

SIFF Volunteer Handbook

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For questions regarding SIFF's Volunteer Handbook, please email volunteers@siff.net.

Welcome to SIFF!

SIFF is a Seattle-based 501(c)(3) arts nonprofit dedicated to the creation of vibrant experiences and spaces that champion film discovery and arts education.

Beginning in 1976 with the annual Seattle International Film Festival, then expanding into year-round programming, SIFF envisions a thriving arts ecosystem where film discovery encourages a more empathetic, joyful, and connected world. Read more about [our history here](#).

In its three theaters, SIFF offers year-round screenings, Film Talks and a series of spotlight festivals throughout the year. SIFF also serves the community through educational programs and SIFFsupports, a partnership program that hosts and provides technical support to a variety of special screenings and festivals.

OUR MISSION - SIFF is a 501(c)(3) Seattle-based arts nonprofit dedicated to the creation of vibrant experiences and spaces that champion film discovery and arts education.

OUR VISION - SIFF envisions a thriving arts ecosystem where film discovery encourages a more empathetic, joyful, and connected world.

OUR FOUR PROGRAMMATIC PILLARS

1. **SIFF Cinema** – Our three theaters—SIFF Cinema Uptown, SIFF Film Center, and SIFF Cinema Downtown—screen arthouse and mainstream films, the latest international works, one-of-a-kind special events, and festivals.
2. **The Seattle International Film Festival** – SIFF hosts the annual Seattle International Film Festival— traditionally attracting nearly 150,000 attendees to celebrate films from more than 80 countries and regions around the world. Many of the features, short films, and documentaries we screen will not have a return to US cinemas, making it an amazing event to discover new and underrepresented voices and stories.
3. **SIFF Education** – SIFF Education is proud to offer a diverse range of year-round programming for cinephiles of all ages. By cultivating the next generation of filmmakers, film programmers, and filmgoers, we ensure a continuity of the culture of cinema appreciation and digital literacy.
4. **SIFFsupports** – The SIFFsupports program opens SIFF venues as host spaces, and provides marketing and technical assistance to SIFFsupports partners. SIFF collaborates with Pacific Northwest-based filmmakers, artists, and nonprofit organizations, as well as a diverse group of community-based film festivals, elevating SIFF's mission of creating experiences that bring people together around film.

RACE, EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE AT SIFF

SIFF is committed to being an anti-racist and anti-oppression organization.

We strive to provide an environment that encourages inclusive experiences for all our audiences, volunteers, artists, staff, and greater community. To create inclusivity and belonging, SIFF expects everyone participating in our events to uphold and embrace this commitment.

We believe that our mission-centered work to create and share space for community bears a responsibility to be fiercely inclusive of communities that have long been systematically marginalized and excluded. We are dedicated to improving racial equity within our organization and our community. Read more at siff.net/equity.

SIFF VALUES

At SIFF, we value:

- Partnership – We build meaningful relationships with community members and colleagues, working in collaborative ways to create equitable and authentic connections.
- Sustainability – We ensure our processes and our outcomes are financially, operationally, and environmentally sustainable in the short and long term. We recognize our impact and that we are part of a greater local and global footprint.
- Curiosity – We approach our work with a desire to learn and explore something new. We encourage audiences to learn more about themselves and more about the world.
- Inclusion – We create welcoming spaces that are accessible to all where everyone can feel a shared sense of respect and belonging, no matter your story.
- Courage – We act with intention, transparency, and accountability in our work. We host films and filmmakers that may not otherwise have a platform.

Why Volunteer with SIFF?

Discover the power of film to build community: volunteer with SIFF and help bring diverse stories to life, support emerging artists, and connect audiences through transformative cinematic experiences. Every year, volunteers contribute more than 6,000 service hours to SIFF's mission through support of our cinemas and programs. SIFF volunteers are dedicated to supporting SIFF's vision of a more empathetic, joyful, and connected world via film discovery.

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY:

"It's flexible, there are a ton of opportunities for a diverse range of skill sets, and everyone on the SIFF staff treats us like an equal part of making the SIFF experience a great one for filmmakers and movie goers alike."

"I had a great time and found volunteering very accessible."

"The best part of volunteering with SIFF was interacting with the community and meeting new people that share my love of film."

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SIFF has tons of volunteer opportunities; you are sure to find something that suits your interests!

