



ARTS OTTAWA

Volunteer Handbook

2026-27

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Arts Ottawa Mission, Vision, Values

Arts Ottawa supports and connects the local arts community, fostering collaboration and empowering creativity. We champion the arts as a vital force in Ottawa's cultural, social, and economic life.

Mission

To drive collective action in responding to community needs and priorities, fostering a thriving arts sector.

Vision

A dynamic cultural capital where the practice of art is meaningful and contributes positively to the development of the city and the quality of life of its citizens.

Values

Care and respect for artists, engagement with community, integrity and accountability, inclusiveness and collaboration.

Message from our Leadership

Welcome Volunteers!

First and foremost, thank you so much for playing such an important part in Arts Ottawa!

Arts Ottawa staff is extremely proud of our activities, and we are confident that, with your volunteer contribution, each event will be a great success.

We are leaders and catalysts in building an engaged, growing and inclusive arts sector. We support artists and arts organizations through leadership, guidance and providing opportunities to advance Ottawa's local creative potential. Through collaboration with a wide range of partners, and with arts supporters like you, Arts Ottawa creates an environment where equity and diversity are celebrated, and artistic achievement is recognized.

In this handbook you will find information on your duties and expectations as an Arts Ottawa volunteer. But, above all, remember to stay safe and have fun!

On behalf of the entire team, thanks for your contribution in support of Arts Ottawa.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Milne', written over a horizontal line.

Nicole Milne
Co-Leadership, Operations & Revenue Generation
Arts Ottawa

Policies

CODE OF CONDUCT

While working as a volunteer with Arts Ottawa, you are representing Arts Ottawa. Arts Ottawa reserves the right to dismiss volunteers without notice, or to prevent individuals from participating in future Arts Ottawa activities. All volunteers must also agree to the following Code of Conduct Policy:

Arts Ottawa wishes to maintain an environment that fosters respect, dignity and professional conduct. Maintaining such an environment is the responsibility of every employee and volunteer. Because of their role, Managers and Supervisors will be held to a higher standard of responsibility to model professional conduct. This commitment includes proper use of authority and appropriate decorum in a group and individual behaviour when representing the organization.

It is the responsibility of all to:

Have an open mind. We make an effort to learn, accept and value the role of each team member. We approach situations without pre-determined outcomes and maintain an open mind by asking questions before making assumptions.

Trust. We are honest in every interaction, and we follow through on our commitments in a dependable and reliable manner.

Be Transparent. We demonstrate transparency in our activities on behalf of Arts Ottawa.

Be Empathetic. We treat others as we expect to be treated. We are approachable, polite and considerate as we seek to understand each other's perspectives in a caring manner.

Demonstrate Teamwork. We meet our member's needs through teamwork and mutual support. We address our issues constructively as a team with the goal to continuously learn from situations that don't go as planned.

Demonstrate Professionalism. We provide quality work through shared individual and team commitment. We celebrate our accomplishments with pride.

Respect. We show respect for Arts Ottawa Staff, Contractors, Artists, Volunteers and Attendees.

Abuse will not be tolerated. Any unacceptable behaviour will result in immediate removal of the person or persons committing the offense. Refrain from:

- pushing
- foul language
- yelling
- disregarding safety measures
- disregarding Code of Conduct
- angry confrontations of any kind

Arts Ottawa will do its utmost to make your experience enjoyable and memorable.

SAFER SPACES POLICY

The Safer Spaces Policy applies to all Arts Ottawa sponsored spaces and programs, including our in-person and online events, hubs, forums, online platforms, emails, as well as any other spaces that Arts Ottawa hosts. The goal of Safer Spaces is to encourage all participants to work together to prevent or reduce harm, particularly for those who are often the targets of violence and harassment. Oppressive behavior that makes others feel unsafe will not be tolerated.

Please review the full policy on our website:

<https://www.artsottawa.ca/safer-spaces-policy>

ATTIRE

Arts Ottawa encourages self-expression while maintaining professionalism. Employees and volunteers should wear attire that is comfortable, neat, and appropriate for their role and work setting.

While creativity is welcomed, clothing should be free of offensive language or imagery. Employees attending public-facing events and meetings are encouraged to consider the impression they make on audiences, partners, and funders.

