

2021 VOLUNTEER APPLICATION GUIDE



Thank you for your interest in joining the Sydney Writers' Festival Volunteer Team!

Each year we are blessed to have an amazing team of 300 volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to help create a remarkable festival for Sydney's readers and writers. SWF volunteers greet people with a friendly smile, answer questions about the program, keep our queues orderly, and the authors on time. For most people, our volunteers are the face of Sydney Writers' Festival, and we are proud that each year our team receives praise from both attendees and authors for their enthusiasm and dedication. The extraordinary work of our volunteer team is a major part of our Festival's success.

In 2021, volunteers will help Sydney Writer's Festival host a Covid-safe festival featuring over 200 events between 26 April and 5 May.

SHIFTS OVERVIEW FOR 2021 VOLUNTEERS

| MON 26 APRIL | TUES 27 APRIL | WED 28 APRIL | THUR 29 APRIL | FRI 30 APRIL | SAT 1 MAY | SUN 2 MAY | MON 3 MAY | TUES 4 MAY | WED 5 MAY |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| WORKSHOPS AT GREEN SQUARE | | | | | | | | | |
| | SLNSW LIVESTREAM | | | | | | | | |
| | FESTIVAL NIGHTS PROGRAM | | | | | | | | |
| | | | FESTIVAL PRECINCT ALL-DAY PROGRAM | | | | | | |
| | | SCHOOL DAYS | | | YA DAY | FAMILY DAY | SCHOOL DAYS | | |

While there are no particular skills or work experience required for you to become a volunteer, a friendly disposition and a love of books would surely be a good start. Though, when we think about our volunteers and the energy they bring to the Festival each year, there are a few personal traits that spring to mind.

Sydney Writers' Festival volunteers are:

- Enthusiastic
- Generous
- Punctual
- Friendly
- Motivated
- Compassionate
- Tactful
- Resilient
- Spirited

If you share these qualities, then you too will enjoy volunteering at Sydney Writers' Festival.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL ASSIST YOU TO FILL OUT THE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Volunteer rosters are decided according to the **locations** you can work, the **times** and **dates** you are available, the **type** and **number** of shifts you prefer, and the **roles** you are interested in doing. This document will explain what you can expect from your time with us as a volunteer, what tasks you might be doing while on shift, and what we are looking for in your application.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Volunteer Application Guide – we hope to see you at the Festival this year!
For further information please email the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@swf.org.au.

Shift locations

The Festival Precinct – Carriageworks (in Redfern): More than 90% of all volunteer shifts are located at this Festival ‘hub’, Carriageworks, so if you do get a volunteer roster this year then you can expect that most of your shifts will be here within our ‘Festival Precinct’.

New volunteers with existing knowledge of the Redfern / Chippendale area will be considered favourably for Information Assistant roles. Experienced volunteers with local knowledge will be considered for Writers’ Green Room Assistant roles positioned at our Festival Hotel.

However, by the start of the Festival, ALL volunteers should be familiar with the layout of the Festival Precinct and all 8 venues located within it. You will be provided with maps and information about each venue, a tour of the precinct, instructions for your arrival, and a supervisor to guide you when you get there.

Volunteers rostered on team locations within the Precinct will sign in at the Volunteer Green Room (VGR) located at Carriageworks, then disperse with their teams to a specific location within walking distance.

Carriageworks VGR: 255 Wilson St, Eveleigh NSW
Train Stations: Redfern (10 min walk), Macdonaldtown (10 min walk), Newtown (20 min walk)
Bus Stop: Codrington Street at City Road (7 min walk)

Locations outside the Festival Precinct

Volunteers are required to be available to work in at least one location outside the Festival Precinct, though not all volunteers will be given a suburban shift on their roster as shift numbers are limited.

The shift locations listed on your application form include:

Major events held in the evenings and on weekends at Sydney Town Hall, City Recital Hall, Riverside Theatres (Parramatta), and The Concourse (Chatswood).

School Days held at Riverside Theatres (Parramatta), Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre (Penrith), Sydney Town Hall, The Concourse (Chatswood) and Seymour Centre (Chippendale).

