

Denver Comic Con Volunteer Handbook Winter 2015

Welcome and thank you for volunteering for Denver Comic Con!

Denver Comic Con (DCC), a program of the Pop Culture Classroom (PCC) organization, strives to promote the mission of PCC: to inspire a love of learning, increase literacy, promote diversity and builds community through the tools of popular culture and the power of self-expression.

DCC does this by providing an opportunity for the greater Colorado community to explore the educational benefits of geek culture available to educators and students of all ages through a 3-day entertainment extravaganza that welcomes people of all races, ages and sexual orientation. It takes a small army of dedicated individuals to make DCC succeed. Foremost, it depends on the generous contribution of time and energy provided by our volunteers.

We have put this manual together to help you understand how the partnership between DCC volunteers and the DCC staff functions. It is our sincere hope that by reading through its pages you will feel better prepared and have a better volunteering experience. If you have questions please contact us at volunteering@denvercomiccon.com.

Thank you again for giving us your time and energy. We look forward to working with you. Sincerely,
The Volunteer Team and the DCC Staff

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Introduction

Agreeing to volunteer for Denver Comic Con should not be taken lightly. Volunteers put in long hours, mostly on their feet, and sometimes sacrifice the chance to enjoy DCC as an attendee. But there are also great benefits: getting to see how a pop culture convention works from the inside, meeting cool people and making new friends, and most importantly, knowing that your contributions help provide arts and literacy curricula to students who struggle academically and/or socioeconomically.

With this great power comes great responsibility. It is important that ALL volunteers follow ALL rules and guidelines as set down by the Denver Comic Con staff.

General Volunteer Information

The Process

The volunteer process for new volunteers begins January 15 of each year. That is when we post the link for the volunteer registration site.

1. A DCC volunteer staff member will review your profile. Because most of our volunteers work directly with children, money and high-profile guests, we require background checks on **all** volunteers and staff. There is a link in volunteer registration site. Once you have been cleared, we will activate your account.
2. Based on the areas of interest you select in your profile, you will be assigned a team. You'll get notification of shifts that come available in those departments and will be able to select the shifts you want to work.
3. Orientation is held in April. It is highly recommended that all volunteers attend orientation as this is a great chance to ask questions that might not be addressed in the manual or on our website.
4. Each department is encouraged to hold a training session(s) specific to their area. Again, it is highly recommended that you attend these trainings as you get a one-on-one opportunity to meet your supervisors and team.
5. Once the Con begins, you will check in at the Volunteer Registration Desk at the Colorado Convention Center to receive your day badge and t-shirt. Please check in a **minimum** of one hour prior to your shift's start time.
6. You must **clock in** with the Volunteer Services Liaison in your department. Please clock in 10-15 minutes before the start of your shift.

Rules of Conduct

As a Denver Comic Con volunteer, you represent both Denver Comic Con and Pop Culture Classroom. In addition to carrying out your assigned duties, you will be expected to abide by the following rules:

1. Respect the property of the convention site, the fans, staff members and fellow volunteers. This includes refraining from causing damage to DCC property due to negligence and the theft of property belonging to others. Do not use DCC property for personal use or loan DCC property, merchandise or cash without management approval.
2. Respect the directions and decisions you receive from DCC staff.
3. Refrain from acts which may result in injury, fighting or horseplay on event premises.
4. Perform your duties to the best of your abilities and advise your supervisor if you are having difficulties carrying out your assigned tasks.
5. Deal with conflicts or difficulties in the appropriate manner as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.
6. ALWAYS be courteous, friendly and cooperative.
7. Offer constructive feedback about Denver Comic Con in the appropriate manner. DCC provides a volunteer feedback survey within two weeks of the completion of the Con. Volunteers have one week to respond.
8. While you are a representative of Denver Comic Con, please understand the difference between taking initiative and taking liberties. Do not make promises or guarantees to exhibitors, artists, guests, celebrities or any other interested party without the expressed permission of your supervisor. Do not represent yourself as a DCC staff member authorized to broker deals on the behalf of Denver Comic Con or Pop Culture Classroom. Brokering unauthorized deals will result in being barred from volunteering in the future. Please refer any individuals looking to become involved with DCC to info@denvercomiccon.com and a staff member will put them in touch with the proper resource.

