

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in the Portland Center Stage Volunteer Usher Program. By volunteering you will help us continue to present great theater to the greater Portland area!

Here are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions about our program that will help you decide if it is a good opportunity for you.

What is an Usher and what do they do?

Ushers are frequently the first point of contact our patrons have with Portland Center Stage and serve as the public face of the Gerding Theatre. Portland Center Stage depends on you to be courteous and helpful to each and every patron who walks into our facilities. The manner in which you greet and assist our patrons may be the most lasting impression they take from their visit to the Theatre. Remember, their safety and comfort is also in your hands! We will depend on you to make the patrons' experience as comfortable and safe as possible.

Ushers are divided into four categories: Head Ushers, Ticket Takers, Seating Ushers and Coat Check.

- **The Head Usher** works most directly with the House Manager greeting patrons as they enter the Armory, directing them to the correct theater and entrance and answering questions about the building. The Head Usher also assists the House Manager with late seating and provides support to the other Ushers when needed. Head Ushers are expected to be proactive when welcoming patrons and ready to answer questions.
- **Ticket Takers** tear and collect stubs as patrons enter the seating area making sure they are at the correct door on the ticketed date. People come to the wrong show more often than you think! It is very uncomfortable for someone to make it inside the house only to find that someone is already in their seat! Or worse yet, they get settled in then have to get up and move when the other party arrives. Ticket Takers can save these patrons early on from this embarrassing scenario simply by paying attention to the date on the ticket as they enter. They are the sentinels that also make sure that no foods, beverages other than bottled water, cameras, recording devices and large bags that may hinder emergency egress are allowed inside.
- **Seating Ushers** take over from the Ticket Takers as patrons enter. They welcome patrons to the seating area, make sure that patrons are watching their step, dispense programs and guide them to the correct row. A frequent misconception is that the Seating Usher's job is done when the show begins. In fact, this can be the most crucial time in the Seating Usher's duties. Imagine if a patron entered the darkened seating area after the show began and tried to find their seat with no lighting or assistance! With flashlight at the ready Seating Ushers must be on alert at all times for latecomers or to help patrons exiting during the performance. They are also the eyes and ears of the House Manager during a performance. They are able to monitor the house for problems of which the House Manager should be aware.
- **Check Room Ushers** provide a wonderful service to the patrons by storing belongings and checking out Assisted Listening or Audio Description Devices. Check Room Ushers should be able lift and hang heavy winter coats and be detail oriented. Can you imagine how many black wool coats get checked in over the winter months? It can be easy to hand someone the wrong coat and not even know until the patron is long out of the building and the other party is left wondering where their coat has walked off to. Needless to say, Coat Check Ushers should be very careful to hand back the coat which the patron checked in indicated by the ticket or token number. They also need to be unflappable individuals who can handle the load-in or load-out of a busy rainy day.
- **All Ushers** must be good communicators and have a positive attitude.

Please keep these Usher descriptions in mind when you consider volunteering with Portland Center Stage. You may be asked to fill any one of them depending on scheduling needs.

Is there a Dress Code?

To be easily identifiable to our patrons, Portland Center Stage Ushers must adhere to the following Dress Code:

- Black dress shirt or turtleneck – Please note: **BADGES ARE ATTACHED WITH PINS**
- Black slacks (not jeans) or skirt with black socks or hosiery
- Comfortable black dress shoes appropriate for ascending/descending stairs (closed-toe please)
- Volunteer identification (provided by Portland Center Stage)
- Flashlight (to be returned at end of shift)

Is there an age requirement?

Portland Center Stage requires that volunteers be at least 16 years of age. Those between the ages of 16-18 should come with parent or group chaperone. Please contact Lead House Manager for youth group policies.

How often will I be required to usher?

We request that you be willing to work at least one shift per run of a performance and one Special Event per season. As the Studio Theatre requires a smaller crew, not every Usher may be scheduled in a run. The *PCS Usher Update* will keep you informed of any shifts that might be available or call the Usher Hotline.

How are Usher scheduled?

The House Managers of Portland Center Stage will determine the staffing needs for each performance and schedule accordingly. Teams of volunteers will consistently work together on the same night in a run allowing them to get to know each other and the Season Ticket Patrons. Scheduling will be done for the entire season with the exception of run extensions and added events. *All scheduling is at the discretion of Portland Center Stage.*

What are some benefits of being a Portland Center Stage Volunteer Usher?

Becoming a Volunteer Usher is an excellent way to see a show while also helping to save the theater thousands of dollars a year in operating costs needed to grow and thrive. You will also be kept up to date about open opportunities through the monthly e-newsletter, *The PCS Usher Update*, and get to work in a fun environment with people who share your appreciation for great theater!

Is parking provided?



As you can see on the map on the left, there are three parking lots (designated with P) located within a block of the theater. The largest lot is a well-lit, security-patrolled underground garage that houses 1,300 parking spaces and is the size of two city blocks. There are two entrances to this lot on NW 12th and NW 13th Avenues, and elevators take you into the M Financial Building lobby directly across from the Armory on NW 11th Avenue or into Whole Foods on the corner of Couch and NW 12th.

The Gerding Theatre is located in busy downtown Portland and while there are metered parking zones and parking facilities in the area there are no special parking areas for our volunteers or staff. You should allow ample time to find parking before you arrive at the Theatre. Portland Center Stage also encourages the use of TriMet buses and trains as an alternative to driving into

the downtown area.

We ask for your understanding with our current inability to reimburse parking expenses and are grateful for your additional help in presenting great theater to the Portland Community.

Now that you know a little about us, please tell us about you!

Please fill out the [Volunteer Application](#) and call Lead House Manager Robyn Hodges at 503.432.2910 to schedule an informal Meet & Greet where we can get introduced ourselves, ask any questions that might arise and determine if this is a good volunteering fit for you and Portland Center Stage.