



# Origins Game Fair Volunteer Handbook 2024

Volunteers are a vital part of Origins Game Fair. They are essential to bring Origins to life! Many volunteers have been with us for years. New or old, we value each and every volunteer for their hard work and dedication to the show.

This handbook will provide you with the basics of volunteering, show policies, and helpful information about the show.

## Why Volunteer?

People volunteer for many reasons. They believe in Origins and want to help make it the best event it can be for attendees. We have the best community of volunteers, many of our volunteers have been working together for years and only see each other at Origins. And of course the PERKS, being able to offset some of the cost to attend Origins. Then there is the volunteer party after the convention, where we distribute swag to volunteers who have given more than 16 hours of their time to Origins.

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## **General Volunteer Information**

In this section you will find the information on how to apply, and what is required.

### **How do I sign up to be an Origins Volunteer?**

- To volunteer you will need a Tabletop.events account. On the Origins Game Fair 2024 Tabletop.event there is an option for [volunteering](#) on the bar at the top. There you will answer some questions and select the shifts you would most like to have.
- Please only sign up for your first choice shifts, if you sign up for more than you want, we will have no idea which are your top choices.
- Note: Selecting the shift does not guarantee the shift. We frequently get more volunteers for a shift than are needed. The shift needs to be approved before it is official.

### **Do I need any special qualifications to be a volunteer?**

- All volunteers are expected to be courteous, professional, and eager to help. We have positions available for any skill set. The main requirement is customer service. All volunteer positions work with attendees in some manner. Some positions have more contact than others.
- All volunteers do need to pass a basic background check.
- To help volunteers arrive at the show armed with basic information we will be scheduling at least one Volunteer Zoom Call and one Lead Volunteer Zoom Call, hopefully more.

### **What does the background check consist of?**

- The background check is a very basic check. Volunteers will get an email from Corescreening, fill it out and return it to Corescreening. GAMA does not receive your social security number and only receives basic public record information.

### **If I want to Volunteer, should I buy a badge?**

- No, a volunteer badge will be assigned to your Tabletop.events account (TTE) after your volunteer hours have been approved. Any badges purchased before receiving your volunteer badge will be subject to the refund fees laid out during the registration process.
- If you earn day badges they will be for the days you are volunteering.

### **How do I get my badge on my Tabletop account if I volunteer?**

- After shifts have been approved and the background check returned a badge will be applied to your Tabletopevents.com account. You can view your badge under Attend.
- If for any reason Origins sells out one or all the days of the convention, Volunteer badges are still included. Don't worry!
- If you have requested an additional badge as one of your perks you will be sent a code to use in Tabletop.events.
- If you have volunteered for less than 16 hours you have the option of receiving a 30% discount on a full show badge instead of receiving a day badge.

### **What is a volunteer lead and how do I become one**

- Volunteer Leads are usually volunteers that have worked with us in the past and have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills. They are appointed positions that are in charge of specific areas at the show. They are the starting line of defense in any area, and the first people you ask when you have a question in that area. Volunteer leads handle many things including fielding attendee questions and managing their volunteer teams. If you are an Origins volunteer fitting this criteria and are interested in becoming a Volunteer Lead, please email Cynthia Tuck (Events Coordinator - [cynthia.tuck@gama.org](mailto:cynthia.tuck@gama.org)). If a position becomes available you could be considered, volunteer lead positions do not become available often but we can't offer if we don't know you are interested.

### **Are Game Masters considered volunteers?**

- Game Masters run specific games at the show and are not considered part of the volunteer program. To become a GM please visit the GM section of the website.

### **Can my child volunteer?**

- Due to insurance and the requirement of a background check for all GAMA volunteers we require our volunteers to be over the age of 18.

### **Can I sign up to volunteer on-site?**

- NO. All volunteers must sign up in advance to submit to a background check and be placed in an area to work. We can no longer accept on-site volunteer signups.

## **Information on Volunteer Shifts**

This section deals with how shifts are created and tips on selecting a shift and making a schedule.

### **How are shifts set up for Volunteers?**

- The volunteer shift schedule is set up based on the needs of the area..
- Shifts are usually 4 hours long. Occasionally a position requires a 6 hour shift. These shifts tend to be very easy positions.
- Whenever possible we structure the shifts to have an overlap so when there is a shift change not everyone leaves at once. **You may not have shifts that overlap.**
- If you are unable to make your scheduled shift for any reason, please contact the volunteer coordinator immediately.
- Volunteer Lead shifts are scheduled differently. We build the volunteer lead schedule together with the volunteer leads in the area since their shift length varies.