Inability of a volunteer to meet DCC performance and behavior standards can result in dismissal from Denver Comic Con.

Volunteer Policies

In addition to the above Rules of Conduct, Denver Comic Con has policies that must be adhered to. Please contact the volunteering department or your supervisor with questions.

1. Applying to volunteer does not guarantee acceptance as a Denver Comic Con volunteer. Background checks must be passed. Also, it is the discretion of any DCC staff member to request an applicant be removed from the DCC volunteer roster if the applicant does not have an attitude conducive to volunteering.
2. Management-level staff of other area pop culture conventions will not be allowed to serve above the level of general volunteer. This determination is at the discretion of DCC Volunteer Team Leader.
3. You must be 15 years old or older by the first day of Con to volunteer. Volunteers 15-17 must have a parent or guardian's written consent to participate.
4. Children under the age of 15 may not accompany volunteers while they are on duty. Please make alternative arrangements for their care.
5. Volunteers will be provided with a day badge for the day they volunteer. If you volunteer for more than one day, you will need to check in at the Volunteer Registration Desk and pick up a badge on that given day.
6. Volunteers are not permitted to use their volunteer status to promote or conduct personal business. Anyone doing so will lose their opportunity to volunteer.
7. No smoking or drinking while on duty. Volunteers are expected to abstain from consuming while on duty. If your supervisor suspects that you are volunteering under the influence you will be escorted off the premises, have your volunteer t-shirt and badge revoked.
8. Volunteers or staff of Denver Comic Con may not conduct themselves in an inappropriate manner while in uniform, or while holding themselves out as a representative of this organization. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate fraternization with guests, exhibitors, or other volunteers or staff, which may portray the organization in an unfavorable light, expose the organization to liability, or endanger the safety or reputation of the volunteer or other party. Personnel records are maintained on all volunteers and staff members. These records are Denver Comic Con property and are held as confidential as is reasonably possible and information will not be released outside of Denver Comic Con operations. Denver Comic Con will maintain information about skills a volunteer may possess, positive and negative performance, and other relevant information in a personnel record.
9. Denver Comic Con does not discriminate against any potential volunteer due to physical or mental disability. When DCC becomes aware of any disability that prevents an individual from performing a needed task, DCC will assess whether a reasonable accommodation would allow the potential volunteer to perform the job before refusing the person with a disability the opportunity to volunteer. An accommodation which creates an undue hardship on DCC and its staff or endangers the health and safety of other volunteers, attendees or staff will be deemed unreasonable and will not be accommodated. An otherwise qualified candidate as a potential volunteer with a disability must inform the volunteer management team of the nature of the disability and the accommodation required. Staff will assess such information and shall maintain the confidentiality of the information to the extent possible and shall not release the information to anyone who does not need to know for the performance of their role with Denver Comic Con.
10. Denver Comic Con is committed to the safety of its volunteers. We provide orientations, training, instruction and high quality equipment to make the event safe. It requires a team effort to accomplish this goal. Volunteers who do not utilize these safety measures put themselves at risk of injury. Volunteers are expected to adhere to the regulations and policies outlined by DCC and the Colorado Convention Center.

Denver Comic Con Harassment Policy

Denver Comic Con is a safe space. This means we expect it to be a safe environment for fans from any ethnicity, creed, religious background, political background, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, sexual orientation, fandom, etc. We do not tolerate harassment in any form. This includes, but is not limited to: physical assault, verbal harassment, sexual harassment, stalking, unwanted physical contact, unwanted advances, or inappropriate photography. (Inappropriate photography is defined as photography where the subject feels they are being stalked, exploited, degraded, or disrespected through being photographed. While it is reasonable that photographers will be photographing costumers and other parts of the convention, should this photography become harassing or sexual in nature, the photographer will be subject to the harassment policy.)