Workshops at Green Square Library (TBC).

Shift times

SWF requires volunteers at various times throughout Festival week. **AM and PM shifts on the main four days (Thursday to Sunday) are *by far* the busiest times.** If you are particularly interested in performing a certain role, remember that consistent availability over consecutive days will be of most help to the position.

There are six shift types per day:

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| AM | START: 8am or 9am | FINISH: 12noon or 1pm |
| MID | START: 10am | FINISH: by 3pm |
| PM | START: 12pm or 1pm | FINISH: 5pm or 6pm |
| EVE | START: 3pm | FINISH: by 8pm |
| NIGHT | START: 4pm or 5pm | FINISH: 10pm or 11pm |
| DAY | START: 8am or 9am | FINISH: 3pm or 4pm |

Shift start and finish times vary as each venue has different requirements. Most shifts are 4-5 hours. Your roster will specify the exact shift times required of you on the day.

Volunteers working double shifts or long shifts (6 hours or more) will have lunch or dinner provided. You will be asked to specify your dietary requirements at the end of your application form.

Preferred number of shifts

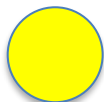
Every volunteer must do a MINIMUM of three shifts, though we know many of you will choose to do more. You will be asked to specify your *ideal* number of shifts on the application form. We will have almost 1400 shifts to roster among 300 volunteers, so volunteers offering FOUR or more shifts are more likely to receive a roster.

Shift dates

As you can see in the 'Roster Overview' table on page 1, the bulk of the Festival's events will happen between Thursday 29 April and Sunday 2 May. In fact, over 90% of all shifts fall on this 'main' Festival weekend. This is why we require all volunteers to be available for AT LEAST THREE shifts during Festival weekend.

Thursday and Friday AM / PM shifts are notoriously difficult to cover, so being available on these days will greatly increase your chance of receiving a roster!

Workshops



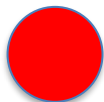
Workshops are DAY shifts (8.30am – 2:30pm) with lunch provided, or PM shifts (10.30pm-4.30pm). Volunteers will work together to assist attendees and authors throughout the day, under the supervision of the Workshops Manager. All workshops will take place at Green Square Library.

SLNSW Events



Suburban events are usually 2-3 hours long. All SLNSW events are rostered with one experienced volunteer and one new volunteer to greet authors and assist them during their livestream events.

SWF Nights



Events at major venues, including City Recital Hall, Town Hall, Riverside Theatres and Chatswood Concourse, as well as the SWF Festival Nights program at Carriageworks, generally require volunteers after 4pm. These are popular events that attract between 200 – 1500 attendees and therefore require experienced volunteers to help manage the large crowds.

SWF Main program at the Festival Precinct



From Thursday to Sunday, there are hundreds of volunteer shifts in the precinct (see the roles available on the next page). To increase your chances of being rostered, you should offer as much availability as possible on these days. Note: Even if you mark all shifts as available you will still only receive one shift per day on your roster, unless double shifts are specifically requested.

Children's & Young Adult Program (*Working with Children Check required)



School Days events (9am – 3pm) and Family Day (9am – 4pm) are DAY shifts, with lunch provided. YA Day has two shifts at Carriageworks (9am – 3pm / 12pm – 6pm). Volunteers will work as a team to assist authors and manage large crowds of young people at these events.

Pre-Festival Volunteering

In the four weeks leading up to the Festival, volunteers can offer to help with the many small but time-consuming tasks that go in to prepping for a festival. These tasks include:

- Compiling Volunteer Information Kits and Orientation Day materials
- Packing author gift bags and volunteer tote bags
- Cutting and compiling lanyards for publishers, guests, volunteers and staff
- Preparing Festival signage, paperwork and VIP passes
- Putting pre-ordered tickets into envelopes for Festival guests

These tasks are simple, and sometimes monotonous, but crucial for the delivery of the Festival. Volunteers come to the SWF office (located in The Rocks) and work together in small groups of 4 – 6 people, taking a break at lunch (harbour views guaranteed). This is usually a weekday task (10pm-4pm) and lunch is provided. Expect lots of chatting, laughter and bonding among the volunteers that come in to help.

