



BERKSHIRE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Thank you for your interest in The Berkshire International Film Festival (BIFF)! We would love to welcome you to our team of dedicated volunteers – some **whom** have been with us for 20 years! Before we get into the details, here's a word from BIFF's Founder and Artistic Director, Kelley Vickery...

Dear BIFF volunteers,

I am thrilled to say that this festival has become one of the top ten cultural events in the Berkshires and the kickoff to the summer cultural season. The support and energy of our volunteers has built a great organization for our entire community to enjoy and to be proud of ... many people have said they now cannot imagine the Berkshires without the BIFF! It is not easy to build a festival from scratch, but it is even harder to sustain it and make it stronger. I appreciate your willingness to volunteer for the BIFF and look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelley R. Vickery".

Kelley Vickery

Founder and Artistic Director, Berkshire International Film Festival



ABOUT US

The Berkshire International Film Festival (“BIFF”) is a world-class festival that is an integral part of the cultural fabric of the Berkshires. BIFF showcases not only the best in independent feature, documentary, short, and family films but also offers lively panel discussions and special events focusing on filmmakers and talented artists from both sides of the camera.

Founded in 2006, **BIFF has become a festival of choice** for filmmakers and film lovers alike, looking for a unique, Berkshire experience and a place to indulge their passion for film that entertains, educates, and inspires. BIFF kicks off the Berkshires cultural season each year on the weekend following Memorial Day. Our festival connects audiences to compelling award-winning international releases, documentaries, and premieres with incredible parties and events. The BIFF brings over 75 films yearly, drawing over 2,000 people during the 4-day festival.

BIFF also offers vibrant, engaging programming throughout the year — from thought-provoking films addressing the climate crisis to Best of Fest encore screenings and joyful celebrations of cult classics. We call it **BIFF365** and during the off-season, we bring exciting, meaningful events that keep our community connected through film. We feature:

- Best of Fest screenings
- Environmental Film Focus Series in the fall and spring – screenings and Q&As with change agents
- Special events in partnership with local venues and vendors – wine tastings, food and film, social gatherings
- And in 2024, we established the **BIFF Social Club** – an opportunity for local young professionals to gather in community and celebrate film and culture.

BIFF is an opportunity to present cinematic works of art to our community here in the Berkshires. Your time and effort as a volunteer help make that possible; regardless of which role you are in, every position is important and necessary.

This booklet will help answer some basic questions and provide some guidance **on** what is expected during the festival.

BIFF INFO

Offices are located at:
4 Castle Street
Suite #207/208
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Telephone: 413.528.8030

Your BIFF executive team:

Kelley Vickery, Founder and Artistic Director
Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director
Lauren Ferin, Assistant Director and
Volunteer Manager



Please carefully read the following information about volunteering for BIFF - even if you've volunteered for the BIFF before, as we continue to update and improve the festival experience for all. Every department needs help in a wide variety of areas.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Volunteers ensure the best film-going experience possible. All volunteer duties require outstanding people skills. These include the ability to interact with the public in a helpful, kind, and courteous manner, and to be able to say "NO" with grace and assertiveness. PATIENCE, rational thinking in hectic situations, and a willingness to do whatever needs to be done are necessary. Remember, you are the face of the BIFF!

We expect BIFF volunteers to follow certain rules of behavior:

1. No drinking or drugs permitted during a shift.
2. No self-promotion (e.g., handing out business cards, marketing your movie) on shift but we encourage BIFF promotion – "like us on Facebook," "post and share BIFF events on BIFF's Facebook and Instagram Page" and "check out our website!"
3. The use of cell phones or email for personal reasons while on shift is not permitted.
4. Volunteers are not permitted to take celebrity photos at events or post them on Facebook, X, Instagram, etc.
5. Volunteers must be on time for each shift; we ask you to notify your coordinator 24 hours in advance and as soon as possible if you will be absent or tardy.

REQUIREMENTS & BENEFITS

Running a festival smoothly involves commitment and communication from both sides.