Our Volunteer Teams fall into five main categories:

- **SIFF Cinema volunteers** support SIFF cinemas with theater operations such as scanning, ushering, and venue clean-up.
- **Special Events volunteers** are the hospitality team for galas, parties and other events. This team provides front-of-house service for events, including set-up and teardown, bartending, and serving/bussing. *This team is by application only.*
- **Guest Relations volunteers** assist with various tasks to ensure a positive experience for festival or program guests. *This team is by application only.*
- **SIFFfluencers** support promotions and outreach. This essential marketing street team spreads the word and distributes materials to increase visibility for SIFF happenings.
- **SIFF Universal Volunteers** help with volunteer tasks that fall outside the categories above.

You can learn more about the different volunteer roles and requirements by reviewing their descriptions on Shiftboard.

VOLUNTEER GIFT MATCHING

Many companies offer monetary contributions to registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations where their employees volunteer. These employer contributions are known by a few different names including volunteer grant programs, employee gift matching, and dollars for doers. Ask your human resources department if your employer offers a volunteer matching program. You can also use [SIFF's corporate giving database](#) to determine if your employer will match volunteer hours and any guidelines. If they do, simply complete and submit the appropriate forms from your employer. Once approved SIFF will receive a direct donation thanks to your hard work!

SIFF is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, tax ID 91-1489660

Registration

If you are a new SIFF Volunteer, please register with Shiftboard, our online volunteer program hub.

REGISTERING WITH SHIFTBOARD

1. Go to shiftboard.com/siff
2. Review the volunteer handbook linked on the registration page, then complete and submit your information.
3. Once approved, you will receive a welcome email.

VOLUNTEER TEAMS

Volunteer shifts are assigned to specific teams on Shiftboard, and you can sign up for available shifts assigned to your teams. All SIFF volunteers are part of "SIFF Universal Team" and "SIFF Cinema Volunteers" automatically.

Assigned Teams

To view your assigned teams, select the 'Teams' tab on your dashboard and select the 'Worker' tab.

Joining Additional Teams

From the Teams tab, select 'Join'. Click on a specific team to learn more about the volunteer roles within this team. Depending on the team requirements, you'll either be automatically added as a member, or the Team Manager will need to approve your request.

Seasonal Teams

For the annual Seattle International Film Festival, there will be festival-specific teams that will become available to join. Stay tuned for more information in early spring!

Signing Up for Shifts

Signing up for volunteer shifts at SIFF is easy!

1. Select the 'Schedules' tab on the main navigation bar.
2. Select an available shift to review the time, location, and shift description. *Note: shifts will show only if they are open.**
3. Select the blue 'Take Shift' button on the right. Confirm your selection.
4. You will receive a confirmation email and be able to view the assigned green shift confirmed on your schedule.

Volunteer shift limitations apply for Year-Round Cinema. Volunteers are limited to 4 hours per week of shifts.

UNASSIGNING SHIFTS

Cancel the shift as soon as you know you cannot work it, allowing time to find a replacement. See 'Cancellation Policy' for procedure for calling out last minute for a shift.

1. Select the shift you need to cancel from your schedules tab.
2. Select the gray 'Unassign' button from the menu on the right.
3. Confirm your selection to remove the shift from your schedule.

SHIFTBOARD SUPPORT

If you need help with Shiftboard, email volunteers@siff.net. You may also visit support.shiftboard.com/l/en.

Cancelling Shifts

Cancellations

Volunteers unable to make their shift can unassign their shift via Shiftboard as soon as they know they cannot work it. Each department has a cut-off time for online cancellations, anywhere from five days prior to 24 hours before the shift start time - please see the shift description for more information.

How to cancel a shift on Shiftboard:

1. Select the shift you need to cancel from your schedules tab.
2. Select the gray Unassign button from the menu on the right.

3. Confirm your selection to remove the shift from your schedule.

Calling Out

If “Unassign” is not a selectable option in the shift details, then it is too close to the start time of the shift, and the shift cannot be canceled online.

If it is more than 24 hours in advance of the shift start time, email volunteers@siff.net to cancel, indicating “Shift Cancellation” in the subject line. Provide the date, time, and location of the shift.

If it is less than 24 hours in advance of the shift start time, please call the correlated cinema phone number below to let the cinema team know. Please leave a voicemail message if the phone isn’t answered.

