

# Peoria Irish Fest - Erin Feis

## Volunteer Handbook

Revised 06/10/2024

### History of Peoria Irish Fest

Peoria Irish Fest is a family event where friendships are made and renewed. It is there where we celebrate our Irish culture through music, sports, arts, crafts, religious services, food, and beverages. In 1997, the [Saint Patrick Society of Peoria](#) partnered with the [Peoria Park District](#), moving Peoria Irish Fest to the [Peoria RiverFront](#) and making it a 2 day event. In 2002, it was expanded to include Fridays, thus becoming a 3 day event.

### Peoria Irish Fest Board

Steve Bergquist, President of the Saint Patrick Society of Peoria, and Nick Conrad with the Peoria Park District, co-chair the Peoria Irish Fest Board. Under their leadership, Peoria Irish Fest has become one of the leading Irish Festivals in the Midwest. Today, our committee consists of twelve members, and the committee coordinates activities for all volunteers, now 300+ strong. Volunteers are coordinated by [Krista Naab](#).

### Peoria Irish Fest Volunteers

Festivals like ours cannot be successful without the dedication of hundreds of volunteers - people just like you - who share their time and talents with our community. Planning starts several months in advance for each year's event, then progresses to the work of building displays for our many exhibits, creating artistic displays and backgrounds, booking entertainment, and days of setting up at Riverfront Park, all before the gates open. The three days of our festival – the gathering, the day, and the scattering, require ticket takers, stage crew, decorators, refreshment staff, announcers, and so much more. Once the final songs are sung and the last jig is danced, everything is taken down and packed away for the next year.

Many of our volunteers return year after year, some signing up whole families or groups. Many become more involved as time goes on. If you are interested in joining one of our committees, contact our [Volunteer Coordinator](#).

### Youth Volunteers

Peoria Irish Fest welcomes the assistance of youth volunteers (ages 12-17) in several areas. Youth volunteers will need a permission form signed by a parent/guardian, an email address for the parent/guardian, and a phone number in order to volunteer. Youth volunteers will be primarily assigned to the Wee Folk's Area (children's area). The ability to stand for long periods is required and a parent or guardian must accompany the youth volunteer at all times.

### Volunteer Get-Together

All Volunteers are invited to a kick-off party on the Thursday before Peoria Irish Fest. This is a volunteer appreciation event where you'll be among the first to learn about what's new at this year's Fest, enjoy light refreshments, and listen to one of the featured bands. We will also announce the recipient of this year's Leprechaun of the Year award. This is a good time to reconnect with old friends from past festivals, pick up your volunteer t-shirt, and have fun!

An e-mail will be sent with information about the Volunteer Get-Together. We hope to see you there!

## General Event Information

### Festival Hours

Friday: 4:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

### Admission Policies

No coolers, food, or weapons at the festival

No skateboards, bicycles or inline skates permitted

Peoria Irish Fest staff reserve the right to prohibit entry with these items which pose a potential threat to the safety of our guests

Dogs are welcome, though patrons should refer to our policy on the website [Pet Policy – Peoria Irish Fest](#)

### Admission Ticket Information

Friday 4:00-5:00 - \$5

Advance Ticket Sales (ends August 1<sup>st</sup>) - \$10 Single Day/\$25 Event Pass

St. Patrick Society Members, Active or retired Military and Veterans - \$5 with proof of service

FREE admission on:

- Sunday: from 9:00 a.m. till 11:00 a.m. with a canned good donation.
- Sunday: anyone wearing a kilt.
- All weekend: Children under 12, with adult.

### Wrist Band

A wrist band is required to identify those who may purchase alcohol. Wrist bands are available after check-in and you must have a wrist band to purchase alcohol.

### Payment Methods

Cash or credit cards are accepted for payment. MasterCard and VISA are accepted at the Main Gate and the Entertainer Souvenir booths near O'Neill's Pub and the Main Stage.

### Kilt Day/Sunday

Continuing a tradition – Sunday is Kilt Day. Anyone wearing a kilt that day will be admitted free of charge.

### Giving Back/Sunday

Peoria Irish Fest collects non-perishable items for the “St. Vincent DePaul Society” 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. This food will be distributed to local food pantries. Food items may be dropped off at the Main Gate entrance and patrons will receive free entry between that time on Sunday.

### Religious Services/Sunday

Peoria Irish Fest is a non-denominational event. Because religion is a fundamental part of the culture of Ireland, space is made available to organizations that wish to sponsor religious services traditionally held in Ireland.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians sponsors a Mass for “Peace & Justice” in conjunction with the Catholic Diocese of Peoria.