What we ask of you:

- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age
- Pre-Festival
 - Flyer, Posters and Program Distribution throughout the County, Connecticut, NY
 - Attend mandatory pre-festival volunteer trainings
- Our primary mode of communication is via email; we ask you to promptly read and respond to emails in a timely manner
- For the Festival, we ask you to sign up in advance for specific shifts:
 - Commit to work a minimum of 16 hours – 3 to 4 shifts @ 4 to 6 hours each
 - Short breaks will be scheduled during your shift



What you get in return!

- **Volunteer Festival** Pass that provides admission to films, talks and events, space permitting
 - Volunteers are required to work at least one of their scheduled shifts before using their Pass.
 - Volunteers may use their Pass to attend the Closing Night film or to see any film of your choice (excluding Opening Night, and when not volunteering, of course!) on a space-available basis (that means after passholders, ticketholders and Rush Line patrons have all been seated.)
 - If there's a particular film that you absolutely want to be sure to see, the only way to guarantee a seat is to purchase a ticket prior to the screening.
 - Volunteers CANNOT expect to watch films while working their shift.
- An invite to BIFF REEL FRIENDS events and screenings
- Volunteer Thank You Party
- Snacks and refreshments during the festival
- Your name in print in the BIFF program!
- The coveted Annual BIFF Volunteer T-shirt!

TO APPLY TO BE A BIFF VOLUNTEER

Visit <https://biffma.org/contact/volunteer/> and complete all the required information. Click I AM NOT A ROBOT and then SUBMIT. Assistant Director Lauren Ferin is our Volunteer Guru! She will be in touch to review your application and provide guidance on next steps! Feel free to email Lauren at lauren@biffma.org with any questions.

VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT

There is a place for all abilities and experience levels on the volunteer team. To find the best fit for you, we will assign you to a festival department(s) based on your preference, experience, skills, and availability as detailed on your application form. We will do our best to assign you to a position that you will be happy with.



HEAD VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- Volunteer Coordinator - Erica Heinlein, Great Barrington
eheinlein@guidosfreshmarketplace.com Cell 413.329.7923
- Asst. Volunteer Coordinator - Patrick Kavey, Great Barrington
Patrickkavey@gmail.com Cell 413.841.4444
- Volunteer Coordinator- Simon Kneeland, Lenox Town Hall
simon.kneeland@gmail.com Cell 413.441.9500
- Program Distribution Coordinator – Lauren Ferin
lauren@biffma.org Cell 413.281.1337
- Transportation Coordinator –
OPEN IN 2026

VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

- **Drivers/Transportation** – Transport filmmakers, VIPs, guests, and others to and from Great Barrington and Lenox; may include runs to nearby major airports, train stations, and frequent trips to and from the Red Lion Inn.
- **Outside Theater Team** – Usher, crowd controller, and ticket taker positions as needed. Monitor lines before and during admission. This person must be mindful of the seating priorities accorded to passholders, ticket holders, and rush line hopefuls. Make sure patrons are in the correct film lines. You will need to announce which line is which— for passholders, individual ticket holders, and rush line hopefuls – and communicate with Inside Theater Ushers as you “release” each line and seats in the theater are filled.
- **Inside Theater Usher** – Protect “reserved” seating for Jury, Filmmakers & VIPs, count available seats for rush ticket sales, and notify Outside Theater Control as to the number of rush tickets available just before the screening is scheduled. Circulate to relieve other volunteers for bathroom and snack breaks.
- **Special Events** – Work premieres, parties, and events. Catering skills are a plus, helping to set up event space, checking guests at the door, distributing gift bags, checking passes, and cleaning up after the event is necessary.
- **Pass Scanner** – Scans all barcodes on passes before patrons enter the theater. Must be patient and remain calm and courteous with anxious passholders.
- **Merchandise Salesperson** – Inventory setup, display, and sales; maintain sold inventory list, cash box to be picked up at the beginning of each day from the main office and returned to the volunteer coordinator at the end of the night. Transportation of inventory from one location to another may be required.