Film Center Front Desk
Monday through Friday from 10am-5pm
(206) 315-0695

SIFF Cinema Uptown
(206) 315-0700

SIFF Downtown
(206) 315-0688

Box Office SIFF
(206) 315-0687

No-Shows

If you fail to let us know you can’t make your assigned shift, you will be considered a no-show. When a no-show is reported, your Shiftboard account will be placed on hold, and any future shifts you have scheduled will be unassigned. Your return to work will be at the discretion of SIFF.

SIFF Volunteer Expectations and Policies

Age Policy

Volunteers must be 18 years or older to participate in SIFF’s volunteer program.

Check-In

Please arrive at your assigned volunteer location with enough time to be ready at the start of your assigned shift. You will likely be relieving another volunteer, so your punctuality is appreciated. Ensure to check in with your shift lead when you arrive.

Attire

Please wear comfortable closed toed shoes, as many positions require standing for long periods. If specific guidance around attire is required, it will be listed in the shift description. If working the SIFF Annual Festival, badges are required to be worn at all times.

Customer Service

It is important to be pleasant and accommodating. We aim to give patrons a positive and enjoyable experience, and as a volunteer, your goal is to make our guests feel welcome. If you find yourself unsure on how to aid a patron, politely refer them to the nearest SIFF staff member. If no staff members are available, assist the patron as best you can. If their question needs follow-up, take down their contact information and question, and pass it along to a SIFF staff member.

Personal Belongings

Please pack light as there may not be space to store items at your shift location. SIFF is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

Cell Phones and Personal Devices

Cell phones and other devices are not permitted to be used during your volunteer shift. If you need to make or take a call, please discuss with your volunteer coordinator, shift lead, or manager on-site.

Meals

While we occasionally provide treats, SIFF does not provide volunteer shift meals. You are encouraged to eat before your shift. Eating is only permitted in designated areas, during your scheduled breaks.

Concessions

When volunteering in a cinema, SIFF volunteers can enjoy popcorn, soft drinks, coffee, & tea from the concession area. Please introduce yourself and let staff know that you're an on-shift SIFF volunteer before ordering. Food and non-alcoholic beverages can be enjoyed during slow times, as the film screening schedule permits.

Event Catering

Often SIFF provides catering to guests at events. SIFF volunteers are not permitted to eat catering and should not expect to do so while on shift. In some cases, they may be given permission by their supervisor. Please also see the ALCOHOL USE policy.

Breaks

Breaks based on the length of your shift and must be planned with your onsite coordinator.

Film Viewing

We encourage volunteers to take advantage of their vouchers and see as many films as possible! Volunteers are not permitted to attend screenings during their scheduled shifts.

Accessibility Accommodations

SIFF is happy to support volunteers to have the accessibility accommodations they need to succeed in their role. Contact us at volunteers@siff.net if you require accommodation.

COVID-19 Volunteer Policy

SIFF has suspended the requirement of volunteers having the COVID vaccine. You are welcome to complete your shifts masked if you prefer.

Safety

Safety is a priority at SIFF, and SIFF volunteers are expected to uphold this commitment.

Physical Safety

Please do not access, lift, or use any materials within the Cinema or SIFF associated spaces without speaking to your supervisor. While we appreciate the helpfulness of our volunteers, we've had injuries and incidents from lifting or using materials that they weren't instructed to. Questions? Ask the leader on site if you're the right person for the task at hand.

Deescalation

In a customer service environment, there may be a situation where conflict arises and deescalation is needed. Some examples of how this can show up at the cinemas is: conflict of priority or goals, conflict of understanding, disappointment or frustration. SIFF staff are trained in deescalation. SIFF Volunteers are not expected to handle every scenario that arises. Support solutions up to your comfort level, and then refer to SIFF staff in situations where support may be needed.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, SIFF cinema management and staff are trained to respond. If able to assist, please follow the lead of your supervisor onsite. SIFF Volunteers are only responsible for their own personal safety.