## **Volunteer Information**

### **Our volunteers make the festival an experience!**

Whenever you are interacting with patrons, remember to act as a “TEAM”:

**T**hank you “plus:” always say thank you; add the plus – “Is there anything else, I can do for you?”

**E**nthusiasm: smile; have fun yourself.

**A**ttention: welcome our guests; be there.

**M**ake their day: exceed expectations. –do we need this?

#### **Volunteer Check-In Procedure**

On-site training of volunteers is essential for providing a cohesive volunteer program. Training will be provided to develop necessary skills and a positive image at the festival before your shift. Additional training will be provided for more technical volunteer positions.

Key volunteer information is as follows:

- On the day you are scheduled, arrive early enough to allow time for travel and parking. There is no special parking identified for volunteers. See the Peoria Irish Fest website to locate parking near the festival area.
- It is critical that all volunteers check in at the Volunteer Booth a minimum of 15 minutes before the start of your shift. The Booth is located off to the left on the sidewalk, before entering the Main Gate.
- You will receive given any last-minute instructions and sign waivers or paperwork if necessary. Then you will be instructed to report to your work location.
  - Never assume that you are not needed at the location you are assigned to. You are most likely there to replace or work with those volunteers. Introduce yourself and make them aware you have reported to begin working.
  - When your shift is complete, do not leave until replacement volunteers have arrived or you have been released by the Coordinator or Manager or their representative. After your shift, please enjoy the festival!
  - After your assignment, if you leave the grounds and plan on returning, get your hand stamped at the Main gate, this will allow you to freely re-enter that day.
  - Only the location/shift manager or volunteer coordinator can change a volunteer’s shift.

#### **Volunteer Compensation**

All volunteers receive free admission on the day(s) they volunteer for a shift of three hours or more, two complimentary drink tickets, and the opportunity to meet and work with a great bunch of people, not to mention the terrific entertainment, music, food and drink. Those who volunteer for projects prior to the festival also receive the same.

#### **Dress Code**

We recommend wearing your volunteer shirt! Upon checking in, you will receive a name tag which indicates the day, location and time that you are on-duty as a volunteer. Dress for the weather (a jacket may be handy to have, especially for rainy days or evening shifts). Dress for comfort, keeping common sense and safety in mind, and remember this is a family-friendly event. Wear comfortable shoes, (such as athletic shoes) and bring any sun protection you may need (hat, sunscreen, etc.) Closed toed shoes are recommended.

### **Scheduling, Cancellations, Changes.**

All communication regarding scheduling, cancellations, shift change requests, or general questions about volunteering should be directed to: [Krista Naab, Volunteer Manager](#)

### **Help While on Duty**

Your manager or coordinator at your booth can assist you with needs while you are on duty. If further assistance is needed, contact a team leader, supervisor, or a Peoria Park District Staff Member

### **No-Show Volunteers – simplify -**

If you are unable to work your shift, please contact the [Volunteer Chairwoman](#) as soon as possible. Volunteers who miss their shift without notice will be removed from the volunteer roster. We understand emergencies do happen, but your call will help us find a replacement volunteer in time.

### **Dismissal**

All volunteers serve “at will” and Peoria Irish Fest officials have the right to terminate a volunteer at any time for any reason, including but not limited to: excessive no-show absences, not wearing appropriate identification, excessive drinking, violent behavior, poor customer service, discrimination of patrons/guests/team members, inappropriate dress code, or theft. Volunteers can be excused immediately or directed to not return to their position in the future.

### **Cash Handling**

Volunteers handling cash at the Peoria Irish Fest will be selected by the Chairperson with the Board of Directors, specifically for the Cash Office and Ticket Office. All other volunteers on-site that handle cash will be carefully supervised by the Chairperson at all times. Anyone stealing from the festival will be dismissed immediately and face criminal charges.

### **Alcohol Consumption**

Customer service is at the forefront of the Peoria Irish Fest mission. Volunteers are expected to report to the Volunteer Check-in booth sober. If, in the opinion of the Volunteer Chairwoman or her successor, a volunteer is not sober, s/he will be removed from the schedule and possibly sent home.

In accordance with Health Department rules, volunteers may not consume alcohol or other beverages in the working area during a scheduled shift. While on break and out of public sight, volunteers may have one alcoholic drink that must be consumed before returning to the work station. Violation of this or any rules may result in immediate disciplinary action. If, in the opinion of a Peoria Irish Fest official, it is determined that a volunteer is intoxicated, the volunteer will be immediately removed from the station and future volunteering eligibility.

