for additional training. Keep in mind that these positions require a slightly greater commitment and will require you to stand for extended periods, as well as setup and break down our bar equipment and inventory.

**Merchandise Sales** are also an important method of creating additional revenue for the center. Volunteers in this position will take the lead in selling either ECA branded merchandise, or merchandise from our visiting artists. This position requires the ability to successfully interact with customers and accept payments and make change with cash, checks, and credit cards. It may also require some very basic record keeping.

**Backstage Monitors** provide oversight and security in the backstage hallway. This position requires vigilance and maintaining an operational awareness of the comings and goings in the backstage area. This position is supervised by our technical backstage staff, so it's a little different than our other volunteer jobs.

**Backstage Hospitality** volunteers will assist our backstage staff by setting up food and drink for our visiting artists. These individuals may also act as drivers when needed, to assist in transporting our visiting artists and/or picking up materials needed for events. These positions are also supervised by our technical backstage staff.

**Poster & Brochure Distribution:** This will involve distributing and hanging posters for upcoming events, and delivering and placing ECA brochures to businesses in our communities. This position will require participation during mostly weekday daytime hours.

**Administrative Volunteers:** There are also a variety of interesting projects and opportunities available for volunteers in the ECA's administrative offices. Projects vary in type and scale, and hours for ongoing projects and can be flexible to meet your schedule. One time opportunities are also available throughout the year. Please let us know if you are interested in these types of opportunities.

## **When the Show begins:**

**Ushers; please stay on station to assist late comers with late seating. After late comers are seated, guides and ushers may find a seat close to their assigned stations if available,** and enjoy the performance. If regular seats are not available, we have folding stools in our FOH pantry that can be setup inside of the entry doors. Please refer to the previous guidelines under “Time of Arrival” for more details on these.

Occasionally, a manual ticket count might be necessary at events that ECA has not ticketed, and scanning equipment can't be used. In that event, see your Event Manger for details on how to proceed.

## **Intermission:**

**A few minutes prior to the start of intermission, all volunteers should go back to your posts to be ready to open doors or oversee concessions sales etc. You should be back on station prior to the intermission to be ready for the rush of patrons at intermission.** This is when it can get a little busy. As many as 700 patrons could be moving into the lobby areas to use restrooms, purchase food and bar concessions, or just gather for conversation with friends. Please open auditorium doors as soon as the first act ends to prevent a “traffic jam” at the exit doors. We should be prepared to assist patrons, answer questions, direct patrons to restrooms, sell merchandise and concessions, or anything else related to our positions. When the intermission is complete, please close both the inner and outer house doors, and when the second act has begun we may begin the process of closing out concessions and bar sales. (In some cases we may keep these open longer for special situations). If selling merchandise, we will probably keep merchandise sales areas up and running in order to take advantage of post event sales. Once we have taken care of our responsibilities, volunteers should feel free to return to their seats to enjoy the rest of the performance but please be aware of what's going on around you so that you can be ready to help if needed.

### **End of show:**

At end of the event, please open both sets of auditorium doors as soon as possible. Thank our patrons for coming to the ECA, and direct patrons to restrooms, and answer any questions about upcoming performances if asked. It's also helpful to direct patrons to the merchandise tables, and assist with post-show events if you are able to stay and help out. Another post show activity is a theatre walk through. This is just an informal walk through of the interior of the theatre, and does not involve cleaning or janitorial functions. We will be looking for programs, debris, and any items of value left behind by patrons. Normally, we would be picking up any miscellaneous items left behind and discarding them. (Programs, cups, papers etc) Should you find any items of value, promptly bring them to the event manager for safe keeping as this is the person that the patron will probably contact first when looking for misplaced items.

(updated 6-17-15)