

SARASOTA FILM FESTIVAL

Volunteer Handbook

DEPARTMENTS

Proceedures to follow before, during, and after the Festival.

GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Minimum commitment hours, training, and documentation.

PERKS & BENEFITS

Recognizing our Volunteers.



<http://www.sarasotafilmfestival.com/volunteer>

CONTACT

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Apply to volunteer at

<http://www.sarasotafilmfestival.com/support-sff/volunteer>



HELLO THERE!

The Sarasota Film Festival emphasizes the best in cinema alongside exciting programs and events, with more than 180 films screened each year including features, documentaries, shorts, and kid-friendly picks. Entering our 17th year, we're proud to bring the best new and veteran independent filmmakers to our Festival with local programs that showcase our idyllic Gulf Coast community.

Be a part of the action and volunteer with the Sarasota Film Festival! There are over 15 departments in which Volunteers can participate in.

We need YOU – a team of Volunteers to help continue making the Festival a success. SFF Volunteers are the heart, man power and face of the Festival and we would not be celebrating our 17th year without our talented Volunteers. Thank you for your support and we welcome you to our SFF family with open arms!

OUR MISSION

To celebrate the art of filmmaking and the contribution of filmmakers by hosting an international Film Festival and developing year-long programs for the economic, educational and cultural benefit of our community.

OUR HISTORY

In 1999, Sarasota civic and business leaders banded together to produce the first Sarasota Film Festival. This “mini-festival,” featuring eight independent films, six actors (Jon Favreau, Marlee Matlin, Jonathan Silverman, Penelope Ann Miller, Peter Sarsgaard, Samantha Mathis) and a gala fundraiser, and has since grown to an annual 10-day event with over 200 hundred films, more than 250 filmmakers in attendance, multiple special events, symposiums, panels and conversations featuring leaders in the film industry.



DEPARTMENTS

The Sarasota Film Festival relies on its Volunteers for a number of important tasks—before, during and after each year’s festival.

In general, Volunteer shifts are four hours long. Please read the following thoroughly to understand the specific tasks required for each department/function and the time commitments likely expected of you.



PRE-FESTIVAL

Screening Committee

A group of Volunteers that reviews submissions for the selection of the Sarasota Film Festival. As a member of the Screening Committee, you are helping us to determine which submitted films should be considered for the final program. Some of them will be student films, experimental films, horror films, etc. The programming team will make final decisions on the films of the program, and which films we review depend largely on the first look reviews by our Screening Committee. We need qualified Volunteers as early as late-October until mid-February to review films.

Box Office

Box office Volunteers will sell and print film and event tickets, and will be among the go-to staff for general film and Festival information. The main SFF Box Office will be located at the Regal Cinema's Hollywood 20 Theater at 1993 Main Street. The Box Office hours, pre-festival, will be approximately 10 AM-6 PM, 7 days a week. A full-time SFF staff person will be at the box office at all times.

Training will be provided.

Call Center

Festival Headquarters will again be at 1900 Main Street, where Call Center is also located. Volunteers at the Call Center will provide a variety of information regarding the Film Festival (films shown, screening dates and times, ticket prices, ticket packages, event locations and costs) and Sarasota (such as driving directions, parking locations, restaurant recommendations, local attractions) to those calling the Film Festival.

Training will be provided.

PRE-FESTIVAL

Marketing / Street Teams

This task will primarily involve distribution of our marketing materials. We will need people to walk/drive these materials to downtown Sarasota and adjacent areas, or drive to local schools and businesses, and to Lakewood Ranch, Venice, St. Armand's, Longboat, Anna Maria, and Bradenton, among other area locations. We will also need Volunteers to work Saturdays at the downtown Sarasota farmers' market beginning around the second week in March.

SFF Coconut Office

We will need Volunteers to staff the front desk and/or assist SFF staff at our offices at 322 Coconut Avenue, starting March 1st. The tasks include answering the phones, limited filing, administrative tasks, routine Festival preparation tasks, and so on.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

Box Office

Box office staff at the Hollywood 20—working with the SFF Box Office Manager—will print, organize, and distribute will call tickets, in addition to selling and printing regular tickets. Box Office hours at the theater will generally be 9AM – 10PM daily.

Training will be provided.

