

# RBC Bluesfest – 2023 Volunteer Handbook

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the 2023 RBC Bluesfest Volunteer Team! This year's festival takes place over 9 days and includes 120+ acts on 5 stages, is home to dozens of local vendors and will see a crowd of over 300,000 spectators.

Before we dive into the nitty-gritty details of the volunteer experience, we want to take a moment and thank YOU from the bottoms of our music-lovin' hearts for the time and commitment you're giving to make this year the best it can be. The only way this festival succeeds is with our incredible force of dedicated volunteers, and we cannot emphasize enough the amount of gratitude we have for your personal contribution.

Since we're all in this massive undertaking together, we want to make sure that we're all on the same page, in order to make your time at the festival as enjoyable and stress-free as a 300,000-person party can be. This means that we're going to provide you with copious amounts of training resources, support and positive feedback. In addition to your Area Leader's sage advice, you can rely on the Volunteer FAQs, our Code of Conduct, the festival site Emergency Plan, Orientation Guide, plus this Volunteer Handbook to ensure that whatever job you happen to be doing, you have the resources available to do it to the best of your ability.

Speaking of the best of your ability, that's what we're looking for from you! From your first scheduled shift to your last, we're looking for you to be the pleasant, respectful and generally AMAZING volunteer that we've come to know and love, not only towards your fellow volunteers, but also festival staff, artists and patrons.

Let's make 2023 the best year yet!

Your Volunteer Services Team

**Keanna Louis-Charles**, HR Manager

**Jason Galway**, Technical IT Assistant, (IT & Volunteer Services)

**Holmer Berthiaume, Christina Vezina, Debby Duford**, Volunteer Advisory Team

## BENEFITS OF BEING AN RBC BLUESFEST VOLUNTEER

Volunteering with RBC Bluesfest comes with certain advantages:

- **Free festival admission & RFID wristband**
  - your RFID wristband will be issued to you when you check in at Volunteer Village; it is your access key to the festival, as well as your identification as a volunteer.
  - wristbands must **never** be shared with someone else and they cannot be replaced
    - § **NEW & RETURNING VOLUNTEERS:** You will be given your volunteer wristband when you check in for your first shift.
    - § Volunteer wristbands **will** be removable.
  
- **Volunteer Village (On Shift) Check-In (Daily: 2PM-9:30 PM)**
  - Volunteer Village on Albert Island, North from the museum, across the footbridge.
  - inside the space are a number of amenities available exclusively for volunteers, including a sitting area, private washroom facilities, bag check, and snacks.
  - free show (“off shift”) check in available (Daily: 5:00 to 10:00 PM)
  - Bike Park hours and info located below (on page 4)
  
- **Volunteer Village Bag Check (Daily: 2:00 PM-11:30 PM)**
  - located in Volunteer Village (on volunteer island) in the same building as Volunteer Check-In
  - volunteers have access to a free and secure bag & coat check station
  - any bags entering the festival site will be inspected for security reasons, so save yourself the hassle and check your bag & coat!
  
- **Welcome Centre Cafe & Snacks (Daily 2:00 PM - 10:00 PM)**
  - located in Volunteer Village (on volunteer island)
  - Cafe will have complimentary refreshments for volunteers (water, coffee, grab & go snacks...)
  - food vouchers are issued at Volunteer Check-In when you sign in for your shift
  - complimentary meals are provided for each shift worked
    - meals are distributed to volunteers through a token system
    - meal tokens allow volunteer ONE (1) volunteer meal option per shift (volunteer meals prepared by participating onsite vendors)
    - snack options can be picked up at **Welcome Centre**
    - Link to previous Volunteer Meal Options [Volunteer Meal Options BF 2022](#) (2023 options **COMING SOON**)
  - best efforts are made to address dietary concerns; however, not all restrictions can be accommodated
  - on-shift meal breaks are granted at the discretion of your Area Leader
  - options include selection of grab and go sandwiches, salads, a cookie and a drink

**And if ALL that wasn't enough, studies have shown that people who volunteer for events they care about have an increased personal well-being and a stronger connection with the community. Additionally, altruistic volunteers tend to have higher levels of self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being, AND reduced levels of stress—so you're welcome!**

## WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

With thousands of volunteers doing hundreds of tasks, it can be hard to figure out what exactly we expect from you. To help keep it straight, here's our Volunteer Top 10:

**1. Know what you're signing up for.** Read through all the resources that we provide to you, come to the Volunteer Orientation for your area, read any emails that you get from us prior to and during the festival, and get in touch with your Area Leader. If you've done all of this and STILL have questions, follow up with your Volunteer Services Team—we're here to help!