If, in the opinion of a Peoria Irish Fest official, it is determined that any volunteer is exhibiting inappropriate behavior, that person will be asked to step away from their duties and leave the grounds.

### **Weather Conditions**

Please report to the Volunteer Booth to confirm your assignment, regardless of weather. The need for volunteer help sometimes increases during inclement weather. If conditions become threatening, the Board of Directors will determine if and when the Emergency Evacuation Plan should be activated. As a volunteer, you may be asked to assist.

In the case of inclement weather, in which the festival grounds need to be evacuated, all patrons and volunteers will be alerted via announcements from the Stage on the proper emergency procedures. We ask that all volunteers help by listening and following the festival leadership team’s directions.

## Safety Plans

### First Aid

The First Aid station is located in the Gateway Building office behind the stage at O'Neill's Pub. It is staffed during the festival. Ambulance service is located off the grounds for quick response time to the grounds.

### Reporting an Injury/Emergency

**In case of any injury** to a patron or a co-worker while you are on duty, please contact your manager or coordinator assigned to your booth. If they are not immediately available, contact any committee member near your area, police officer or any Peoria Irish Fest official. Since time is crucial with any medical emergencies, please do not hesitate to take action.

### Lost Child Procedure

A "Lost Child" situation has two scenarios: 1) Lost Child and/or 2) Lost Parent. Both require immediate action.

- 1) Lost Child: When a Parent reports to a volunteer that they have lost their child, immediately inform your manager of the situation. Make sure you retain the parent who reported the missing child to answer further questions. Either you or a manager should then escort the parent to the Riverfront office in the Gateway Building where security will be notified.
- 2) Lost Parent: When a child reports to a volunteer that they lost their parents, inform a Peoria Irish Fest official, and retain the child by your side. Escort them to the Riverfront office in the Gateway Building where security will be notified. It is important that you inform someone where you are taking the child.

### Lost or Missing Items

Volunteers who are given lost & found items should immediately turn said items over to their location manager. The manager should then take those items to the Riverfront Office located in the Gateway Building as soon as possible. Similarly, if a patron is trying to locate a lost item, they should be escorted to the Riverfront Office.

# Volunteer Positions

## Volunteer Sign-Up

Sign-up on-line at [Why Volunteer? – Peoria Irish Fest.](#)

All volunteers sign up via the Peoria Irish Fest application located on the website. Email reminders, schedule notifications, and other communications will be sent to you via e-mail. Except where expressly noted, **all positions require walking and or standing for long periods of time. If you would prefer a seated position, please contact the [Volunteer Chairwoman](#)** to discuss options that will suit your needs.

## Bar Server

These volunteers will be serving soda, water, and alcoholic beverages (or as they say in Ireland, “a Pint,”) to thousands of thirsty Peoria Irish Fest patrons at one of our many service areas. This is a non-stop, fast paced service area and is one of the most popular positions at the fest. Shifts fill quickly. When shifts are full, volunteers may be asked to work in another area. Volunteers must be 21 years or older to serve alcohol.

## Cultural Village

Education and learning are key at Peoria Irish Fest. If you are interested in Irish history and culture, this is where you should be. If you want to learn about the Irish, sign up for this position and learn from others. A quick orientation with the Cultural Village exhibits will be required.

## Decorations Assistant

Put the sparkle in Peoria Irish Fest tents and stage areas! Set up is Thursday and Friday before the festival. Decorate stages and tents with artistic canvases, Irish and American flags, backdrop draperies and bunting on stages. Tear down is Sunday evening. This is for volunteers of all ages.

## Entertainment Hospitality

This area requires a special crew working with the Hospitality Manager, Stage Manager and Stage Crew Manager. You will serve as a Host/Hostess to the fest’s Entertainers, meeting, greeting, and catering to the needs of the entertainers in dressing and stage areas, ensuring entertainers are comfortable and have a great experience. You must be able to lift 25 lbs.

## Irish Rovers

These volunteers fill time periods or areas that may otherwise be understaffed. We are looking for flexible volunteers willing to be placed where the need is greatest. If extras are not needed during your scheduled time, you will still receive admission and drink tickets, and will be on call for the duration of your shift.

## Gate Ticket Sellers

You will sell admission tickets to everyone that comes to the festival. You will greet customers, explain ticket prices, collect the appropriate amount of money, and answer questions. This is a fast-paced, seated position and volunteers are able to sit in the shade. The ability to handle cash and use credit card machines is required.