Volunteer Orientation Day

The **compulsory** Volunteer Orientation Day will take place from 9.30am – 1.30pm on **Saturday 17 April** at Carriageworks in Bay 25.

All volunteers will be given a welcome kit, their volunteer ID lanyard and a 2021 volunteer t-shirt. The team will be briefed on general Festival information by SWF staff, given a full safety briefing from our production team and an overview of the systems relating to our volunteer team this year.

Experienced volunteers will be offered early departure at 12.30pm, while new volunteers will take a walking tour of the Festival precinct, led in groups by the 2021 supervisor team.

Please note: Non-attendance at Orientation Day means you may not be able to volunteer. While it is understandable that an emergency or unexpected event might prevent a prospective volunteer from attending the orientation, if you miss Orientation Day, your participation in the Festival is not guaranteed.

Orientation Day Address: Bay 25, Carriageworks
255 Wilson Street, Eveleigh NSW

Train Stations: Redfern (10 min walk), Macdonaldtown (20 min walk), Central (20 min walk)

Bus Stops: City Road after Cleveland Street (2 min walk), Cleveland Street near
Beaumont Street (3 min walk)

Parking: Shepherd Street multi-storey carpark on corner of Cleveland & Shepherd Streets
(10 min walk)

Volunteer roles preferred

We recommend you remain open to performing multiple roles as this increases your chances of being given a roster. If you are happy to help with whatever is needed, then please select all boxes on the application form and consider yourself a star!

If you have particular skills or work experience that would suit a certain role, please note this on your application form when we ask about your previous experience and skills.

The 2021 SWF Volunteer roles are:

- Book Signing Assistant
- Children's Event Assistant
- Communications Assistant
- Concierge
- Donations Assistant
- Festival Bus Assistant
- Floater
- Greeter
- Information Assistant
- Livestream Assistant
- Site & Stage Assistant
- Survey Assistant
- Usher
- Volunteer Green Room Assistants
- Volunteer Supervisor (*only available to returning volunteers)
- Writers' Green Room Assistant
- Workshop Assistant

Book Signing Assistant

During Festival weekend, there will be two book signing areas at Carriageworks. Book signing assistants will ensure guests know which queues are for buying books and which are for book signings, they will ensure signing tables have name markers and glasses of water for the authors, and they will make sure the queues are managed effectively within the space. Before each event finishes, volunteers will rearrange chairs and name markers to accommodate the next round of authors signing.

Children's Event Assistant

Volunteers will greet families and school-age children then usher them into events, help give out prizes, assist with microphones during Q&A sessions, and manage the book signing queues after each session. Family Day is particularly busy, with volunteers also assisting at author activation spaces, helping with craft activities, dressing up in book character costumes, and assisting on Russ the Story Bus.

NB. A valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required for all volunteers working at children's events. Please have your WWCC number handy when filling out the application form.

If you do not have a WWCC already, it is free to register online at:

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/volunteers>.

You will need to verify your ID at a Service NSW Centre. Please allow 4 weeks for the approval process.

Communications Assistant

Communications Assistants will move between the VGR, Information Teams, and the Festival HQ (located in the Back of House area at Carriageworks), gathering updates and passing on messages. Volunteers will track program changes, correct messaging, safety hazards, staff updates, and anything else that might affect the smooth operation of the Volunteer team, ensuring information is communicated to all Volunteers, Supervisors and Managers quickly and efficiently. These volunteers will need to be great communicators and physically active as they will traverse the entire festival precinct during their shift.

Concierge

Volunteers taking on Concierge roles will be stationed at key locations to assist special guests of the Festival. For example, Concierge volunteers will be at the entrance to our Patron Lounge, to welcome sponsors and contributors, assisting with program information and wayfinding. Concierge volunteers will also be positioned in the foyer at our author hotel, The Old Clare, to assist authors with Festival information and event times, directions and general local information. This role is best suited to experienced volunteers who are familiar with the Redfern and Chippendale area.