- **Office and Filmmaker/VIP Lounge Help Phone Dispatch** – Located in the BIFF office and other venues, duties would vary between running errands, answering phones, fielding questions, helping out the Transportation Coordinator, replenishing beverages and snacks, **neaten spaces, emptying trash and more!**
- **Pass/Ticket Concierge** – Distribute complimentary will-call tickets, passes, and VIP BIFF gift bags as needed. Answer questions regarding the Festival weekend in a courteous, helpful manner.
- **Greeter/Filmmaker Check-in Assistant** – First point of contact for filmmakers checking in at BIFF. Escort **them** to the theater where their film is being screened and connect them with the person running the Q&A for that film.
- **Box Office** – Process walk-up ticket orders at The Triplex and Lenox Town Hall.

PRE-FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Program Distribution** - Work with the office to distribute Festival programs throughout Berkshire County, VT, NY & CT
- **Poster/Print Materials Distribution** – Distribute BIFF promotional materials such as rack cards, posters, etc.
- **Gift Bag Assembler** – Assemble VIP & Filmmaker Gift bags, as needed
- **Filmmaker Transportation** – Provide transportation for filmmakers attending the Filmmaker Summit that arrive on Wednesday.
- **Pick up Rental Cars** – Assist with driving vehicles to Great Barrington (typically Tuesday)

POST-FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- **Rental Car Return** – Assist in returning rental cars to Pittsfield.
- **Pressbook** – Locate, clip, and assemble all press articles and place in the book
- **BIFF Office** – Pack up supplies, take inventory of merchandise, **and** general organizing of office



FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

BIFF's Accessibility Statement:

We are dedicated to creating an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all patrons. We partner with venues that comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements and provide:

- **Venue Accessibility** – Accessible parking, seating, and restrooms
- **Screening Features** – Captioned or subtitled screenings, plus assistive listening devices upon request
- **Support Animals** – Access for registered support animals
- **Sign Language** – Information on requesting American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

We ask all volunteers to become familiar with each venue's accessible options and to report any inquiries to your site volunteer coordinator.

The following are general guidelines that are consistent with most film festivals.

FESTIVAL ETIQUETTE

- No outside food is permitted in the festival theaters. The theaters go above and beyond to provide quality food to patrons.
- All theaters must be cleared between showtimes and to allow staff to clean and ready the theater for the next screening. Any left behind will either be put in the trash or put in lost and found.
- Saving seats for other guests or for yourself between shows is not permitted.
- To expedite theater cleaning and seating, please discard your trash and exit promptly after your screening.
- Please keep talking to a minimum when exiting theaters to not disturb the other patrons in other theaters.
- No recording equipment is permitted in the theater.
- Please turn off all cell phones and pagers during the film presentation.
- For the pleasure of all patrons, there is no talking permitted during the film presentation and no late seating if the theater is at full capacity.
- Lines may lead outside of the theater and theater temperatures are regulated automatically, depending on the number of patrons in the theater. Please bring layers and dress appropriately for your comfort.



THEATER GUIDELINES

- Theater admission - Passholders MUST be present at the venue, in their appropriate lines **15 minutes prior** to the scheduled film start time. Late seating is only permitted if seats are still available.
- In order for us to create a positive experience for all involved, including patrons, volunteers, and theater team members, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines.
- You are a guest in the theater, please respect their space and their policies. While we are responsible for the festival, they are still responsible for the overall running of their business.
- The theaters donate the space for these special screenings; they make their money from their regular films and any concessions that are sold over the weekend. Please respect their
- merchandise and concession items. Ask a member of the management team before 'taking' anything that is theater property.
- Customer service is a priority. Whenever possible, if you do not know the answer, please find someone who does. Do not make promises to patrons without knowledge of festival policy that can be referred to in the program.
- Check in with your volunteer coordinator prior to taking a break or leaving your designated area.
- Absolutely no eating in the theater lobby or in the doorways to the theaters. We have designated spots for you to eat.
- If you are assigned to an area near or around a theater entrance, please refrain from conversation with other volunteers or patrons. The sound reverberates into the theater and is disruptive to those trying to enjoy the film.
- Communication is necessary, stay in touch with your volunteer coordinator. Check in when you arrive, when you need a break and at the end of your shift.
- If there is a film you would like to see, you will be one of the last people to go in, regardless of your volunteer pass.
- Remember, you are part of a team. As such, you should work together to support each other in your individual roles.