Volunteers should expect most roles to be 'casual or business casual'. Volunteers will be informed should an event's dress code be different, or require more formal attire. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- clothing covers the groin, buttocks and nipples with material that is not see-through or transparent
- includes more than underwear as the only layer of clothing
- includes footwear with consideration for health and safety

- ensures the volunteer's face is not fully covered (This is for safety reasons and to ensure the correct volunteer signs in. This does not prohibit any volunteer from wearing a face covering for cultural/religious purposes or a non-medical facemask provided it does not cover their entire face*. - [click here to view mask guidelines](#))
- clothing may not include wording or graphics that reasonably could be construed as promoting or symbolizing hate or discrimination, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, illegal activity, profanity, nudity, pornography; or that incites violence or harassment

* Arts Ottawa recognizes and respects religious and cultural dress, including head coverings such as hijabs. Any identity confirmation will be done in a respectful, private manner by a same-gender staff member if needed, and in accordance with applicable human rights laws and policies. Note that a volunteer whose face is partially covered may be required to answer a few screening questions to ensure identity, and/or offer identification. This is particularly important when confirming student volunteer hours.

A badge identifying you as a volunteer will be provided upon arrival and must be worn during the entire shift. We will make a call out to confirm the name on your badge. Should you wish to have a rainbow symbol, pronouns or other diversity & inclusion symbol/info (space permitting) on your badge we will provide a deadline by which to add one or make any changes to your name. Note that any requests need to fall within the above-mentioned guidelines.

When an employee or volunteer is unsure if their attire is acceptable, they should contact the Volunteer Coordinator (info@artsottawa.ca) to inquire in advance.

ATTENDANCE/ILLNESS

- you must arrive at the scheduled time and check in with the Volunteer Coordinator
- if you will be late, inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible
- if you need to cancel your shift, inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible
- should you feel ill do not come to the event, inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible

PERFORMANCE/BEHAVIOUR/DISMISSAL

You will be asked to leave if:

- you show signs of illness
- you are displaying inappropriate behaviour or aggressive attitude
- you make inappropriate comments or requests of others (harassment in any form is not tolerated)
- you are committing illegal, violent or unsafe acts
- you fail to perform your assigned tasks
- you are insubordinate
- you are suspected of theft of any kind (financial, property, etc.)
- you are suspected of destruction of property or damage at the event

- you post or allude to any of the above on your social media channels or other messaging platforms

ALCOHOL & ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

You will be asked to leave immediately if:

- you are using or possessing drugs and/or illegal substances on site
- you are possessing or consuming alcohol on site, or are intoxicated while on shift
- you are smoking or vaping while on site

Volunteers may be dismissed for any other reason deemed applicable by Arts Ottawa staff. Arts Ottawa reserves the right not to discuss details of a dismissal with the volunteer in question. Once a volunteer is dismissed, they must hand in their badge (if applicable) and leave the space immediately. Failure to adhere to the above will result in immediate loss of your volunteer standing for the current and/or future years.

By filling out the Volunteer Form found on our website (<https://www.artsottawa.ca/get-involved/volunteer>), you are agreeing to abide by all Arts Ottawa Policies, as stated above, so please read the information carefully.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please let the Volunteer Coordinator know right away. If you do not have the Volunteer Coordinator's contact information you can email info@artsottawa.ca.

Volunteer Roles

We typically seek volunteers to fill the following roles at events:

Box Office / Registration

Volunteers in this role are the first point of contact for guests and participants.

Duties may include:

- Greeting guests warmly upon arrival
- Checking in pre-registered attendees against list
- Ensuring if names are not on list, they add name and email address to list
- Selling tickets or collecting donations at the door
- Distributing event materials (programs, badges, etc.)
- Answering general event-related questions
- Managing the flow of lineups and ensuring accessibility
- Handling cash and/or electronic payment systems (training provided)
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Friendly, organized, comfortable with technology and customer service

VIP / Artist Liaisons

These volunteers support artists, performers, hosts, sponsors and special guests, ensuring their experience is smooth and enjoyable.

Duties may include:

- Assisting artists and guests with check-in and orientation
- Ensure on time arrival (or notify onsite Manager if not arrived)
- Confirm schedule for entrances and exits on stage (if applicable)
- Confirm photo times (if applicable)
- Escorting them to dressing rooms or green rooms
- Providing schedules, maps, script copies, badges, etc.
- Acting as a liaison between artists and event staff
- Supporting with personal requests as needed (e.g., water, snacks)
- Maintaining a professional, respectful demeanor at all times

- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Discreet, dependable, personable, respectful of boundaries

Tech Crew / Stage Crew

These behind-the-scenes volunteers help ensure the technical and stage elements run smoothly.