Community Agreement

Kindness

Kindness is a throughline for all that we do at SIFF. Staff, volunteers, and patrons are doing their best, so please use kindness in all interactions. Every volunteer joins SIFF with different experience, whether it's their first day or 20th year, and deserves to be treated with patience, consideration, and respect. If you are unsure about questions or instructions, ask for clarification and be ready to listen. Constructive feedback is welcome, and we ask that it's shared with your shift supervisor to allow for direct change. SIFF does not tolerate rudeness, arguments, or belittling language towards patrons, volunteers, or staff. This means that we also ask that you provide the utmost respect and follow these guidelines in your interactions with and treatment of staff. Here's some examples of what this looks like:

- A lead or member of cinema management may give you instructions that differ from previous instructions or structure seen over years of volunteering. You are welcome to ask questions of leaders and staff around those instructions, but please do not contradict this guidance because “the other way works better.”
- Please follow all employee and facility policies.
 - Do not bring in outside food and drink, for example. Whatever we enforce for staff and our audiences should be followed by volunteers. Avoid putting staff in a difficult place of needing to enforce policies with you. Volunteering does not grant you special treatment or waive any rules or policies.
 - If you would like a copy of the employee handbook, please place a request at HR@siff.net
 - Please listen to leadership instructions and follow them regardless of what has been done before.
- A new employee or leader may be learning their way around SIFF and its programs. Please be patient and kind to all staff at all levels, and do not treat staff differently based on their age, tenure, gender or other protected characteristics.
- An employee may be following instructions given to them by their manager. Please do not ask the employee to change or divert from these instructions. You are welcome to speak to the manager to seek more info, but it is up to the manager to decide the best path forward. Do not put pressure on the employee to do something their manager has not asked them to do.

Failure to adhere to this and other policies will result in the following disciplinary procedures and the reconsideration of your participation in the volunteer program.

Anti-Harassment Policy

SIFF is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for EVERYONE, regardless of gender, gender identity & expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, or religion. SIFF does not tolerate harassment in any form, including at any of our online events or in chat rooms or forums. Harassment includes but is not limited to:

- Offensive comments related to gender, gender identity & expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion
- Sexual images in public spaces
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing, unwelcomed photography, or recording
- Sustained disruption of programs
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Unwelcome sexual attention

If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have any other concerns, please contact SIFF staff IMMEDIATELY or contact volunteers@siff.net.

SIFF Policies

Media

The Artistic Director and Executive Director or their designees are the sole spokespersons for SIFF. All press inquiries should be directed towards press@siff.net or a member of staff who will relay them to the Press Team.

Confidentiality

The nature of services provided by SIFF requires that information be handled in a private, confidential manner. Information about our business, our employees, or clients — including, but not limited to, film sources and contacts, guest attendance and itinerary information. Festival sales numbers will not be released to people or agencies outside the company without SIFF's written consent. The only exceptions to this policy will be to follow legal or regulatory guidelines. Employees and volunteers are expected to keep such information confidential and not disclose such information to any third party without prior authorization from their supervisor.

Guest Confidentiality Policy

Forward all guest-related questions (who will be attending, etc.) to Press and Public Relations in the Marketing and Communications Department by emailing press@siff.net. Be always pleasant and respectful of guests' privacy, including events. DO NOT APPROACH GUESTS

FOR AUTOGRAPHS OR PHOTOGRAPHS, OR TO DISCUSS PERSONAL PROJECTS.
Approaching guests shall be grounds for dismissal.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use

The use of alcohol or any drug that is illegal under either federal or state law (including marijuana) may be a serious threat to personal health, workplace safety, and job performance. Volunteers are strictly prohibited from possessing, selling, consuming, or being under any influence of alcohol or drugs while on the job or in any other manner that may affect the volunteer's work performance or SIFF's interests or reputation. This prohibition also extends to legal drugs for which a volunteer may not have a valid prescription or that are not used in a manner consistent with accepted frequency or dosage requirements.

Volunteers are strictly prohibited from possessing, selling, consuming, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (and legal drugs that are not used in a manner consistent with accepted frequency or dosage requirements) while on the job. SIFF is a tobacco-free environment. Please do not consume alcohol, drugs, or tobacco while wearing SIFF volunteer gear. Alcohol served at SIFF events is not for SIFF volunteer consumption while on shift. Violations of this policy will result in removal from the program.

Benefits & Appreciation

VOLUNTEER VOUCHERS

As a volunteer benefit, SIFF volunteers receive vouchers that are redeemable for tickets and passes to screenings, as well as SIFF memberships. For every four hours of service, a volunteer receives one voucher that can be redeemed for one regularly priced ticket.

There are two types of vouchers:

- Year-Round Vouchers
 - Can be used for eligible screenings at SIFF Cinemas.
- Festival Vouchers
 - Can be redeemed on both screenings during the annual Seattle International Film Festival, as well as SIFF Cinema.
 - These vouchers expire after 1 year from festival to festival. (AKA: valid from start of first year's festival date 5/7/2026 to the first date of the next year's festival)

You'll receive your vouchers at the end of your shift when you check out with your shift supervisor. You can present your volunteer vouchers at the Box Office in exchange for Festival tickets or redeem them online.