Call Center

The Call Center is located at the Festival Headquarters. Volunteers will provide a variety of information regarding the Film Festival and Sarasota to those calling the Film Festival.

Training will be provided.

Festival Concierge

This position is a “greeter” at the front door of the Hollywood 20, sometimes the first festival contact with our patrons. You will answer questions and direct patrons to the appropriate location,



DURING THE FESTIVAL

Events

We will need a number of Volunteers to assist with the Festival events. SFF events may include Moonlight Movies; Opening Night Film and Party; Cinema Tropicale; Tribute Luncheon; Conversation Series; and Filmmaker Tribute and After-Party. Volunteers are needed to work the events—setting up the venues, helping during the events themselves, and breaking down the venues. The number of Volunteers needed and the Volunteer shifts will vary by event; final determinations will be made at a later date. This department includes late hours and many hours standing on your feet. During the event, Volunteers are required to wear a white button-down shirt, black slacks or black skirt, and black comfortable shoes. SFF will provide you a red tie and badge to complete the outfit.

Marketing / Street Teams

During the Festival, the materials’ distribution will continue. We will also need Volunteers to work at the merchandise booth at the Hollywood 20 Box Office.

Social Media Team

During the festival, we will need Volunteers to help photograph and update the public about the exciting happenings of the Festival. Proficient in social media, clever with words and a love for communication and sharing is what we look for in Volunteers to join our Social Media Team. We will select Volunteers for specific days and events who will be in charge of collecting pictures, quotes and names and sending it to our Social Media Director.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

SFF Coconut Office

We continue to need Volunteers at our office at 322 Coconut Avenue to assist SFF staff.

Education

In addition to providing fantastic films and events, SFF is committed to making the art of film accessible to local kids and their families. Our Education Department works with students year-round and creates special opportunities for recognition during the Festival, empowering students with critical thinking skills and the tools to express themselves. Operating both in and out of area classrooms, SFF Education reaches more than 5,000 students through filmmaking, film review, screenwriting, and movie screening programs. Before, during, and after the Festival, we host free Moonlight Movies at public locations throughout the community. We also host kids trips to the theater, which requires the help of Volunteer to run smoothly.

Sponsor/ Filmmakers' Lounge

As an SFF Ambassador at the lounge, Volunteers will not only be gracious greeters to our Sponsors and Filmmakers, but also will serve to ensure that only appropriate guests are entering. As well as greeting, Volunteers serve beverages and help bus tables once our guests are finished eating. The lounge is open only during the Festival, and from 11 AM- 6 PM. All lounge Volunteers must be 21 years old or older.

Training will be provided.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

Theater Operations (Lobby / House / Tech)

We will need Volunteers at the Hollywood 20 Theater throughout the daytimes/evenings. Volunteers—under the direction of the Front of House Theater Manager—will assist in organizing the waiting lines, showing patrons to the correct theater, collecting tickets, distributing/collecting patron comment cards on the films, tallying patron ratings of the films, and so on. We will need 8-12 Volunteers for 4-hour shifts each day. Other theater Volunteers will assist in various technical aspects of film screening. Tasks include talk-back with the projection booth, working on the Q & A periods with filmmakers after screenings, and performing basic daily operations of screening set-up and break down. The time frame for shifts and the number of Volunteers needed will be determined at a later date.

Training will be provided.

Festival Headquarters / Volunteer Central

Festival Headquarters will need Volunteers to assist SFF staff in coordinating Volunteer shifts, checking in Filmmakers, Volunteers and Press, answering Volunteer questions, and occasionally helping Staff, including ensuring that headquarters remains neat and organized and distributing Volunteer meals to those working in the theater. We will need 2 Volunteers for each 3-hour shift.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

Will Call

The Will Call station is located inside Hollywood 20, right as patrons enter the theater. Volunteers there interact with festival-goers by assisting them in finding their tickets and having them sign a receipt. Also, when Box Office hands the Volunteers a box of envelopes filled with tickets, it is up to the Volunteers to put the envelopes in alphabetic order. Volunteers at Will Call will also be trained for the Stand-by Line, in case assistance is needed during a rush of films.

Training will be provided.