## Gate Ticket Takers

You will meet everyone that enters the festival at the gate. This is a fast-paced position and volunteers will be on their feet for several hours. The main focus is taking tickets from customers and directing them towards the ID check so that they can buy beer, whiskey or wine. Gate Ticket Takers also stamp hands at the exit gate so patrons are able to return.

### **Merchandise Sales**

Help sell artist's merchandise and festival gear, such as CD's, t-shirts, logo apparel and other items that promote Peoria Irish Fest. Volunteers assist patrons with their purchases using musical knowledge, sales skills, and tracking inventory. The ability to handle cash and use credit card machines is required.

### **Setup/Tear Down**

Be part of a team that "builds" Peoria Irish Fest from the ground up, and then packs the fun away for next year. Setup is a physically demanding job that begins Monday of festival week through Friday at the start of the festival. You will move tables/chairs, install signs, set up small tents, hang lights, set up exhibit displays and other details. Must be in good physical shape and able to lift up to 40 lbs. Abilities in construction and use of tools is helpful.

Teardown includes stacking chairs, taking down small tents and exhibits, removing signs and decorations and cleaning up the grounds. Teardown is a physically demanding job beginning at 6:00 P.M. on Sunday and ending on Monday. Must be in good physical shape and able to lift up to 40 lbs. Abilities in construction and use of tools is helpful.

### **Stage Crew**

This crew of volunteers work closely with the Stage Manager. These festival "roadies" literally set the stage for our entertainment venues. You are responsible for ensuring that the entertainers are comfortable and have an amazing experience at Peoria Irish Fest. The Stage Crew Member will assist the Sound Technician with set up and tear down equipment before and after performances as needed, stock stages with refreshments, and keep the stage areas clean. Must be in good physical shape and able to lift up to 40 lbs.

### **Survey Taker**

We want to know who is coming to Peoria Irish Fest! Help us capture the demographics of our festival, how they found out about us, where they came from, and their experience. You will have the freedom to move throughout the fest or may be stationed at the gate and catch people as they leave.

### **Technical/Administrative Support**

These folks provide critical "behind the scenes" support. Technical support volunteers provide IT, Audio-visual, electrical and other technical support to festival functions. Administrative support volunteers provide a variety of support, including office and clerical functions.

### **Volunteer Booth Assistant**

This special crew of volunteers take care of YOU! Peoria Irish Fest would not be possible without the many volunteers that freely give their time and talents to make it happen. In this position, you are the first contact with volunteers. Determine who they are, the position they volunteered for, their schedule and location of work, and direct them to the appropriate area. Volunteers in this area can sit and work in the shade.

### **Wee Ones Area**

The kids at the festival have the most fun because of the great volunteers that help with these activities. Volunteers will lead kids with crafts and assist with games in the Wee One's Area. This is a perfect match for youth volunteers (12 years and up) who want to volunteer at Peoria Irish Fest. Note: Youth Volunteers require a parent/guardian to be present at all times.

## **Supervisory Positions**

The following positions are supervisory and appointed, and cannot be chosen. Persons interested in moving up to one of these positions should contact Krista Naab, Steve Bergquist, or KC Murphy.

- Bar Captain: supervises a particular bar and manages the volunteer staff.
- Beverage Manager: responsible for the overall operation of all bars.
- Cultural Village Manager: responsible for the overall operation of the Cultural Village.
- Event Coordinator: responsible for the overall operation of Peoria Irish Fest.
- Field Coordinator: responsible for the general support of an assigned area by providing whatever assistance may be needed to the bars, tents, etc. within that area, including running supplies and giving volunteers breaks.
- Gate Manager: responsible for the overall operation of admissions, ticket money, information, and anything else related to the Main Gate.
- Logistics Manager: responsible for coordinating setup, tear down, storage, and any logistical functions of Peoria Irish Fest.
- Merchandise Manager: Responsible for coordinating the sale of all merchandise related to Peoria Irish Fest. Responsible for inventory, storage, setup and tear down of the merchandise area.
- Stage Manager: responsible for the overall operation of the stage at an assigned tent.
- Wee Ones Manager: manages the operations of the Wee Ones area.

**Remember: You Make the Difference!!!**

Peoria Irish Fest would be impossible without our outstanding volunteer team! You are our best source of ideas for improvement for future festivals. If you have any suggestions please contact a Peoria Irish Fest Board member, or go to the web site under "contact us" and leave a message. We look forward to your service, feedback and continued support of our festival!

Thank you!

[Peoria Irish Fest](#)