Duties may include:

- Assisting people up and down stairs to stage, when necessary
- Assisting with setup and teardown of staging, sound, and lighting equipment
- Managing cables, props, and gear during performances
- Supporting sound checks and transitions between sets
- Helping with equipment transport or storage
- Following direction from technical leads or production managers
- Asked to dress casually in black clothing, if possible
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Comfortable with physical tasks, able to follow instructions precisely, may require lifting

Set Up / Décor

Volunteers in this role help transform event spaces to match the artistic vision or theme.

Duties may include:

- Ensure the area is prepped and tidy prior to set up
- Hanging signage, advertising, decorations, artwork, banners, décor items
- Setting up tables, linens, chairs, and crowd-control items
- Ensuring accessibility and safety in layout
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Creative, hands-on, attentive to detail, physically able, may require lifting

Event / Party Planning

These volunteers assist with the planning and execution of event logistics and ambiance.

Duties may include:

- Contributing ideas for themes, décor, and programming
- Assisting with timeline development and task checklists
- Coordinating logistics (deliveries, schedules, supplies)
- Supporting communications with vendors or performers
- Helping with day-of-event supervision or troubleshooting
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Organized, creative, collaborative, proactive

Volunteer Coordination

These volunteers support the management of other volunteers during the event.

Duties may include:

- Assisting with scheduling and confirming shifts
- Greeting and orienting volunteers at the start of shifts
- Helping volunteers understand their roles and where to go
- Tracking attendance or hours
- Checking in with volunteers throughout the day
- Helping solve issues or redirecting questions to staff
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Friendly, reliable, organized, good with people

Hospitality Assistant (Food Service)

These volunteers support food and beverage preparation and service for artists, staff, and guests.

Duties may include:

- Preparing and setting out refreshments
- Maintaining a clean and inviting hospitality area
- Refilling food trays, as needed
- Supporting food vendors or caterers
- Cleaning dishes, tables, or serving areas, disposing of unsightly garbage

- Following public health and food safety guidelines
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Hygienic, detail-oriented, friendly, team player

Bartending

These volunteers support the running of the bar, beverage preparation and service for artists, staff, and guests.

Duties may include:

- Serving alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- Checking ID and enforcing responsible drinking policies
- Maintaining a clean and stocked bar area
- Engaging with patrons in a professional manner
- Recording sales or tickets if applicable
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Requirements: Must be of legal age and hold current Smart Serve certification

Fundraising / Silent Auction Coordination

Volunteers in this area support fundraising efforts tied to the event.

Duties may include:

- Soliciting or organizing donations for auctions or raffles
- Setting up and supervising silent auction tables
- Safeguarding silent auction pieces
- Providing information to guests about how to participate
- Recording bids or donations
- Coordinating prize distribution
- Packing up/labelling prizes not claimed at event
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Personable, persuasive, detail-focused, organized

Administration

Administrative volunteers help with back-end support leading up to or during the event.

Duties may include:

- Supporting set up prior to the event
- Data entry, spreadsheet updates, or tracking RSVP lists
- Assisting with printing, assembling packages, or signage
- Answering emails
- Filing, organizing, or prepping materials
- Providing office-based support to staff
- Supporting teardown and cleanup after the event

Skills/Traits: Accurate, dependable, good with basic computer tasks

Translation

These volunteers help make the event more accessible by providing language support.

Duties may include:

- Translating materials (signs, programs, promotional materials)
- Providing live interpretation during key event moments
- Supporting multilingual guests with information
- Assisting in communications with artists or vendors who speak other languages

Skills/Traits: Fluent in English and French, be able to provide professional and accurate communication

Note: All volunteers and staff support teardown and cleanup after the event. Many hands make light work!

Additional Volunteer Information

Mandatory Volunteer Accessibility Training: As an Ontario nonprofit, Arts Ottawa is required by law to ensure all staff, volunteers, and board members complete accessibility training under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This applies to everyone regardless of role or hours.

There are three short training streams. All are free and self-paced online. The total time across all three is roughly one to two hours.