Harassment is defined by the victim.

"No" means no. "Stop" means stop. "Go away" means go away.

If it is determined – either by observation or by complaint – that an individual or group has harassed another attendee, any or all of the following things may occur –

That individual or group may be:

1. Warned to cease and desist;
2. Asked to leave the convention, or;
3. Banned from the convention for a period of time to be determined by staff.

To report harassment please find the nearest Denver Comic Con volunteer or security personnel. They will direct you to an information desk or security center. If you feel your safety or the safety of others is jeopardy please contact the Denver Police Department at 911 if an emergency. The Denver Police Department non-emergency number for District 6 is 720-913-2800.

For your own safety, if you feel that you are being harassed in a non-emergency situation please report your problems to us before anyone else. Please report to us before taking matters into your own hands (such as personally confronting the aggressor or posting on social media). We have professional security and they are properly equipped for these contingencies.

Volunteer Benefits

General volunteers (Red Team) will receive the following benefits.

- Badges
- Volunteers receive a badge for the day that they volunteer
- Volunteer t-shirt
- Volunteers who volunteer a minimum of 8 hours will be invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Party (time and location TBD, post-convention)

Volunteer Opportunities

The bulk of Denver Comic Con's workforce is made up of general volunteers (Red Team) at the convention itself. Work areas include (but are not limited to):

- **ADA Services**
 - This group helps disabled attendees have a more gratifying experience at DCC. This might mean serving as an escort to panel rooms or distributing credentials that allow ADA attendees early access into panel rooms.
- **Artist Valley Services**
 - This group works with artists on the show floor to make sure their questions and concerns are addressed.
- **Audio/Video Services**
 - AVS volunteers help set up and operate audio and video equipment in panel rooms or the stage on the main show floor.
- **Pop Culture Classroom Lab**
 - Working in the PCC Lab is an opportunity to help families have a Con experience unique to Denver Comic Con. It might be assisting with crafts or helping with special guests on the PCC Lab stage.
- **Celebrity Summit**
 - The Summit area needs volunteers to manage lines while attendees wait to meet and greet their favorite film, television, internet, and comic book industry celebrities. Help is also needed to assist celebrities with their daily schedule and in the photo op area.
- **Cosplay**
 - Volunteers in this area are needed to help with the Cosplay photo op stage and the Cosplay Shindig.
- **Exhibitor Services**
 - The hundreds of merchants on the show floor often need volunteers to provide information on getting around the Con and other general information.
- **Front of House Crowd Control**
 - FOH volunteers help regulate the flow of traffic in and around the registration and programming areas of the convention center.
- **Information Booth**
 - The Info Booth is the encyclopedia of Denver Comic Con. Volunteers in this area have the 411 on the ins and outs of all Con happenings.
- **Set Up and Tear Down Teams**
 - Volunteers are needed to help staff and vendors get their areas set up in short order. Load-in will occur the day or two before the Con. Load-out happens late afternoon on the last day of the Con.
- **Merchandise Booth**
 - When attendees are looking for the fun swag to show off their time at Denver Comic Con they head to the Merch Booth. Volunteers help sell DCC branded items and Con exclusives.

- Programming
 - Programming presents all of the informational panels, workshops and films presented in the convention center meeting rooms as well as the main stage on the show floor. Volunteers are needed to help with the flow of traffic in and out of these rooms.
- Volunteer Services
 - The Volunteer Registration Desk is where all volunteers start their Con experience. This is where you pick up your badges and t-shirt. It is where you go if you have any questions. It also includes floating volunteers who move from department to department to fill in where those departments are shorthanded.

Management positions (Gold Team):

Denver Comic Con staff members commit huge amounts of time, anywhere from 2 months to year-around, working to plan the big event. Other staff members always have their eyes open for volunteers who excel in their given duties and show potential to handle the huge responsibility involved at this level. Open staff positions will be posted on our web site and Facebook page.