Vouchers are transferable to friends or family, but the sale of vouchers is strictly prohibited.

Some limitations may apply - see siff.net/vouchers for voucher restricted screenings or view the film event page to see if there are any restrictions.

FILM VOUCHER TIME CONVERSION

1 hour → 3 hrs 59 mins = 1 voucher

4 hours → 7 hrs 59 mins = 2 vouchers

8 hours → 11 hrs 59 mins = 3 vouchers

REDEEM VOUCHERS FOR SCREENINGS:

- Go to siff.net and view which film and showtime you would like to see.
- Go to a SIFF box office to exchange your voucher for ticket redemption.
- Once redeemed, your ticket can be physically printed or sent as a PDF attached to your confirmation email. Tickets can also be printed at home or scanned off your mobile device.
- Each screening has a limited allotment of tickets that may be redeemed with volunteer vouchers. Once the volunteer allotment is reached for a screening, you will need to purchase a ticket to attend.

REDEEM VOUCHERS FOR SIFF MEMBERSHIP

In addition to redeeming vouchers for tickets, volunteers may redeem six volunteer vouchers for a SIFF Membership! A SIFF Membership grants you discounts on tickets and passes, reciprocal benefits at several local organizations, and invitations to member-only events and screenings. You can fill out the [Vouchers for Membership Form](#), and learn more about the benefits of a SIFF membership on our [Membership page](#).

REDEEM VOUCHERS FOR PASSES

Whether you volunteer year round, or during the Festival, SIFF volunteers can redeem unexpired vouchers for passes to enjoy SIFF programming even more!

20 volunteer vouchers can be redeemed for a [Downtown Annual Pass](#).

30 volunteer vouchers can be redeemed for a [2026 Film Pass](#) (May 7-17, 2026)

40 volunteer vouchers can be redeemed for an [Ultimate Annual Pass](#).

Redemption must be completed in person at any SIFF cinema. If you have questions about exchanging vouchers for passes, please contact boxoffice@siff.net.

VOLUNTEER SCREENINGS

Volunteers in good standing with shifts confirmed within the calendar year will be invited to exclusive Volunteer Screenings of SIFF-curated films throughout the year, and may also receive invites to screenings held by partnering agencies.

Transportation

PUBLIC TRANSIT

SIFF encourages our audience to use public transportation when possible. [King County Metro Trip Planner](#) and [One Bus Away](#) are useful resources to plan ahead.

- SIFF Cinema Downtown: Served by a variety of public transportation including: bus (Metro Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 17, 21, 24, 28, 33, 40, 62, 124, 131, 132, 994, C Line, D Line, E Line, and H Line), Link light rail (Westlake Station), Monorail, and Seattle Streetcar (South Lake Union line).
- SIFF Cinema Uptown and SIFF Film Center: Served by numerous bus routes including Metro Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13, 24, 29, 31, and 33. The [Monorail](#) departs from Westlake Center and Seattle Center approximately every 10 minutes.

BIKING

There are bike racks in front of the SIFF Cinema Uptown and throughout the Seattle Center Campus as well as safe bike lockers inside the 1st Ave N Garage, accessible using a BikeLink Card.

PARKING

Street parking and [several garages](#) are available near SIFF Cinema venues. If you do decide to drive, please be advised that SIFF does not reimburse parking expenses.

- SIFF Cinema Downtown: The closest garage to the venue is located at the [Warwick Hotel](#). Additional neighborhood lots include [Pacific Place](#), [3rd and Stewart](#), [Amazon Day 1](#), and [Amazon Doppler](#) (free parking nights and weekends).
- SIFF Cinema Uptown and SIFF Film Center: View [parking lots](#) in the area or explore [Seattle Center](#) for additional parking resources. Events at [Climate Pledge Arena](#) may cause increased traffic and parking rates.

Stay Connected!

For daily updates, announcements, and more, sign up for SIFF's enews at siff.net/enews.

Follow us on socials [@siffnews](https://twitter.com/siffnews) and be sure to tag us to share your experience!

Handbook Version Documentation:

Version and Date of Revision	Revision team
October 2025	Festivals and Events, Customer Service, Cinema Ops and HR
February 2026	Cinema Ops, Volunteer Management, and HR