Donations Assistant

After a devastating year in 2020, Sydney Writers' Festival needs more financial support than ever before. Volunteers on our Donations Team will work together to help raise money by approaching people at the Festival requesting small donations using cashless mobile pay points. Basic technical skills are required for volunteers to select the amount being donated and enter details for donor receipts. This role is suited to volunteers with a confident and friendly communication style, especially experienced volunteers who can explain why supporting the future of the festival is important.

Festival Bus Assistant

This year, the Festival will be running a shuttle bus between Redfern Station and Carriageworks. Volunteers will work together to manage this service, greeting patrons at bus stops, collecting gold coin donations for the service, and welcoming patrons on the bus. Bus shifts are shorter than other shifts and require friendly volunteers who will enjoy chatting to people while they wait for the bus.

Floater

Floater are very important: they are often asked to assist multiple teams throughout a shift, helping when there is an unexpected surge in crowds, or replacing another volunteer when they get called away, or when a crucial task for SWF staff needs doing very quickly. Floaters can offer assistance anywhere, to anyone, and so will provide much needed support at challenging times. Note: this is not a 'spare' position, but rather, one that is quite crucial to the smooth operation of our team!

Greeter

Greeters will be positioned at the entrance to the Festival Precinct and main foyers. Their task is to warmly welcome Festival patrons, provide directions and program information, and answer miscellaneous questions.

Information Assistant

Volunteers on the Information Team will stand at the main festival entrances to the Precinct, along walking routes between venues, and at information booths in the busy public spaces at Carriageworks. Volunteers will hand out daily program guides, answer questions, and help people navigate the precinct, plus handle lost property enquiries. Good customer service skills are a must! Familiarity with Redfern and the surrounding areas would be a bonus.

Livestream Assistants

Volunteers who help in this role will assist the Live & Local Coordinator throughout the day as they help our regional and interstate partners access the livestream. They will need to use social media and smart phones to follow questions being submitted online by regional attendees throughout the event, gathering them for the facilitator on stage. Volunteers in this role should be tech-savvy, experienced with social media, and able to maintain attention on multiple screens over a long period of time.

Site & Stage Assistants

Site and Stage Assistants help with behind-the-scenes set up and pack down of festival spaces. Tasks may include packing or unpacking boxes, arranging chairs or assembling décor before events, sticking seat numbers

on chairs, carrying equipment between venues, removing seat numbers from chairs, clearing away rubbish and running errands. This role suits physically active volunteers who enjoy being behind-the-scenes with the production team.

Survey Assistants

Survey Assistants will spread out among the crowds to ask Festival patrons to take a short survey. This work allows Sydney Writers' Festival to apply for funding, program events relevant to our guests, and improve our customer experience across the Festival. In preparation for this role, volunteers are asked to attend a short training session on Wednesday 28 April at 4pm, where you will get acquainted with the survey, your supervisors, and the survey tablets. Survey shifts are shorter than other shifts.

Ushers

Ushers work in small teams to organise queues, point people to their seats and ensure a smooth changeover between events. As the queues can become quite long, volunteers will need to work as a team to manage the queues effectively, sometimes within small spaces. When ushers are not managing large crowds of people, they answer questions and keep an eye on who's coming and going.

Volunteer Green Room (VGR) Assistants

From Tuesday 27 April to Sunday 2 May, the Volunteer Green Room is the headquarters for all volunteer shifts at the Festival Precinct. All volunteers doing a shift at Carriageworks will check in and out here. VGR Assistants will greet and register volunteers at check-in, assist with Covid-safe sign in processes, give directions to new volunteers, assist with allocating team lunches, track late volunteers and cancellations, collect feedback, and manage the check-out process as volunteers finish their shifts.

Volunteer Supervisors

Supervisor positions are only available to experienced volunteers. The role involves supervising a small team of volunteers who require instructions to commence their tasks, positioning them and providing guidance as needed, plus coordinating break times throughout the day. Supervisors must be confident with front of house tasks, like addressing crowds, managing queues and resolving problems with guests, as well as back of house processes, like coordinating shift changes and lunch breaks, giving briefings and allocating team positions.