Checking In

Volunteers will need to both check in and clock in/clock out in order to have their time accounted for and receive credit for their time worked.

1. Volunteers will need to check in at the Volunteer Registration Desk each day. On the first day of their individual schedule, volunteers will receive their t-shirt for the weekend and their day badge. If you volunteer for more than one day, you'll need to register again and receive a day badge for that specific day. It is recommended to check in a **minimum** of one hour before you are supposed to be at your assigned station.
2. Volunteers will also need to clock in and clock out so we have an accurate accounting of time worked. Please clock in **15 minutes** prior to the time you are due at your station. Department volunteer liaisons will clock you in and out in the area where you're volunteering.
3. If you are working two shifts in one day, you will need to clock in and out for each.
4. If you are unable to fulfill your volunteering commitment, log into Shiftboard ASAP and remove yourself from any shifts for which you have scheduled yourself. If this happens within the week of the Con, send an email to volunteering@denvercomiccon.com in addition to removing yourself from the schedule. No-show volunteers will be ineligible to volunteer the next year.

Dress Code

1. Volunteers must wear their appropriate day badge during the duration of their assigned shifts along with their volunteer t-shirt. This serves as your admission into the Con and will be needed to get to your assigned areas. It also serves as entrance into restricted areas you might need access to in order to carry out your assigned tasks.
2. Do not alter your volunteer t-shirt in any fashion. If it doesn't fit properly, please return to the Volunteer Registration Desk and exchange it for a different size. Do not cut or decorate your shirt.
3. Please wear appropriate bottoms. Jeans, khakis, shorts, skirts and kilts are all acceptable. Skirts and shorts must be mid-thigh in length. The waist of pants or similar bottoms must fit at the waist.
4. Please refrain from wearing torn or dirty clothing or open-toed shoes.
5. Comfortable walking shoes are best as most volunteers will be standing or walking a great deal of their shift. Closed-toe shoes are recommended.
6. Undergarments **must** to be worn under all clothing, particularly skirts and kilts. No articles of clothing that may classified as an undergarments may be deliberately exposed. Examples of such are boxers, briefs, bras, bra-straps, panties, thongs and any other article of clothing deemed by DCC management to fall within that specification.
7. Please use your best judgment but be prepared to be asked to change, or, in extreme cases, asked to not volunteer if your attire is found unacceptable. Any earned benefits are subject to forfeit if you can't complete your duties because you have chosen to dress inappropriately.
8. No Cosplaying is allowed while on duty. Attendees and staff must be able to clearly identify you as a volunteer and as someone who can help them when needed.
9. Volunteer t-shirts are to only be worn while on duty. Wearing them while off duty risks being put to work.

For Your Comfort and Convenience

- Please wear comfortable shoes and clothing.
- Please be sure to get a good night's sleep the night before you volunteer.
- Be sure to eat right and stay hydrated.
- Be sure to consider your personal hygiene. Please shower, wash your hair and brush your teeth before starting your volunteer shift. Also wear clean, non-torn clothes.
- There will be a Volunteer Break Room. You will need to be in (or have) your volunteer t- shirt and the proper day badge to enter this room. It is only for DCC volunteers and staff. Please do not bring friends and family not volunteering with you.
- Please limit your personal belongings to a small purse or backpack. While there will be a Volunteer Break Room, Denver Comic Con will **not** be held responsible for lost or stolen items. Store personal items at your own risk.
- DCC will attempt to provide water and light snacks in the Volunteer Break Room. However, you will need to be prepared to supply your own meals during the Convention. The Colorado Convention Center allows volunteers to bring in their own individual meals like a sandwich and small snacks. It does not allow for outside food like pizza or large takeout orders. Food vendors are available throughout the convention center.
- You are responsible for your own transportation to and from the Colorado Convention Center. Public transportation is strongly recommended. Carpool groups can be organized on our forum at www.forum.comicbookclassroom.org.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer it is my right:

- To receive appropriate orientation, training and supervision to adequately perform my job.
- To receive a clear job description and to have a good understanding of my role and responsibilities.
- To be given information, guidance, support, resources and tools to do my job.
- To be heard with consideration and given a response to suggestions, questions and concerns.
- To be treated with respect for my efforts and contributions.