### **Should I volunteer all my shifts in one area?**

- That is individual preference. Some people like to move around, some like to be in one area. Multiple shifts in an area doesn't require training with each shift so priority is given to multiple shifts in an area.

### **How are Volunteer shifts approved?**

- While we do value all volunteers equally there are a variety of different things that go into approving shifts to make a workable schedule.
- When approving volunteer shifts volunteers who have more overall hours or all hours in one location are prioritized. This allows the volunteers who are trying to reach a higher perk level to build a schedule.
- We often just roll a die! If you don't get an assignment you were looking for, it is nothing personal. It is possible it just came down to a roll of the die. Please request a different position.

### **Does my shift get a break?**

- If you need a bathroom break, please advise your volunteer lead, and go. We ask that you don't wait until the last minute. We do not want the desk unattended because everyone needs to talk to mother nature at once. Please remember the rest of your team will be expecting your return. A bathroom break is not the time to wander the rest of the convention or to have a cigarette/Vape.
- While we try to give 30 minute breaks when someone has two back to back shifts in the same area things can get crazy and they get overlooked. If you want to assure a break please plan one in your schedule.
- If you have a set time that you **MUST** eat or be somewhere, please do not schedule a shift for that time span. While we will do our best to accommodate you, we cannot guarantee any specific time slots for breaks.

### **Perks, Perks and more Perks**

Perks are how Origins show appreciation to Volunteers. The more you volunteer the more perks you earn. The perks cap out with what we offer our volunteer leads. This section gives extra information on the [perks](#) offered.

### **I have volunteered under 16 hours, how do I get the discount on a full show badge instead of just a day badge?**

- Once your shifts have been approved Email Cynthia, [cynthia.tuck@gama.org](mailto:cynthia.tuck@gama.org), and she will email you a discount code to use to purchase a full show badge instead of the day badge for the days you are working / selected.

### **How will my 10% off at the Origins Store Work?**

- Each volunteer will receive one coupon good for 10% off the total purchase, once, at the Origins Store. You must use credit or debit to use the 10% off.

### **What are the optional perks?**

- Optional perks are additional benefits you can earn along with the automatic perks including badge. We realize not all volunteers are the same. We allow you to choose which benefit works best for your life. Volunteers working 32 or more hours will receive two optional perks, they must be different options except for badges, you may choose

the additional badge option twice. Note: Hotels placed by Origins are limited, have a deadline and are provided on a first-come basis.

### **What does ½ of a hotel room mean?**

- If you have earned the perk of ½ of a hotel room, it means that Origins will place you into a hotel room with another volunteers.
- We do our best to place you with people you know. We send a volunteer perk request form and ask if you have another volunteer you want to room with. This is a great reason to encourage friends to volunteer.
- Hotel rooms for volunteers are check in on Wednesday and check out on Sunday morning. Typical hotel check in time is 3pm and check out is 11am. Hotel check in & out times may vary, so be sure to check their website or give them a call to check.
- Volunteer leads can request the check in date of Tuesday night.
- Parking is **not** included with your hotel room
- Deadline for a volunteer hotel room is May 1, 2024.

### **What if I select the Hotel Stipend?**

- GAMA will reimburse you the flat fee mentioned in perk rewards towards your hotel. **YOU MUST MAKE YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS.** GAMA takes no responsibility to ensure you have a room. As with the food stipend, you will receive this reimbursement after completing all your shifts and turning in your timesheet.

### **If I earn a partial hotel room, can I pay the difference for the rest of the room?**

- No. If you would like a room to yourself, please select the hotel reimbursement and book your own hotel room. GAMA has a limited number of rooms we reserve for our Volunteers and GM's. One person per room could contribute to not having enough rooms for everyone.

### **Is parking paid for as part of the hotel?**

- No. Parking connected with hotels is not covered in our perks. If you qualify for a parking pass it is not in a lot connected to the hotel.

### **How do parking passes work?**

- If you choose the parking pass option, you will be given the choice of 5 single day parking passes or one pass good for 5 days.
- The one-day parking pass will **ONLY** be good for up to 24 hours. If your car remains parked for over 24 hours the pass will no longer be valid. If you overstay your parking pass, you will be responsible for any additional charges.
- Replacement passes for multiple days will not be issued.
- Parking passes are generally good at the following locations but verify when picking up.
  - South Garage
  - Goodale Garage
  - Vine Garage
  - North Surface Lot
  - East Surface Lot

### **Does my parking pass have in and out privileges?**

- No. Currently none of the parking passes allow for coming and going at will.

