

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Thank you for volunteering to usher at The Geffen Playhouse!
Please read this volunteer handbook carefully to prepare yourself
to be a representative of this historic performing arts venue.
We are happy to have you as a volunteer with the team!

Geffen Playhouse
10886 Le Conte Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 208-6500
www.geffenplayhouse.org
volunteer@geffenplayhouse.org

General Volunteer Requirements

- Must be 18 years of age or older.
- Must have a personal email account and access to a computer with internet for volunteer communications.
- Must be able to stand for up to an hour and move within the theater efficiently with or without reasonable accommodations.
- Must be able to scan and/or tear tickets and direct patrons with or without reasonable accommodations.
- Must be friendly and willing to interact with patrons, staff and other volunteers in a courteous manner.
- We ask that all volunteers attend a mandatory Season Orientation Meeting prior to the start of each season. This meeting will cover:
 - o Brief history of the theater
 - o Summary of upcoming season
 - o Roles of volunteer ushers
 - o Theater policies and procedures
 - o Theater seating
 - o Emergency Procedures
- Must be able to usher for all performances in the Gil Cates Theater during the season (at least one shift per show).
 - o Shifts last 3 to 5 hours depending on the length of the performance.
 - o Volunteers are scheduled to arrive 1 hr 15 mins prior to the show start.

Usher Expectations

General

1. Arrive on time (your shift will be scheduled to begin 1 hour and 15 minutes before the show) and sign in at the front desk. The reason we schedule volunteers to arrive at this time is due to the time needed to check in volunteers, open the lobby, work with stage management, and attend to patrons. It is essential that we check in and orientate our volunteers before our lobby is open.
2. If you are late or miss the pre-show meeting, you may be asked to leave.
3. Look professional in appropriate usher attire. Please see Dress Code. If you arrive and are not dressed properly, you may be asked to leave.
4. Attend the pre-show meeting with the House Manager. This meeting will cover:
 - a. A brief review of policies, procedures and theater seating
 - b. Any changes or updated information
 - c. The logistics of the specific show you are working
 - d. Position Assignments for the evening
5. Receive seating assignment from the House Manager. Seating location for volunteer ushers during the performance is at the discretion of the House Manager.
6. Stay for the entirety of the performance. If for some reason you need to leave early, please alert the House Manager so they can make proper adjustments.
7. In the event of an emergency, injury, incident or accident of any kind, please stay calm. Locate and alert the House Manager immediately and await further instructions before making any decisions.

Usher Expectations

Dress Code

- Our dress code for volunteers is all black business casual attire and all black shoes that are comfortable to stand in for 30-60 minutes.
- Please no handbags larger than a book as we have limited storage space. You may wear a small crossbody purse, fanny pack or bag during your shift as long as it is black and does not impede you from performing your duties.
- We do not allow t-shirts, tank tops, sweatshirts, sleeveless shirts, flip-flops, hats, or political buttons or labels.

Professionalism

- You represent the Geffen Playhouse while you are volunteering. Please maintain a professional demeanor and positive attitude at all times.
- Please do not approach performers during, before or after your volunteer shift.
- Derogatory language or sentiment will not be tolerated. We aim to be an inclusive institution. Please refrain from conversations about how anyone looks, sounds or acts.
- Refrain from speaking ill of others, including theater staff, fellow volunteers, and patrons. Please extend to others the degree of patience and courtesy you would expect to receive.
- No outside food or beverage may be consumed once the lobby opens. Eating or drinking on the patio, or resting/sitting should be done after the pre-show meeting and before the house opens (with the permission of House Management only).
- If you are running late or will be unable to attend your shift - please send an email to volunteer@geffenplayhouse.org or call the front desk at 310-208-6500 so we are aware and can plan accordingly.
- If you are unable to behave in a professional and appropriate manner while volunteering, you may be asked to leave or dismissed from future show dates.

Scheduling

Signing Up

All usher communications take place through e-mail, so please make sure we have your correct e-mail address. Prior to each season, current volunteers are and asked to fill out the form on our website requesting the following information: contact information, preferred days/times, volunteer partners, and any potential conflicts. Once the responses have been compiled, shifts will be assigned in two batches - the Fall/Winter show(s) and the Spring/Summer show(s). If you learn of conflicts you may have from your stated availability, e-mail updates to volunteer@geffenplayhouse.org

Cancellations

It is your responsibility to keep track of the times and dates of your commitments and important that volunteers consistently follow through with ushering the events for which they sign up. If you must cancel, please do so at least 48-hours in advance by emailing volunteer@geffenplayhouse.org. If there is an ongoing pattern of last-minute cancellations, you may not be asked back in the future.