Stand-by Line / Welcome Tent

The Film Festival Stand-by Line / Welcome Tent is located outside of the Hollywood 20. Volunteers there interact with festival-goers by answering general questions about the Festival, assisting them in finding tickets, and coordinating stand-by lines. We will need 2 Volunteers for each of 4, 3-hour shifts. **Training will be provided.**

Runners

During the Film Festival, we will have a constant need for Volunteers available on a moment's notice, to assist the Festival Manager at Festival Headquarters, other on-site managers, marketing and/or staff in the Cocomanut office. Tasks may include ferrying materials between the Hollywood 20 and/or headquarters to/from the SFF offices, or assisting in delivery/set-up of marketing banners or other materials at event venues, or collecting Volunteer and staff meals, and other related tasks. All runner/on-call Volunteers will need cell phones and vehicles.

DURING THE FESTIVAL

General Assignments

Volunteers will report to Headquarters, located at 1900 Main Street, for their shift. At Headquarters, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator will direct the Volunteers to a specific task that needs to be done or a department that needs more Volunteers. This is a great way for Volunteers to get a little taste of every department.

Transportation

The Film Festival relies on Volunteers to drive Filmmakers, industry guests, and celebrities to and from area airports, and from their hotels to screenings and events and then back to their hotels, and other trips as needed. There may be opportunities for a limited number of new Volunteers to assist in this task; most of our drivers have had these Volunteer positions for a number of years. Requirements include; you must be 21 years old, an excellent driving record, background checks, and possible drug tests. All applicants must first be personally interviewed. For insurance purposes, all drivers are screened through the Department of Motor Vehicles. Driver shifts are variable but generally require a commitment of a minimum of 8 hours.

Training will be provided.

POST FESTIVAL

Break-Down Team

Once the Film Festival concludes, we will need Volunteers to break down the tents at the theater, clear out theater equipment, disassemble the box office(s), collect all the marketing materials, clear out/clean up headquarters, and assorted and similar tasks. We will need approximately 10 Volunteers for up to eight hours, each of 2-3 days.

SFF Coconut Office

We will continue to need Volunteers after the Festival ends to help with administration work, wrapping up projects and preparing for the next year.





GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

+ A minimum commitment of
12 hours of service is required to volunteer.

+ Independent responsibility for transportation and lodging.

+ Participation in pre-festival training and requested documentation.



THANK YOU FOR THE FOLLOWING

1. Please be on time, observing prerequisite training or orientation requirements. Be prepared to hand off your assignment to the next volunteer scheduled. No volunteer is authorized to change any volunteer schedule. Any and all changes must be approved by the Volunteer Coordinator.
2. Check in and check out with your manager or Lead Volunteer before and after your shift, having managers or Lead Volunteers sign off on your time card at the end of each shift. Please try and accommodate staff requests, but do not leave your position unless directed by your Lead Volunteer or manager.
3. You will receive a Volunteer ID Badge and Volunteer t-shirt. These must be worn when you are on shift. Special Events Volunteers will wear black pants/skirt with a white button down shirt and a SFF tie that will be handed out and collected after the event.
4. When attending the Festival as a patron and not as a volunteer we ask that you do not wear any t-shirts that identify you as a Volunteer. This relieves you of any responsibility, leaving you free to enjoy the festivities as you like. In addition, it lets us know that you are off the clock. If you attend a film with the use of your volunteer movie voucher, however, please wear your volunteer badge.
5. Even though you are not a salaried festival employee, we do count on you just the same and consider your sign-up to be a work commitment. If conflicts arise and you are unable to make your scheduled shift, it is important to contact the Volunteer Coordinator or Assistant Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible, (24 hours advanced notice required) allowing them enough time to find a suitable replacement.

6. The Sarasota Film Festival stipulates that all contact with the media is limited to designated PR, Publicity and SFF Staff members. Please direct questions or requests from the press to your manager or Lead Volunteer.
7. Please report an emergency or accident to your manager or Lead Volunteer immediately.
8. Although the Festival hosts many parties where food and alcoholic beverages may be available, Volunteers must refrain from consuming food and alcoholic beverages while on duty. If you observe an instance of suspected under age consumption of alcohol, please report the situation to an SFF Staff member immediately. Volunteering while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is grounds for immediate expulsion.
9. Please smoke in designated areas only. If you are a driver or providing other direct services to patrons and guests of the Festival, please refrain from smoking in their presence or in the SFF provided vehicles.
10. SFF welcomes youth Volunteers; however, they must complete an application and work in an established position. The Festival cannot supply childcare and requests that parents leave children in the care of another while on shift. Underage Volunteers will not be permitted at our events where alcohol will be served.
11. Please observe our firm, yet friendly request that you engage in your assigned task while on shift. You are more than welcome to enjoy the screenings and activities of the festival when your shift is over. This applies to all Volunteers.

