

Peoria Irish Fest - Erin Feis

Volunteer Handbook

Revised 7/13/2017

History of Erin Feis

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

Irish Fest - Erin Feis Board

John L. Martin (john@ErinFeisPeoria.com), with the Saint Patrick Society of Peoria, and Nick Conrad (nconrad@PeoriaParks.org), with the Peoria Park District, co-chair the Irish Fest - Erin Feis Board. Under their leadership, Irish Fest - Erin Feis has become one of the leading Irish Festivals in the Midwest. Today, the Irish Fest - Erin Feis Committee consists of 20+ members, and the committee coordinates activities for all volunteers, now 300+ strong. Volunteers are coordinated by Cheri Ruskusky (volunteer@ErinFeisPeoria.com).

Irish Fest - Erin Feis Volunteers

Festivals like Irish Fest - Erin Feis cannot be successful without the dedication of hundreds of community volunteers- people just like you who donate a few hours of their time and talents. Planning starts 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 River Front Park, all before the gates ever open. The three days of Irish Fest - Erin Feis require ticket takers, stage hands, announcers, and so much more. Then once the final songs are sung and the last jig is danced, everything has to be taken down and packed away until next year.

Many of our volunteers have returned year after year, some signing up whole families or groups. Some have gotten more involved as time goes on. And you don't even have to be Irish! Those who might like to join our crew of volunteers contact our Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@ErinFeisPeoria.com and tell us you want to share in the fun. We'd be thrilled to have you!

Youth Volunteers

Irish Fest - Erin Feis welcomes the assistance of youth volunteers (ages 12-18) in several areas. Volunteers under 18 will need a permission form signed by a parent/guardian in order to volunteer. Youth volunteers will be primarily assigned to the Wee Folk's Area (children's area) and will work under adult supervision. The ability to stand for long periods is required. Other youth volunteers may be scheduled to sell water and soda to patrons at the festival.

Volunteer Get Together

All Volunteers are invited to a Kick-Off Party on the Thursday before Irish Fest - Erin Feis. This is a volunteer appreciation party where you'll get the inside scoop on festival updates and listen to one of the headliner bands. See which volunteer is awarded the "Leprechaun of the Year!" You'll have snacks and beverages. Plus you'll meet old and new friends at this event! Pick up your Volunteer t-shirt, sign waivers as needed, get a program, see this year's souvenirs and get the information on where to report on the day(s) you volunteer. You'll also get the scoop on all the last minute festival news before we open the gates on Friday afternoon. An e-mail will be sent informing all volunteers of when and where the Volunteer Get Together is being held. Keep an eye on your E-mails! Attendance is strongly encouraged.

General Event Information

Festival Hours

Friday: 4:00 p.m. – 11:30 p.m.

Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 11:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Admission Policies

No coolers, food, pets or weapons at the Festival

No skateboards, bicycles or inline skates permitted.

Admission Ticket Information

Adults: \$8 before 5 p.m.; \$10 after 5 p.m.

Weekend Event Pass: \$15

FREE admission on:

- Friday: 4-5 p.m.
- Sunday: from 9:30 a.m. till 11:00 a.m. with a canned good donation.
- Sunday: anyone wearing a kilt.
- All weekend: Children under 12, with adult.

Blarney Bucks/Wrist Band

All alcohol, soda and water must be purchased with Blarney Buck's. All food vendors will accept Blarney Buck's. Blarney Buck's are sold at various locations and cost \$1 per ticket. Sales of tickets will stop ½ hour prior to festival closing. A wrist band is required to identify those who may purchase alcohol. Wrist bands are available at ticket booths. Drink prices are listed below:

- Pint of Domestic Beer: 4 tickets.
- Pint of Import Beer: 5 tickets.
- Wine: 5 tickets.
- Soda or bottled water: 2 tickets.

Payment Methods

Cash or credit cards are accepted for payment. MasterCard and VISA is accepted at the Main Gate, the Blarney Buck's ticket booths and the Entertainer Souvenir booths by O'Neill's Pub and the North 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

Irish Fest - Erin Feis collects non-perishable items for the "St. Vincent DePaul Society" and the "United Presbyterian Church" from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. This food will be distributed to local food pantries. Food items may be dropped at the Main and North Gate entrances and patrons will receive free entry.