PASS & TICKETS SALES

All Passes go on sale December 1st at www.biffma.org. Passes are sold on a first-come, first-served basis and can be picked up at the BIFF offices in May beginning two weeks before the start of the Festival. On Opening Night, passes are available at the Mahaiwe Theater lobby, and any pass not picked up on Opening Night will be available at The Triplex box office.

PASS LEVELS

The following passes are available for sale to the general public:

- \$100 One Day Pass – Part of the BIFF Social Club includes Filmmaker Cocktail party, screenings all day Saturday at Mahaiwe, Indigo Room and Lenox Town Hall and Tribute Night at the Mahaiwe.
- \$250 All-Access Movie Pass – Allows passholder admission to all movies and panel discussions throughout the Festival in Great Barrington and Lenox.
- \$450 Tribute/Special Event Pass – Allows passholder access to the Tribute Night cocktail party, reserved seating for Tribute Night Film, and admission to all Festival movies (including Opening Night film) and panel discussions throughout the weekend.
- \$450 Opening Night Pass – Allows passholder access to Opening Night Cocktail Party, reserved seating for Opening Night film, and admission to all movies (including Tribute Night Event) and panel discussions throughout the Festival weekend.
- \$650 All-Inclusive BIFF Pass – Allows passholder access to the Opening Night cocktail party and screening, the Tribute Night reception and screening, Filmmaker Cocktail Party, Juried Prize Brunch, Closing Night event and admission to all movies and panel discussions throughout the weekend.

Other Passes Include: Filmmaker, Press, VIP/Sponsor and Volunteer

Individual Tickets - \$15 to \$25; available online at www.biffma.org following the Announcement Party – typically the last Monday of April

- Tickets for all films may be purchased in advance on BIFF website and in the lobbies of each venue.
- Mahaiwe will only sell tickets for films & events taking place at the Mahaiwe and can be purchased through their box office.

Rush Line Sales

Seats that are set aside for Passholders will be released 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. All tickets will be sold on a **first-come, first-served** basis. **Nothing is ever sold out! Rush lines are the best bet when advanced tickets are no longer available.**



THEATER AND VENUE LOCATIONS AND DETAILS

Triplex Cinema – 413.528.8886 x ext. 3 (manager's office)
70 Railroad Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center – 413.528.6415
14 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

The Indigo Room – 413.528.6415
7 Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

St. James Place – 413.528.1996
325 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

BIFF Tent – 413.528.8030
Children's Park behind GB Town Hall off of Castle Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Lenox Town Hall – 413.637.5506
13-33 Walker Street, Lenox, MA 01240

IMPORTANT 2026 FESTIVAL DATES TO KEEP IN MIND!

Thursday, April 23rd – BIFF Festival Announcement Party at Haven Café/Lenox

Wednesday, May 27th to 28th – Annual Filmmakers Summit

Thursday, May 28th – Opening Night Cocktail Party, Event at the Mahaiwe in GB and Dance Party at the Indigo Room; Berkshire Bank's Next Great Filmmaker announced

Friday, May 29th – Screenings Triplex and Mahaiwe and Indigo Room in GB; Lenox Town Hall; Filmmaker Cocktail Party; Special Event at St. James Place

Saturday, May 30th – Screenings at Triplex and Mahaiwe/ Indigo Room in GB; Lenox Town Hall; Tribute Night event in GB

Sunday, June 2nd – Screenings Triplex and Mahaiwe/ Indigo Room in GB; Lenox Town Hall; Juried Prize Brunch, Closing Night Film and Party

Visit biffma.org for updated information and details on BIFF365 Events!