**2. Adhere to our policies about drugs and alcohol.** Giving us your best means that you're at your best for the entirety of your shift. All outside alcohol and illegal substances are to be kept off the premises and you must start and finish every shift sober.

**3. Respect patrons, artists and fellow volunteers.** Harassment is not acceptable in any way shape or form. You should be able to enjoy the festival unimpeded, and so should everyone else.

**4. Respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of any festival information.** Being a volunteer with RBC Bluesfest could mean you know things that others don't. Any information that you may learn regarding the festival, (e.g. programming, performer details, proprietary training information, personal information of any other volunteer, etc.) should only be discussed with your Area Leader or with Volunteer Services.

**5. Notify your Area Leader of any absences well in advance.** If you can't attend a shift, let your Area Leader know as soon as possible. If you can't reach your Area Leader, email [volunteerassistant@ottawabluesfest.ca](mailto:volunteerassistant@ottawabluesfest.ca) and make sure to let the Volunteer Services Assistant know:

- your full name;
- your area/activity;
- assigned shift start time;
- location;
- reason for cancelling.

**6. Be reliable.** For the length of the festival, you should consider yourself an abacus: your team is counting on you! Show up for shifts, return from breaks in a timely manner, and make sure to pull your weight with your team.

**7. Report to your Area Leader or Supervisor at the beginning of your shift and as required throughout.** After checking in at Volunteer Village, make sure to head over to your Area Leader or Supervisor before you get started.

**8. Use technology appropriately.** Cell phones, digital music players, laptops and other electronic devices should be used only when necessary while you're on duty, but feel free to use them to your heart's content before and after your shift or while you're on break. We ask that you refrain from identifying yourself as a volunteer and commenting on social media on behalf of the festival. If you have feedback or comments, please reach out to your Area Leader or the Volunteer Services Team – we are happy to help!

**9. Be present.** When you're volunteering, you're an ambassador of RBC Bluesfest. Don't use your position to solicit for other causes or events.

**10. HAVE FUN!** This is an awesome opportunity to meet other brilliant, like-minded people and create some wonderful memories—take advantage of your time here!

## WHAT TO EXPECT FOR A SHIFT

Whether you're new this year or just excited to be back, getting ready for your shifts can be a little overwhelming. Have no fear, the Volunteer Checklist is here to make sure that you get started (and stay!) on the right foot.

### **Get mentally and physically ready for your shift**

Take a nap, go for a run, have an espresso, listen to "Eye of the Tiger." Whatever you need to do to get in the volunteer frame of mind, take some time and do it.

### **Check the weather & prepare accordingly**

Like Scar and his hyena army sing in The Lion King: "BE PREPARED!" Although your goal is to perpetrate excellent customer service and not fratricide, it is, nonetheless, excellent advice. Items you may want to bring include:

- YOUR VOLUNTEER T-SHIRT! (see below for more info about this)
- sunscreen & hat
- sweater
- reusable water bottle
- any medications that you may need while on shift
- appropriate footwear (e.g. runners, rain boots, steel-toed shoes)
- a raincoat, rain poncho and/or personal umbrella, etc.
- **Optional Face Masks:** RBC Bluesfest is a mask-friendly environment, and encourages volunteers who wish to wear one during their shift to bring it with them to their shift.

### **Head over to the festival grounds**

First, make sure to leave yourself enough time! Consider traffic, weather conditions, construction work, whether you're planning on eating a quick snack on Volunteer Island before your shift, as well as how long it will take you to get over to your Area Leader/Supervisor from Volunteer Island (Village).

We're located centrally at LeBreton Flats, along the Transitway and beside the Canadian War Museum, so there are several transportation options available to you:

- **Walking:** One of your more eco-friendly options, please check our website to see what entryways are available to you.
- **Riding a bike:** Also eco-friendly, parking your bike on-site won't be a problem. We offer free valet bicycle parking in our Bike Park for the length of the festival.
  - **Bike Park hours of operation are Daily from 2:30 PM-11:30 PM\*\***

\*\*\*Note if you are a volunteer and your shift ends later than 11:30PM, please let the Bike Park volunteers know so they can help make arrangements for your bike to stay safe, and accounted for.

- **Bus:** The Transitway has stops within walking distance of the festival grounds. Plan your route at [www.octranspo.com](http://www.octranspo.com).

- **Car:** There is no parking available on-site, so we recommend that you get dropped off or use one of the previously-listed methods of transportation.