Religious Services/Sunday

Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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. The United Presbyterian Church sponsors Celtic Worship services based on the liturgy and music of the Iona Community.

Volunteer Information

Our volunteers make the festival an experience!

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

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

Enthusiasm: smile; have fun yourself.

Attention: welcome our guests; be there.

Make their day: exceed expectations.

Volunteer Check-In Procedure

On-site orientation of volunteers is essential for providing a cohesive volunteer program. One-half (1/2) hour before your shift, orientation will be provided to develop necessary skills and a positive image at the festival. Additional training will be provided for more technical volunteer positions.

Key volunteer information is as follows:

- On the day you are scheduled leave early enough to allow Travel and Parking Time. There is no special parking identified for Volunteers. See the Irish Fest - Erin Feis website to locate parking near the festival area.
- It is critical that all volunteers check in at the Volunteer Booth at least 30 minutes before the start of your shift. The Booth is located off to the left on the sidewalk, before entering the Main Gate.
- After checking in, proceed to the “Volunteer Orientation Booth” right across from the Check-in Booth.
- During orientation you will receive any last minute instructions, review the “Program” which you should carry with you to assist in answering questions from patrons. Sign any waivers or complete any paperwork. After orientation 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 re-placement 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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 all the fun they have and the terrific entertainment, music, food and drink. Those who volunteer for projects prior to the festival also receive the same.

Dress Code

Your name tag 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 comfortable but modestly. Shorts are always a good choice. Dress for your own comfort, but keep common sense and safety in mind. 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: Cheri Ruskusky, Volunteer Coordinator, at 309-685-9585 prior to the festival and 309-643-3820 during the festival.

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 your Field coordinator, Irish Fest - Erin Feis Board member or a Peoria Park District Staff

No-Show Volunteers

A volunteer who does not report for their assigned shift and does not call or make an effort to notify the Volunteer Coordinator of the extenuating circumstance will be removed from the Master Volunteer list for the following year's festival. The volunteer should notify the Volunteer Coordinator by calling Cheri Ruskusky at 309-643-3820.

Excusing Volunteers

All Irish Fest - Erin Feis volunteers serve "at will" and Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis will be selected by the Chairperson with the Board of Directors, specifically for the Cash Office, Ticket Office, and Blarney Bucks positions. 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis mission. Volunteers are expected to report to the Volunteer Check-in booth sober. If, in the opinion of the Volunteer Coordinator or her successor, a volunteer is not sober, s/he will be removed from the schedule and sent home.

In accordance with Health Department rules, volunteers may not drink alcohol or other beverages in the working area during the 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 the Field Coordinator or other Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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 the Field Coordinator or other Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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

Rain or shine, please report to the Volunteer Booth to confirm your assignment. The need for volunteer help sometimes increases during inclement weather. If conditions become threatening, the Board of Directors/Field Coordinators will determine if and when the Emergency Evacuation Plan should be activated.

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 beer trailers 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 the Field Coordinator assigned to your area, police officer or any Irish Fest - Erin Feis Board member. Since time is very important in all injuries please do not hesitate to take action.

In case an emergency arises, please contact your Manager or Coordinator assigned to your location. If they are not immediately available contact the Field Coordinator assigned to your area, police officer or any Irish Fest - Erin Feis Board member. They will call for emergency assistance as needed.

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 tell your location manager of the problem. Make sure you retain the parent who reported the missing child. Either you or the manager should then take 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, please retain the child by your side and take them to the Riverfront office in the Gateway Building where security will be notified.

Lost or Missing Items

Customer Service is #1 at Irish Fest - Erin Feis.

Volunteers who are given lost & found items should immediately tell their location manager of the situation and then take those items to the Riverfront Office located in the Gateway Building. Similarly, if a patron is trying to locate a lost item they should be directed to contact the Riverfront Office.

Volunteer Positions

Volunteer Sign-Up

Sign-up on-line at www.ErinFeisPeoria.com. Select Volunteer and Sign-Up!!

All volunteers sign up via the Irish Fest - Erin Feis on-line 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.**

Bar Server

These volunteers will be serving soda, water, or alcoholic beverages (or as they say in Ireland, “a Pint,”) to thousands of thirsty Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis. 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.