Stream 1 and Stream 2 — AccessForward (Government of Ontario)

www.accessforward.ca

Start with the Customer Service Standard module (Stream 1), then work through the other modules relevant to your role (Stream 2): General Requirements, Information and Communications, Employment, Design of Public Spaces, and Transportation. The site will guide you through the steps.

Stream 3 — Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA

www.ohrc.on.ca/en/online-learning/working-together-code-and-aoda

This is a separate video-based module from the Ontario Human Rights Commission covering how the Human Rights Code and the AODA work together. It is required in addition to the AccessForward modules. You are to complete the Certificate Version, which generates a confirmation of training.

Once you have completed all three streams, please do the following:

1. Download the Confirmation of Training form (Appendix H) here:
<https://accessforward.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Confirmation-of-Training-Appendix-H.pdf>
2. Fill it in with your name, role, the modules you completed, and the dates.
3. Email the completed form to info@artsottawa.ca.

That form is your confirmation to let Arts Ottawa know that you have completed the training. We will use it to update our organizational training log, which we are required to maintain.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

Other Volunteer Orientation/Training: You will be contacted if there is any advance orientation/training necessary for your volunteer roles.

Emergency Contact Information: You will be asked to provide Arts Ottawa with your full name, cell phone number (if available) and home address. Arts Ottawa will also request the name and phone number of an emergency contact, as well as their relationship to you.

Arrival/Shifts: Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your shift to ensure the supervisor on site can check you in. Times vary depending upon the volunteer role chosen. See details for the specific roles above.

Personal Possessions: If possible, travel as light as you can. Arts Ottawa is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged items.

Conflicts or Issues: If you have a concern or happen to find yourself in conflict with anyone, please bring this to the attention of the Volunteer Coordinator. If they are not available, take your concerns to the supervisor on duty or any Arts Ottawa staff member.

Washroom Facilities: Should you need a washroom break during your shift, inform your onsite supervisor. Be certain to wash your hands well before returning to your duties.

Water and Breaks: Please bring a reusable water bottle with your name on it. Snacks might not be provided. There will be plenty of opportunities for breaks but please inform your supervisor when you'd like one.

Parking: Arts Ottawa does not reimburse volunteers for parking and cannot provide free parking. Reach out for driving directions, transit and parking information.

First Aid/Medical Emergencies: A First Aid Kit will be available. If you happen to have a serious medical condition, let the Volunteer Coordinator know ahead of time so, in the event something happens, we can provide immediate assistance.

Safety: On-site evaluations are completed in advance with any recommended health and safety guidelines put into place. An Emergency Plan is in place for the venue and announcements will be made if needed. In the event of any emergency, do not hesitate to leave the location. If you see any areas for safety improvements, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator.

Emergency Procedures: An Emergency Plan is in place for the venue and announcements will be made if needed. In the event of any emergency, do not hesitate to leave the location. If you see any areas for safety improvements, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator.

Liability

Arts Ottawa is covered by Commercial General Liability insurance. The policy states that volunteer workers are covered for General Liability during the regular course of Arts Ottawa business operations.

In any Arts Ottawa activity that is undertaken by a volunteer, Arts Ottawa's liability insurance regarding will apply. Volunteers should be aware that Arts Ottawa's insurance does not include a loss-of-income provision should the volunteer sustain an injury that prevents them from resuming their normal employment.

Special Accommodations and Accessibility

Volunteers requiring special accommodations should inform the Volunteer Coordinator prior to taking part in the event.

- While maintaining privacy and avoiding discrimination, special situations will be identified and addressed to support all present.
- Accessibility – Arts Ottawa is committed to diversity, inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities and to ensuring that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with and promote the core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Should you require any accommodation to make your experience more enjoyable please let the Arts Ottawa Volunteer Coordinator know. We will make every attempt to accommodate our volunteers.

Thank You

Volunteers play an important role in Ottawa's vibrant arts and culture scene. In addition to the volunteering of physical labour, their life experiences, knowledge, and expertise, contribute greatly to the success of the event and overall sense of community at Arts Ottawa.

All volunteers are valued partners and the interaction and co-operation between and among Arts Ottawa and the wider community benefits us greatly, while enabling volunteers to gain valuable experience, friendships, personal growth and the satisfaction of working with an incredible team for an incredible cause – THE ARTS!