THANK YOU FOR THE FOLLOWING

12. As a Volunteer wearing a Sarasota Film Festival t-shirt and badge you are representing the SFF. Please be respectful of others and be aware of your personal conduct. When you are not working please take off your Volunteer shirt and badge.

13. SFF is not responsible for any personal items lost or stolen. Please leave all valuables either at home or locked in your car.

14. Please do not use any personal mobile devices while on your shift unless its use is directly related to your volunteer duties.

15. We want our Volunteers to stay hydrated and fed throughout the day. Water bottles and food can be found at three different locations during the Festival. While on shift, please do not eat food at your station. Make sure a Volunteer is present at your station when you leave to eat food.





PERKS & BENEFITS

At the Sarasota Film Festival, we recognize that we wouldn't be who we are without you, our Volunteers. The Film Festival is an enormous undertaking and we depend on the tremendous amount of Volunteer labor and assistance you all provide. We know that all of your hard work deserves rewards.

As a result, our Volunteers are eligible for the following benefits:

- Volunteer badge
- Volunteer t-shirt
- Lunch and/or dinner are provided for those Volunteers working during those shifts.
- SFF Volunteer Kick-Off
- 10% off SFF Merchandise
- Daily movie passes. Please see below for procedures and limitations.
- Volunteer Thank-You Party. Please see below for requirements.

We encourage our Volunteers to work a minimum of 12 hours, which translates into four shifts during the ten days of the Festival. Those working 15 hours or more are invited to our Volunteer Thank-You Party. Details on the party are given below.

VOLUNTEER TIME CARDS

Each Volunteer is asked to maintain a time card. Movie tickets and entrance to the Volunteer party are based on the number of hours worked, tracked on your time card.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your time card is accurate. After each of your shifts, you must make sure that a SFF staff member, manager or Lead Volunteer signs your time card. We want to make sure to accurately track your important contribution to the Festival's success and reward you accordingly.

You will receive your time card when you receive your Volunteer shirt and badge. Fill out the form with your name and contact information. List each Volunteer shift you undertake, date, and hours worked.

At the time of your final shift, please turn in your completed, signed time card to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Assistant Volunteer Coordinator. SFF will retain your time card.

DAILY MOVIE PASS

For every three hours of Volunteer work, as shown on your signed time card, you will be eligible to attend any regular showing of our Festival films, on a space-available, first-come basis after ticket-holders have been seated. Volunteers will be given a special ticket that clearly marks that admittance is for a Volunteer, for use by the box office. Volunteer tickets will be handed out at the Welcome Tent. You may see a movie on any day that is most convenient to you, but please wear your volunteer badge and not your volunteer shirt when you do so.

You must complete your volunteer assignment for that day, if you intend to see a film the same day you volunteer.



VOLUNTEER THANK-YOU PARTY

Volunteering for 15 or more hours—before, during, and/or after the film festival—is one of the prerequisites to be invited to the Volunteer Thank-You Party. The second precondition is to not cancel a shift less than 24 hours (unless unforeseen emergency or illness) before the start of a shift. If a Volunteer does not show up for a shift or cancels the morning of, this will be taken into consideration when deciding the guest list for the party. This party is held the week following the festival's conclusion. Details on the location, time, and date of the party will be announced closer to the start of the Festival.

Each Volunteer at the party is given raffle tickets to items donated by local merchants and arts and cultural organizations. The more hours a Volunteer works, the more raffle tickets he or she receives.

The Volunteer Coordinator must receive all signed time cards within two days of the completion of the film festival, in order to verify a Volunteer's eligibility for the thank-you party and to determine the number of raffle tickets to which each Volunteer is entitled.

Thank you all again for your enthusiasm, your hard work and your friendship. Our Volunteers are incredibly valuable to us.



CONTACT

Main Office

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