Grounds for Dismissal

- Geffen Playhouse or the volunteer may terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause or prior notice.
- Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to: failure to perform assigned duties, inability to perform assigned duties, failure to follow Geffen Playhouse policies and procedures, disruptive, inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, using drugs/alcohol while performing volunteer duties, abuse of patrons or staff or theft of Geffen Playhouse property.
- If a volunteer is absent from a shift without e-mailing more than once, it is grounds for the volunteer's dismissal and the volunteer may be taken off all future show dates.

FAQ

Q: Where should I park?

A: Geffen Playhouse does not own or operate our own parking lot. More information about parking is available at <https://www.geffenplayhouse.org/parking>.

Q: Where can I put my personal belongings during my usher shift?

A: Please bring as little as possible with you, as there is limited storage space. The Geffen Playhouse cannot be responsible for loss or damage of personal property. See Dress Code for more information on personal belongings.

Q: May I bring a family member or friend to volunteer with me?

A: Please do not bring a family member or a friend to volunteer with you. If this family member or friend is interested in volunteering on a regular basis, they are welcome to fill out the Volunteer Interest Form on our website at www.geffenplayhouse.org/about/join-our-team/volunteer/

Tickets



History of the Geffen Playhouse Building



- Built in 1929 as a Masonic Clubhouse to serve UCLA students and alumni.
- Sold to Donald and Kristen Combs in the early 1970s. The building then became home to Contempo (a furniture store), Stratton's (an Italian restaurant) and The Westwood Playhouse.
- Donated to UCLA under the premise that it would remain a theater and that Gil Cates Sr. (founder of the UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television) assumed development.
- Geffen Playhouse opened in 1995 - named in honor of David Geffen's generous founding gift.
- From 2003-2005 during the capital campaign upgrade, productions were held at nearby Brentwood and Wadsworth theaters.
- In September 2005, the Geffen Playhouse reopened and included the smaller Audrey Skirball Kenis space.
- In 2010, the larger stage was named the Gil Cates Theater in honor of Gil Cates Sr.
- In 2014, his son Gil Cates Jr. was appointed Executive Director after Gil Cates Sr. passed away in 2011.
- In 2023, Tarell Alvin McCraney was appointed the Artistic Director.

Geffen Playhouse Policies

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Geffen Playhouse is an equal opportunity employer. Neither the Geffen Playhouse nor any of its employees, including its supervisors and managers, may discriminate or retaliate regarding any employee, applicant, intern (paid or unpaid), or volunteer in violation of the law or Geffen Playhouse policy. All aspects of employment with Company are on the basis of competence and merit. Thus Geffen Playhouse does not discriminate against qualified individuals or prospects on the basis of any protected category, i.e., a person's age (40 and over), ancestry, association with a member of a protected class, color, disability (mental or physical, including HIV and AIDS), engagement in protected activity, family care or medical leave, genetic information (about genetic tests or participation in clinical research or manifestation of disease), marital status, medical condition (including cancer or a related medical condition or genetic characteristics not presently associated with symptoms of disease), military or veteran status, national origin (including language use restrictions and use and possession of a driver's license issued to persons unable to prove their legal presence in the U.S.), race and traits historically associated with race (including hair texture and "protective hairstyles" such as braids, locks and twists), religion or religious creed (including religious dress and grooming practices), gender (including gender expression and gender identity such as transgender or transitioning) sex/gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and/or any related medical conditions), sexual orientation, or any other classification that is or shall be protected by federal, state, or local law. The Geffen Playhouse applies this policy to all employment practices and personnel actions including advertising, personnel recruitment, testing, hiring, promotions, transfers, demotions, layoffs, terminations, pay scales, and other terms and conditions of employment. The Geffen Playhouse expects all individuals affiliated with the Geffen Playhouse to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees, candidates, volunteers and interns, and to demonstrate a commitment to the Geffen Playhouse's equal opportunity objectives. Any individual who believes that he, she or another person has been subjected to a retaliatory or discriminatory decision or practice must immediately notify the House Manager.

Anti-Harassment Policy

As described above, the Geffen Playhouse is committed to maintaining a work setting free of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or other prohibited conduct based on any legally protected classification or based on the perception that an individual is a member of a protected class or is associated with a member of a protected class. Prohibited conduct includes harassment, discrimination, retaliation and other inappropriate conduct of any nature based on a protected classification.

The Geffen Playhouse is committed to preventing and prohibiting misconduct on the job, including sexual harassment or any other type of harassment from any workplace source. Employees, job applicants, volunteers, unpaid interns and independent contractors are legally protected from harassment.