Blarney Buck Sellers

Outgoing personalities with great cash handling and/or credit card skills are needed to sell the Irish Fest - Erin Feis currency to our patrons. Blarney Bucks are used to purchase all beverages and are accepted by all food vendors. Some Blarney Buck Seller positions are available in ticket booths. Volunteers must be 21 years or older because Blarney Bucks are used to purchase alcohol.

Cultural Village

Education and learning is key at Irish Fest - Erin Feis. If you are an “expert” on Irish history/culture...this is where you want to be. If you want to learn about the Irish, sign up for this position and learn from others. A quick introduction to the Cultural Village exhibits will be required.

Decorations Assistant

Put the sparkle in Irish Fest - Erin Feis tents and stage areas! Set up is Thursday and Friday prior to 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 is reserved for a special crew working with the Hospitality Coordinator, Stage Manager and Stage Crew Manager. You will serve as a Host/Hostess to Irish Fest - Erin Feis Entertainers. Volunteers will meet, greet and cater to the needs of the entertainers in Dressing and Stage areas insuring entertainers are comfortable and have a good experience. You must be able to lift 25 lbs.

Extras

These volunteers fill time periods or areas that may otherwise go 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

This is a great job! Sellers get to 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 position and volunteers are able to sit in the shade. The ability to handle cash and use credit card machines is helpful.

Gate Ticket Takers

This is a great job! You get to meet everyone that comes to 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 paid customers, distribute programs and remind of the need for a wristband to buy beer, whiskey or wine. Gate Ticket Takers also stamp hands at the exit gate so a patron can return.

Merchandise Sales

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

Setup/Tear Down

Be part of a team that "builds" Irish Fest - Erin Feis from the bottom up, and/or packs the fun away for next year. Setup is a physically demanding job that begins Wednesday of festival week through Friday the start of the festival. You will move tables/chairs, install signs, position trash containers, set up small tents, put up tent sides, hang tent 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.

Shuttle Cart Driver

Get the lead out! These positions drive shuttle carts that transport Irish Fest - Erin Feis patrons, volunteers, and materials, as needed.

Stage Crew

This crew of volunteers works closely with the Stage Manager. These Irish Fest - Erin Feis "roadies" literally set the stage for our entertainment venues. You are responsible for ensuring that the entertainers are comfortable and have a good experience at Irish Fest - Erin Feis. The Stage Crew Member will assist the Sound Technician with set up and tear down equipment before and after performances, stock stages with water and beverages, and keep stage and back 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis! 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 takes care of YOU! Irish Fest - Erin Feis would not be possible without the many volunteers that freely give their time and talents to make Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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. Keep records of those checking-in on the Master Schedule. Volunteers in this area can sit and work in the shade.

Wee One's Area

The kids at Irish Fest - Erin Feis have the most fun, and that's 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 Irish Fest - Erin Feis while their parents are working in another location!

Supervisory Positions

The following positions are supervisory and cannot be chosen. Persons interested in moving up to one of these positions should contact Volunteer Coordinator Cheri Ruskusky or Event Co-Chair John Martin.

- Bar Captain: supervises a particular shift of Bar Servers.
- Beverage Manager: responsible for the overall operation of an assigned bar.
- Cultural Village Manager: responsible for the overall operation of the Cultural Village.
- Event Coordinator: responsible for the overall operation of Irish Fest - Erin Feis.
- 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 Captain: supervises a particular shift of ticket sellers.
- Gate Manager: responsible for the overall operation of both North and Main gates.
- Head Cashier: responsible for the cash management of the festival.
- Logistics Manager: responsible for coordinating the logistical functions of Irish Fest - Erin Feis.
- Merchandise Manager: responsible for coordinating all merchandise sales at Irish Fest - Erin Feis.
- Stage Manager: responsible for the overall operation of the stage at an assigned tent.
- Trainer: reviews and updates operational procedure with volunteers.
- Wee Ones Manager: manages the operations of the Wee Ones area.

Remember: You Make the Difference!!!

Irish Fest - Erin Feis would be impossible without our outstanding volunteer team! You are our Best source of ideas for improvement of future festivals. If you have any suggestions please contact an Irish Fest - Erin Feis 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 the Irish Fest - Erin Feis.

Thank you!

www.ErinFeisPeoria.com