As a volunteer it is my responsibility:

- To consider my volunteer work a serious, professional commitment and view the position as valid and important.
- To responsibly and correctly clock in and out for my volunteer shifts and follow the procedures for access to Denver Comic Con.
- To be accountable to the rules, policies and procedures of Denver Comic Con and Colorado Convention Center.
- To sign and submit any paperwork necessary before volunteer work begins (for example: background check, parental consent form, release forms, confidentiality agreement, etc.)
- To keep all information entrusted to me confidential.
- To meet time commitments and show up ready to work. Also, be considerate and give adequate notice if I will be unable to fulfill my responsibilities.

Customer Service

In the end, it boils down to one thing: customer service. The ultimate task of volunteers is to provide our paid attendees with the best, safest possible experience. To that end, here are some customer service tips to keep in mind:

1. **Always** be courteous and polite.
2. Keep a copy of the program and programming schedule on hand. The most popular questions have to do with times and locations.
3. Know the location of the Info Booths. We have two: one on the main exhibit floor and one in the entrance of Hall A.
4. When asked a question, try “let me find out” instead of “I don’t know.”
5. Offer to help someone you see struggling.
6. Use positive language.
7. Never touch an attendee or their children.
8. Contact staff or security personnel to request emergency medical and/or law enforcement personnel.
10. Remain calm when faced with confrontation.
11. Be aware of the proximity of supervisors, staff and security personnel in your area.

Interacting with Physically and Intellectually Challenged Attendees

It is Denver Comic Con’s mission to create a venue that welcomes individuals from all backgrounds. This most certainly includes attendees who face physical and intellectual challenges. To ensure this, DCC has an ADA (American with Disabilities Act) department to make sure their special needs are being met. To that end, please remember the following:

- Treat all ADA attendees with extra patience. Attendees with disabilities face additional challenges in order to enjoy Denver Comic Con.
- Not all disabilities are obvious. If someone tells you that they are disabled, don’t question them. Do what you can to accommodate them.
- All disabled attendees must have a sticker indicating that they can use the ADA entrance to panel rooms and the show floor. If a person with a disability has not acquired proper authorization when they are attempting to enter a venue, recommend that they return to the
- ADA station at the Info Booth after they have enjoyed the panel or workshop they are attending.
- ADA attendees are allowed to bring one person with them into a panel room to help them find their seat. Be flexible. Their “plus one” might be a “plus two” if they have a child in tow. However, it doesn’t mean a family or group.
- If you suspect someone is abusing their ADA status, please contact a staff member. Do not take it upon yourself to make that determination.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I sign up?

We will open up our volunteer process to new volunteers in early January of each year. You will be able to find the link to the DCC Shiftboard in the Volunteer section of our website. In addition to filling out the volunteer profile, you will also need to fill out a waiver that will allow us to run a background check. Since our volunteers often work in sensitive areas—such as with children, celebrities, and money—it is important to ensure the safety of everyone involved. You will be prompted to complete the online waiver and background check while completing the volunteer application on Shiftboard.

Is there an age limit on volunteering?

You can volunteer if you are 15 or older. Volunteers age 15-17 will need to have a parent or legal guardian sign a consent waiver prior to the Con. It will be available on the DCC Shiftboard site. You can print, scan, and email back to Volunteer Services at volunteering@denvercomiccon.com.

What time commitment is there for volunteering at DCC?

Most daily commitments will be 4-8 hours per day.

What do I get for volunteering?

Each volunteer gets a volunteer t-shirt (to be worn while on duty) and a badge for the day they work. Volunteers who volunteer a minimum of 8 hours will be invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Party (time and location TBD, post-convention).

