



Volunteer Training
2018-19 Season

Thank you for volunteering your time with us! We have an exciting season ahead, and we are glad to have you be a part of it.

This material is designed to provide information about our organization, policies, procedures, and venues that will be helpful to you as a volunteer.

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What is Opening Nights?

Opening Nights at Florida State University is the performing arts presenter of the University. During the months of September through April, we present top-tier and emerging artists in the fields music, dance, comedy, theatre, and visual arts. Our primary audience is made up of community members in and around Tallahassee.

The letters 'ON' are rendered in a large, bold, purple serif font. The 'O' is a solid circle, and the 'N' is a solid vertical bar with a horizontal top and bottom bar. The letters are positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Opening Nights Volunteer Policies

We ask that volunteers read and comply with the following Opening Nights volunteer policies:

- All volunteers must be 18 years of age.
- All volunteers must successfully complete the online training quiz before volunteering.
- All guests are to be treated with the utmost respect and courtesy. We expect the same respect and courtesy be shown to other volunteers, staff and crewmembers.
- In the event of a complaint or an event-related question, always refer the patron to a Volunteer Captain, the House Manager, or an Opening Nights staff member.

The logo consists of the letters 'ON' in a large, bold, purple serif font. The 'O' and 'N' are connected at the top, and the 'N' has a vertical bar on its right side.

What do volunteers do?

Opening Nights volunteers function primarily as ushers for performances. Prior to each performance, there is a pre-show meeting when the House Manager will give you an overview of the event and assign you to a role for the performance.

Various responsibilities may include:

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What do volunteers do?

- **Set-up/Clean-up:** help staff prepare the lobby and house before the show, set up for post-show signing during intermission, collect any trash in the house after the show.
- **Ticket Scanning:** scan tickets and direct patrons to their respective doors for admission.
- **Will Call:** distribute will call tickets to patrons beginning one hour prior to the show, work with the box office staff to resolve any ticketing issues.

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What do volunteers do?

- **Programs:** distribute programs to all patrons, ensure a ready supply of programs at all entrances prior to the show, collect programs for recycling after the performance.
- **Seating:** help patrons find their seats as efficiently as possible, assist in late seating, aid in the resolution of any seating issues, monitor the house during the performance for disturbances or patrons in need of assistance.
- **Accessibility:** assist patrons from the accessible entrance to the performance venue, providing directions about elevators, etc. as needed.

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Dress Code

- Volunteers are expected to wear a white shirt/blouse, black dress pants (or black skirt), and black dress shoes. Sweaters and blazers are welcome, as the venues can be chilly. No jeans, sandals, or flip-flops are allowed.
- Tasteful purple accessories, such as earrings, necklaces and ties are acceptable.
- If your attire is considered inappropriate, you will politely be asked to leave. Wear comfortable and sturdy shoes, as you will be spending a lot of time on your feet while volunteering. Please make sure your clothing is appropriate, clean, and wrinkle-free.
- You will be given a volunteer badge to be worn at all times while on duty.

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How are Volunteers assigned to events?

- After completing your event availability, the House Manager will assign you to a set of performances for that semester. Every effort will be made to assign you to your preferred events, but sometimes events are too popular to accommodate everyone. Popular events will be assigned with a lottery system. If you aren't assigned to one of your preferred events, you will be added to the waitlist.
- **Please note that volunteering for a show does NOT guarantee that you will be able to watch the performance.** If you really want to see a particular performance, we recommend that you purchase a ticket so you can enjoy it as an audience member.

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Day of Show Procedures

- Upon arrival, check in with the House Manager in the lobby of the venue one hour and fifteen minutes prior to the start of the show. The House Manager will record the time of your arrival and distribute your volunteer badge and any other applicable materials. She will then brief you on your volunteer duties and communicate any other important information.
- Shows begin promptly as scheduled, so it is important that you are timely. Volunteers are required to stay until the end of the performance to assist with post-show clean up and thank patrons for attending.
- We understand that occasionally, volunteers must cancel at the last minute. **In the event that there is a lack of coverage in a certain area that may compromise the customer-centered nature of our volunteer interactions, you may be asked to switch positions.** Please be flexible to allow for this kind of change.

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Volunteer Captains

- Experienced Volunteer Captains have been selected to assist the House Manager in handling patron issues, providing faster support to volunteers.
- There will be 1-3 Volunteer Captains per event, depending on venue capacity.
- Each volunteer will be assigned to a Volunteer Captain before each event begins. Captains can assist with seating questions, scanner trouble-shooting, and small patron issues. Larger issues will be directed to the House Manager at the Captain's discretion.
- Captains will also provide brief evaluations of their assigned volunteers to the House Manager at the conclusion of each event.

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Attendance Policy

- You must inform the house manager via email within 48 hours of receiving an assignment if you are unable to work a show. There will be no penalty for canceling within 48 hours of receiving your assignment. After this 48-hour period, you are allowed one cancellation per semester. If you cancel or don't show up twice during a semester, you will be withdrawn from all other performances that you were assigned to during that season.
- Timely arrival is very important. Arriving 15 minutes or more after call time is considered late. Being late means that your position may be given to someone else, and you may be sent home if no positions are left. If you are late twice during a semester, you will be withdrawn from all other performances that you were assigned to during that season.
- If you lose your assignments due to lateness or cancellations two seasons in a row, you might not be eligible to volunteer in future seasons.

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Substance Policy

- Volunteers are not permitted to use controlled substances during or before their volunteer shifts.
- If you use these substances at these times, you will be asked to resign from your volunteer duties immediately and forfeit your opportunity to volunteer at future events.
- It is in the interest of the patrons, staff, and volunteers of Opening Nights that we take this policy very seriously. If you have questions, please contact the Opening Nights at 850-644-7670 or ON-housemanager@fsu.edu.