### **What is the Food Reimbursement?**

- We realize volunteering can be hungry work and you need sustenance to survive. The food stipend will help reimburse some of the expense of food. Reimbursement will be provided in check form after all your shifts have been completed.

### **When do I pick up my check for any monetary perks?**

- You pick up your check as you turn in your timesheet. Checks may not be ready until Sunday morning. If you have not received a check do not sign the pick up form.
- Any issues involving monetary perks must be addressed within 30 days of the convention.

### **What happens at the Volunteer Appreciation Party?**

- The appreciation party is where we show our volunteers how much they mean to us by distributing games provided by sponsoring companies, and our continued gratitude for all your hard work. The party takes place after the close of the convention, usually at around 6pm on Sunday. Once all the signs have been taken down and the majority of the supplies in the packing room, the party begins!
- The party has evolved over the years and due to Covid and volunteers wanting to get home it is more of a festive give away than an actual party.
- We structure the give away selection starting with the number of hours volunteered, and then the number of years they have been volunteering. A few exceptions are made for volunteers who have earned a special token.

## **At the Show**

This section covers things you need to know as a volunteer at the show!

- Volunteers need to arrive early enough to the convention to go through the Scan and Go registration and pick up their supplies from the Info Booth / Help Desk.

### **What is the dress code for Volunteering**

- Volunteers shall maintain a neat, professional and dignified appearance. Gamer Nice.
- Practice personal hygiene – come to work clean, wash hands
- Wear your Origins Volunteer T-shirt
- Bottoms should be clean, neat, and not ripped up. Shorts or skirts are acceptable but should be at least knee length.
- Shoes should be appropriate for the position you are in. Example: If you are in the exhibit hall during setup wear closed toe shoes. It is a construction zone as booths are created. Comfortable, flat shoes are always recommended.
- Absolutely no explicit words or images on clothing.
- Refrain from clothing or accessories with political party affiliation while volunteering.
- Remember there is no smoking or vaping permitted in the Convention Center.

## **Customer Service**

- Please remember while you are wearing a volunteer shirt you are a representative of Origins.
- Not everything at Origins is to everyone's taste. As a volunteer, you do not have to promote something you do not like or understand but you must refrain from criticizing it to attendees.
- Exhibitors are an intricate part of the show. While you are wearing your volunteer shirt please do not criticize an exhibitor or their pricing.

## **Where do I pick up my badge and supplies?**

- You will pick up your badge at registration just like all attendees. Your T-shirt, time sheet and any other information needed will be picked up at the Help Desk. Registration is on the north end of the convention center by Goodale Ave, and the giant head. The Help Desk is near Exhibit Hall B in a roll up window.

## **Do I need to get my time sheet signed off?**

- Yes. You will turn in your time sheet after your last shift to get any perks you have earned. Having your time sheet signed by a volunteer lead shows you were at your shift. Your shifts will need to be signed off on to receive any after shift perks.
- Volunteer leads, please use your time sheet to designate if that shift was well staffed for use in determining needs for next year.

## **What if I work extra hours?**

- Extra hours should be approved by a lead volunteer and entered at the bottom of your time sheet as a new shift, even if it is just an hour. If your extra time boosts, you into a different perk bracket GAMA will reconcile the difference in the food stipend and parking after Origins closes and contact you. Please put your address on your time sheet.

## **Is water provided?**

- In an effort to cut down on plastic waste, Origins will provide water bottles that can be refilled at one of the many fill stations in the GCCC.

## **Can I bring a beverage or snack with me to my shift?**

- We encourage everyone to keep a water bottle and stay hydrated during the convention! We do ask that water bottles and other beverages are kept under the table.
- Snacks are permitted during slow times in your shift. Check with your volunteer lead if the time is correct to step away for a snack.
- While snacks are permitted, please use your break to eat your meal. Please be careful not to spill on any equipment or paperwork and clean up after yourself.

## **Will I be able to sit down during my shift?**

- That entirely depends on what position you have volunteered for. Many shifts are a mix of sitting and getting up to help attendees. We want to make sure you have a position that fits your physical needs. Please look at the description of the position and if you have any questions email [Cynthia.tuck@gama.org](mailto:Cynthia.tuck@gama.org)



**What if I have a problem?**

- During the convention, start with your volunteer lead. The lead is the first line of defense and generally has answers!
- You can always go to Cynthia. She is generally easy to find at Registration. Her cell phone number is 330-730-9357. Texts usually work best, but calling is an option.
- If you can't get ahold of Cynthia, the help desk has contact numbers for the rest of the Origins staff.
- If you have a problem not during the dates of the convention, contact Cynthia.  
[cynthia.tuck@gama.org](mailto:cynthia.tuck@gama.org)