How do I provide feedback from my volunteer experience?

In one to two weeks after the Con is over, Volunteer Services will send out a survey where you can provide us with feedback from your time with us. Volunteers have one week to get the survey back to us so we can process the information while it's fresh for all of us.

Do volunteers have to pay for a signing fee for guests that charge?

That is at the discretion of each guest. Generally, guests will sign your volunteer shirt at no cost on Sunday afternoon when lines quiet down. Whether or not you pay for a signed photo is at the discretion of the guest.

Can I get items signed before the doors open or would I have to wait in line up with attendees?

Please do not ask to purchase merchandise or autographs before the merchants or guests have officially opened for business. This is their time to get themselves and their space in order for the rest of the day. During the day, if time allows, you may wait in line with attendees to purchase merchandise or autograph/photographs. Please remove your volunteer t-shirt while you wait, even if you are only on a break.

Colorado Convention Center Maps

MEETING ROOM LEVEL

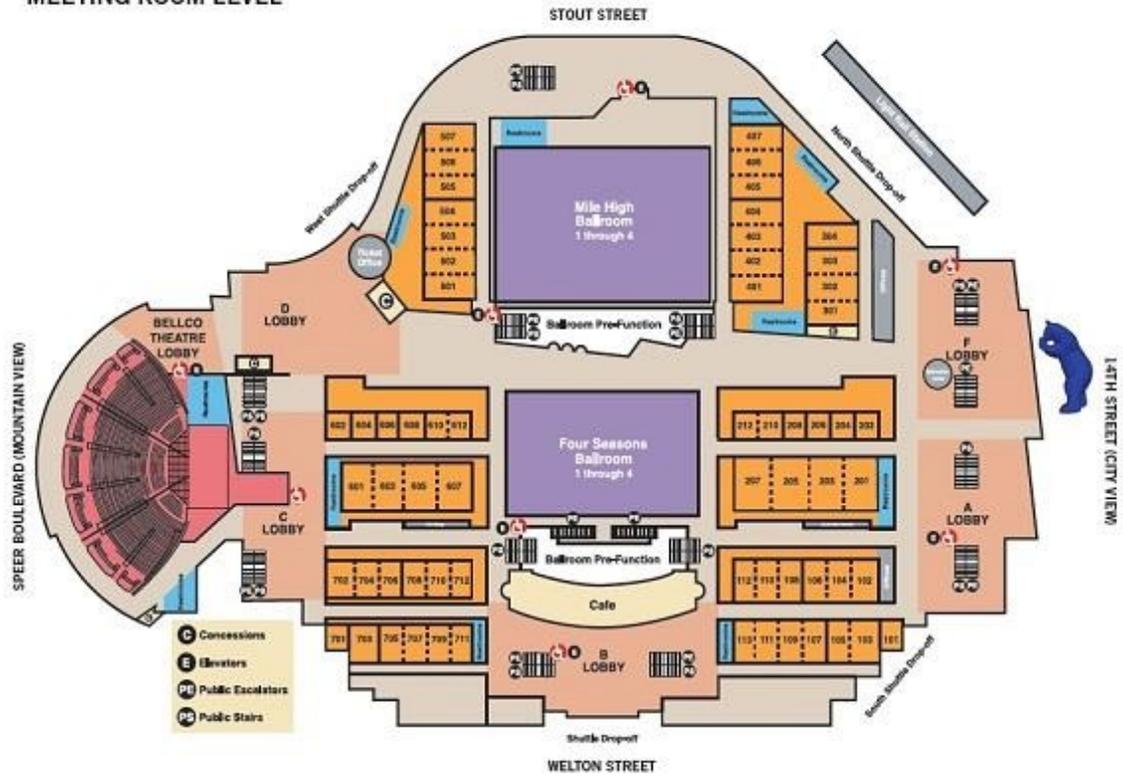


EXHIBIT LEVEL