All supervisors are required to attend three key supervisor dates:

Initial Supervisor team meeting from 9.30am – 12.30pm on Saturday 6 March

Supervisor safety, site and role training from 9.30am – 2.30pm on Saturday 27 March

Assisting with registrations from 8.30am and tours until 2pm at Orientation Day on Saturday 17 April

Writers' Green Room (WGR) Assistants

This year, the Festival will be operating one Writers' Green Room at Carriageworks, requiring a team of author runners and registration desk assistants. Writers, their publicists and event facilitators are asked to check in at WGR 45 minutes before the start of their event. WGR assistants will be asked to assist with Covid-safe check in processes, escort authors to stage and book signings, relay signing information to the book signing team, and help keep the WGR tidy.

Workshop Assistants

Sydney Writers' Festival runs an extensive workshop program, hosting up to six workshops each day at Green Square Library. Workshop Assistants help set up workshop rooms at the beginning of each session, register workshop participants and authors as they arrive, set out morning and afternoon tea, and ensure the workshop rooms are tidied at the end of the day.

YOU NOW HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM.

After Applications close

Your roster will be built after applications close at midnight on Sunday 31 January 2021. As the rosters are determined by availability, we cannot guarantee that all applicants will receive a roster, though you will stand a better chance of success if you are open to a broad range of locations, roles, shifts and dates, as mentioned above. Ultimately, your availability determines your eligibility for a volunteer position.

Getting your roster

We will begin the roll out of rosters in early March, releasing and confirming shifts in batches, starting with supervisors and experienced volunteers. All volunteer applicants will have heard from Sydney Writers' Festival, whether successful or unsuccessful in their application, by the end of March.

When you receive your roster, it is a good idea to look up where each shift is located and check parking or public transport times to ensure you can get to and from your shift with ease.

Please ensure that you reply to all emails from volunteers@swf.org.au and confirm your roster as soon as you receive it. If at any time you are no longer available for one or all of the shifts allocated to you, please let the Volunteers Coordinator know as soon as possible so that we can change your roster.

Buying Festival Tickets

Sydney Writers' Festival is launching its program on Thursday 11 March. You can get your copy of the program in the Sydney Morning Herald on Saturday 13 March or read it online at www.swf.org.au.

We recommend waiting to see if you received a roster before purchasing tickets. Sometimes, we are able to adjust your roster to allow you to work at the events you wish to watch. Please avoid buying tickets during the times you have been scheduled for volunteer shifts.

If your availability changes for any reason, we ask that you let us know immediately.

Volunteer Satisfaction

The Festival believes there is a strong link between volunteer satisfaction and the success of the Festival. We know that providing clear information about your role as a volunteer will help you enjoy your time with us. In order to better prepare you for your role as a volunteer, we will:

- Introduce the different volunteer roles to you in this document
- Email you information about your allocated shifts once rosters are complete
- Provide further information and relevant role training at Orientation Day
- Assign a Supervisor or experienced volunteer to guide you while on shift

Our promise

In return for your commitment to volunteer, we commit to taking all practical steps to ensure we deliver a volunteer program that is both engaging and rewarding for you to participate in. We promise to:

- Be reliable in our dealings with you
- Build rosters that are balanced
- Provide useful information and training on your role
- Give you clear instructions in a friendly and respectful way
- Support you with experienced and reliable supervisors
- Recognise the value of your efforts
- Provide you with a safe working environment



Thank you!

We appreciate that you are considering offering your time to Sydney Writers' Festival.

SWF is one of the largest literary festivals in the world and it remains one of the most inviting and inspiring festivals to attend, for both audiences and authors alike. This is, in part, due to the commitment and conviviality of our wonderful volunteer team.

We hope you will choose to join us as a Sydney Writers' Festival volunteer in 2021.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Volunteer Application Guide – we hope to see you at the Festival this year!
For further information please email the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@swf.org.au.