**Wear your volunteer t-shirt**

You'll be issued your very own RBC Bluesfest t-shirt when you check in for your first shift. T-shirts should be worn proudly while you're on duty and **must** be removed when a shift ends. While it may be tempting to personalize your shirt, please keep them in the same pristine condition you get them in, at least until after the festival is done.

**Sign-in (with ID) at Volunteer Check-In and drop your bag off with Volunteer Welcome Centre**

Make sure you bring **your photo ID** over to Volunteer Village at least 15 minutes before each shift starts in order to sign in. And if you're planning on seeing a free show on a day when you don't have a shift, you'll need to sign in at our Free Show satellite station first.

- Volunteer Check-In hours of operation are 1:00 PM to 9:30 PM, daily.
- The Free Show satellite station is located at the corner of Booth Street and Vimy (open daily at 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM). This station is **ONLY** for volunteers coming to see a free show. If you are checking in for a shift, we still need you to go to Volunteer Village.
- The latest check-in for a free show at the satellite station is 10:00 p.m. Unfortunately, late-comers can't be accommodated, so make sure to give yourself plenty of time!  
If you have a backpack or coat that you don't want to carry around during your shift, feel free to leave it at the Bag Check with Volunteer Welcome Centre. If you're working the last shift of the day, make sure to pick up your gear from the Welcome Centre before they leave, between 2:00 PM and 11:30 PM, daily.

**HYDRATE!**

During the hot days of summer, water is H<sub>2</sub>O—so good for you. Stay hydrated throughout your shift by filling up your (please remember to bring your own) water bottle at one of our water refill stations on our festival grounds and from the big jugs located in Volunteer Village.

**Stay green**

It's not easy being green but it is important. Familiarize yourself with the RBC Bluesfest's environmental policies & greening initiatives and help keep the festival clean by using compostable & recyclable options, and keeping trash to a minimum.

**Stay safe!**

Do what you need to do to safeguard your health, avoid injury and protect yourself.

## THE MORE YOU KNOW

This is a smattering of other important information that all of our volunteers should be aware of in order to help patrons, artists and other volunteers:

### Accessibility

RBC Bluesfest is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities; in a manner that respects their dignity, independence, integration and that is equitable in relation to the broader public. The festival permits people with disabilities to use assistive devices, service animals and/or support personnel. The festival has established an Accessibility

volunteer team (A-Team) who provide support and feedback to continually improve the accessibility of the event. A-Team volunteers will be roaming the site to offer support, and stationed in the A-Team Tent (next to the Info Booth) to offer guidance and light support as needed. Volunteers are encouraged to bring a support worker with them to each shift if they need additional assistance.

### **First Aid**

The headquarters for First Aid is located in the main bowl near the Info Booth, across from the Canadian War Museum entrance. There are also numerous roaming First Aid teams throughout the site. There are also roaming First Aid teams from the Gatineau Ski Patrol that circulate the grounds and who are recognizable by their red shirts and navy vests that say FIRST AID.

### **Lost & Found**

All found items should be delivered to the on-site RBC Bluesfest Admin Office located within the Canadian War Museum, which is also where lost items can be claimed.

### **Lost Children**

Lost children should be delivered to Info Booth in order to reunite them with their parents as soon as possible.

### **Severe Weather Conditions**

Your Area Leader has an emergency plan for your area. Make sure you know the plan, remain calm, listen to the instructions of your Area Leader, and direct any patron questions or concerns to him/her.

Changes to the festival schedule and site access due to weather conditions will be posted on our website.

### **Youth – High school volunteer hours**

If you're still in high school, the hours you volunteer for RBC Bluesfest can count towards your required volunteer hours. Make sure to bring your school-issued form with you to each shift and ask your Area Leader to sign it immediately after you finish each day.

### **Youth – Parental permission form**

If you are between the ages of 15 and 17 on the first day of the festival, you **MUST** bring your Parental Permission Form, signed by your parent or legal guardian, to the Volunteer Check-In at the start of your first shift.

# The RBC Bluesfest Volunteer Handy-Dandy Cheat Sheet

If you've read through all of the resources we've given you, but are worried about keeping it all straight as the hot Ottawa sun beats down and the loud music overwhelms your senses, don't worry—we've got you covered! Print off this sheet and keep it with you to refer to in a pinch.

## Your Volunteer Services Team:

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Have questions? Contact the Volunteer Service Team at [volunteers@ottawabluesfest.ca](mailto:volunteers@ottawabluesfest.ca)