The Geffen Playhouse prohibits all employees (including co-workers, supervisors and managers) and non-employees (such as vendors, customers/clients, independent contractors, volunteers and anyone else doing business with the Geffen Playhouse) from engaging in prohibited harassment as further defined in this policy and as provided under applicable law. Prohibited conduct under this policy – even if not unlawful in and of itself -- includes disrespectful, unprofessional and/or unwelcome conduct based on sex or any protected characteristic. Such improper conduct can include, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Verbal or Written Conduct: Abusive words or phrases, “hate words,” jokes, sexual banter, conversations about one’s or someone else’s sex life, derogatory or patronizing comments, stereotyping, unwanted statements (such as about an individual's sex, physical features, color, dress or skills) and unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;
- Visual Conduct: Demeaning or offensive gestures, clothing, posters, cartoons, or other illustrations;
- Physical Conduct: Assault, inappropriate touching, obstructing normal movement, or hindering one’s work directed at an individual because of his/her sex or other protected characteristics;
- Hostile Acts: Any hostile act based on gender (even if not motivated by sexual desire) or other protected classification;
- Sexual Favoritism: Granting of employment benefits or advantages in exchange for sexual favors, regardless of whether the employee(s) granting such favors did so willingly. Such circumstances can create an atmosphere offensive to other employees of either gender and detrimental to workplace production;
- Sexual Threats and Demands: Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests in order to keep one’s job or avoid some other loss, and offers of job benefits in return for sexual favors; and
- Retaliation: This includes any adverse employment action for having reported or threatening to report unlawful or otherwise prohibited conduct. “Adverse employment action” can mean any adverse management decision or evaluation, including but not limited to job or performance evaluation, discipline, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, diminished rate of pay and benefits, and/or not being selected for training. Adverse employment action can also mean any action reasonably likely to deter reports or complaints of unlawful or otherwise prohibited conduct.

The Geffen Playhouse is an equal opportunity employer. Neither the Geffen Playhouse nor any of its employees, including Geffen Playhouse supervisors and managers, will unlawfully discriminate against any person involved in Geffen Playhouse operations, including job applicants, employees and interns (paid or unpaid).

Right of Publicity

The Geffen Playhouse reserves the right to photograph its premises, activities and volunteers for possible promotional purposes. Volunteers grant The Geffen Playhouse all rights to their video, photographic, or audio, or other recorded images, likenesses and sounds of my voice captured in the course of their volunteer activities. The Geffen Playhouse is and shall be the owner of all such images, including but not limited to any and all portraits, pictures, photographs, video and audio recordings, and any reproductions thereof, and all plates, negatives, recording tape and digital files containing or depicting such images.

GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I acknowledge that I have received my copy of The Geffen Playhouse's Volunteer Handbook, containing important information about the Geffen Playhouse's volunteers' procedures and my rights and duties as a Geffen Playhouse volunteer.

I further acknowledge and agree that it is my responsibility to read, understand and apply the information specified in the volunteer handbook as well as all other Company policies, procedures or rules applicable to Geffen Playhouse volunteers. I also acknowledge and agree that the Geffen Playhouse can and does reserve the right to revise, adapt, cancel, add or otherwise change all or any part of this volunteer handbook or any other Geffen Playhouse policy, procedure or rule applicable to volunteers when, at its sole discretion, The Geffen Playhouse determines that the law and/or changed circumstances warrant such adjustments.

Date: _____

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Volunteer's Name (print or type) _____

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VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND GENERAL RELEASE

1. Nature of relationship: I understand that I am a volunteer of The Geffen Playhouse, a non-profit organization, and I will be performing work for public service and/or humanitarian reasons without promise, expectation or receipt of any payment or other compensation for that work. As a volunteer, the services I provide are distinct from the services provided by Geffen Playhouse employees. I understand I will not receive compensation, payment, benefits or other exchange for the services I provide as a volunteer under this Agreement.
2. Dismissal: I understand that The Geffen Playhouse has the right to release or dismiss me as a volunteer without any prior notice.
3. Assumption of risk: In exchange for the opportunity to work for public service and/or humanitarian reasons such as supporting community-based theater arts, I specifically assume the risk of any injury, damage or harm in conducting my volunteer duties and I release The Geffen Playhouse and its directors, officers, employees, agents, representatives and other volunteers from any and all liability for injury, illness, death or damage to property arising out of my volunteer activities and association with The Geffen Playhouse.
4. Miscellaneous: This Agreement contains the entire agreement between The Geffen Playhouse and me and replaces all other agreements and understandings, whether written or oral, covering the subject matter of this Agreement. Any amendments or modifications to this Agreement must be in writing and signed by both parties to be valid. California law shall govern the construction, interpretation, and enforcement of this Agreement.

Volunteer's Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Home Address _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

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