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Providing Excellent Customer Service

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Customer Service

- As the front line staff at performances, it's extremely important that volunteers provide positive experiences for Opening Nights patrons. You may be the only human interaction a patron has with Opening Nights.
- Simple things like smiling and welcoming people as they walk in the door can go a long way toward making sure someone has a great time at a performance.
- Remember that YOU are Opening Nights!

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Handling Complaints

- As a volunteer, you may encounter complaints, whether or not you had anything to do with the problem.
- Be calm and listen to their concerns. Volunteers should always be polite and respectful, even if the patron is not responding in kind.
- If you are unsure of how to handle a complaint or don't feel comfortable addressing it, please refer the complaint to your Volunteer Captain. If the Captain is unable to handle the complaint s/he will seek out the House Manager.

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Emergencies

Emergencies may occur during an event. To efficiently manage an emergency situation, such as a serious medical emergency, please do the following:

- Make the injured party your top priority. Another volunteer can cover your duties while you attend to the emergency.
- Stay calm.
- An FSU police officer is always in the lobby during an Opening Nights event. At the first available moment, contact the police officer or House Manager. They will contact emergency services.
- Please be advised that you are not to distribute any type of medication.
- Remember general safety rules and regulations.
- Finally, stay with the injured party until a staff member or the first responder dismisses you. You will be asked to write a detailed description on the accident report. The safety and well being of our volunteers, staff and patrons is the first priority.

A large, stylized purple logo consisting of the letters 'O' and 'N' in a serif font. The 'O' is significantly larger than the 'N', and they are positioned close together.

General Safety

- We take the safety of our patrons, artists, and volunteers very seriously. There is always at least one FSU police officer in the lobby.
- **Absolutely no one** is to go backstage without proper identification or a staff escort. Any special backstage passes will be shown to you before the event.
- If someone seems to be acting oddly or seems to be in an area where they don't belong, immediately point that person out to the House Manager, an ON staff member, or a police officer (whoever is closest). Do not approach the person yourself.
- As always: “If you see something, say something.”

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Event Procedures

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Venues

Opening Nights performances are held in many venues. Each venue is unique, and you will be briefed on specifics when you arrive. The list below represents the venues where we will hold ticketed events, which will require volunteers. Directions to each venue are available on the Venues page of our website <http://openingnights.fsu.edu/about/venues/>

- Ruby Diamond Concert Hall
- Opperman Music Hall
- Richard G. Fallon Theatre
- Goodwood Museum & Gardens
- Fred Turner Auditorium at Tallahassee Community College
- The Moon
- St. John's Episcopal Church
- St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral
- Temple Israel

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Food and Beverage

- Refreshments are available, usually for purchase, at selected venues.
- No outside food or drink is allowed at any of the venues.
- Food and drinks are not allowed inside most of the halls. The House Manager will inform you when there is an exception.
- If you encounter problems, questions, or concerns, contact your Volunteer Captain or the House Manager.

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Cameras and Recording Devices

- Professional quality audio/video recorders and cameras, are not allowed during performances. Recording of any kind violates contracts between the University and the performing artists, as the performance materials are considered intellectual property. Professional cameras may only be used by authorized members of the press.
- Smart phone photos and short videos are generally allowed, provided they are not disruptive to other patrons. Signage will be placed in the lobby to inform patrons of shows where this is prohibited.
- Please be advised that NO flash photography will be allowed in any of the concerts, and Opening Nights holds the right to **confiscate** any electronic devices used by patrons. If you feel uncomfortable taking an electronic device, please contact your Volunteer Captain or the House Manager and he/she will handle the situation. Confiscated cameras and recording devices will be returned at the end of the show.

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Facilities and Accessibility

- It is the responsibility of the volunteers to know where restrooms and water fountains are located so that they may direct patrons accordingly. When you arrive, familiarize yourself with the venue layout, including locations of the restrooms, box office, refreshment table and emergency exits.
- It is also the responsibility of the volunteers to assist patrons with accessibility needs. Wheelchair accessible seating is available at all venues. You will need to know where these seats are and how to get there from the parking lot so that you can direct patrons.

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Evacuation Procedures

- In the event that we must evacuate the building, stay calm and go immediately to your pre-show post.
- Calmly lead the audience out through the nearest exit. Give detailed instructions on where you are taking the audience, keeping them calm and focused.
- Wait for further instructions from the House Manager. Remember, the House Manager is the last person to leave the building.
- If there is a power outage, stand up and turn on your flashlights. Stay calm and keep the audience seated, calm, and focused. Wait for further instructions from the House Manager.

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Media

- Do not attempt to answer specific questions from the media.
- Direct the media contact to the House Manager, who will then contact Opening Nights staff.
- Professional media photographers **must** be escorted by an Opening Nights staff member in order to enter the hall.

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Opening Nights Staff

- Michael Blachly, Director
- Bethany Atwell, Assistant Director
- Caroline Conway, Director of Development
- Lori Elliott, Marketing & Communications Manager
- Calla MacNamara, Education & Engagement Manager
- Lisa Shuman, House Manager
- Sarah Goodson, Director of Ticketing Services

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Contact Information

Please use the following contact information to reach members of the Opening Nights staff:

- **By phone:** ON Office Main Line: 850-644-7670
- **By mail:** 216 Westcott Building, PO Box 3061350, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1350
- **By email:** ON-housemanager@fsu.edu
- **Website:** OpeningNights.fsu.edu

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You've Completed the Training!

You can now take the Volunteer Training Quiz on our website. Once you complete the quiz, you'll be able to submit your availability, so have your calendar ready.

On behalf of the entire Opening Nights team, thank you!

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