

Volunteer Policy

IDFA 2026

12–22 November



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Introduction

Welcome to IDFA

Thank you for choosing to work with us on the biggest documentary film festival in the world. It would not be possible to organize the festival without the help of the more than 500 volunteers who work with us each year. Unlike the paid staff, the working relationship between volunteers and staff is not legally regulated. The purpose of this document is to inform you of the way of working, rights and obligations involved. Volunteers can expect IDFA to observe the rights of volunteers and to keep to its agreements. IDFA must be able to count on its volunteers to do the same. Should you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or the volunteer coordinators.

1. The Basics

1.1 Aims

The reason IDFA works with volunteers is that this line of work enables us to achieve our organisational aims. As the volunteers are drawn from a wide range of individual backgrounds, we are also able to appeal to a broad target audience. Alongside these organisational aims, IDFA offers volunteers the opportunity to broaden their own horizons: meeting new people, obtaining work experience and undergoing personal development. In addition, the volunteer can benefit from watching the best documentaries made during the past year.

1.2 Definition of volunteer work

Working for IDFA as a volunteer is not obligatory but does involve a certain level of commitment. We appreciate and respect the work of volunteers and rely on them. Volunteering to work for IDFA is a great choice for a number of reasons, such as:

- Enjoying the type of work
- Wanting to get to know the organisation
- Wanting to take on responsibilities
- Gaining work experience
- Expressing support for IDFA
- Contributing to the cultural life of the city of Amsterdam

1.3 Our vision for volunteers

When performing their work, IDFA volunteers are a part of the organisation, and are treated as such. The volunteers represent IDFA during the festival. IDFA is responsible for supervising and supporting its volunteers in the event of uncertainties or problems. Each volunteer has their own unique competences and way of working. IDFA works hard to take this into account when selecting volunteers and allocating tasks. Although the volunteers do not receive any financial payment, we do reward their efforts in other ways. IDFA considers it very important to receive feedback from its volunteers; this enables us to continue to grow and develop. Volunteers wishing to give feedback should do so via their immediate supervisor or volunteer's coordinator.

1.4 Anti-discrimination Act

IDFA adheres to the statutory principle of non-discrimination, as laid down in Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution: discrimination is forbidden. The law states, verbatim:

"All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances.

Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or gender or on other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.”

The law specifies a total of twelve grounds for discrimination: race, gender, sexual orientation, political convictions, religion, philosophy of life, disability or chronic illness, civil status, age, nationality, working hours (full time or part time) and type of contract (permanent or temporary). If you experience illegal discrimination on one of the above grounds, please contact the volunteer’s coordinators about this, and they will handle the issue accordingly. For more information on IDFA’s Code of Conduct, you can read more [here](#).

2. The position of the volunteer within the organization

2.1 Responsibility for volunteer policy

The volunteer coordinators are responsible for monitoring and implementing IDFA’s volunteer policy. This policy was drawn up in cooperation with all the staff, based on a desire to create a single vision for the organisation.

2.2 Coordination

During recruiting and selection, the volunteer’s coordinators carry out the coordination of the volunteers. Once a volunteer is selected for a team, a separate coordinator is responsible for each team. In the case of escalating conflicts, assistance will be sought from the volunteer coordinators.

2.3 Rights

Every volunteer that sticks to the obligations stated in 2.4, are entitled to the following benefits:

- A crew pass that entitles you to special volunteer activities. The crew pass also serves to make yourself recognisable at the festival. The crew pass will give you access to all regular shows of IDFA (unless it is sold out).
- Lunch when working a morning/afternoon shift, dinner when working an afternoon/evening shift. Shifts that start at 7 pm or later do not carry this entitlement.
- Coffee and tea during your shift.
- An IDFA T-shirt.
- Travelling expenses within the Netherlands if applicable (see expenses).

2.4 Obligations

To make a claim to the rights stated in 2.3, volunteers are held to the following commitments:

- Shifts are arranged in coordination with the volunteer coordinator. Although we would encourage volunteers to complete at least 7 shifts in order to experience the festival fully and acquire the full access pass, we are happy to work with volunteers that can work less than 7 shifts. In this case each shift completed is awarded with a ticket voucher.
- You have filled out the volunteer’s entry form online (www.idfa.nl/volunteers) and sent us photo. **Before your first shift, we must have seen your passport or ID, and you are obligated to have your ID on you during your shifts. Volunteers from outside the European Union, need to upload a copy of their work permit for the Netherlands as well.**
- You stick to the agreements made concerning your shifts. In case you cannot attend your agreed shift, we expect you to inform us in a timely manner.
- You are friendly, helpful, and positive to our (professional) audiences.
- You wear your IDFA T-shirt and crew-badge during your shifts.
- IDFA is a guest at all festival locations. Therefore, we expect all staff, crew, and volunteers to remain respectful towards the location we are working with.

3. Job descriptions

3.1 Jobs and criteria

Below is a list of volunteer jobs at IDFA that are available to non-Dutch speaking volunteers, stating the competencies you should have to carry out each job as required, and the competencies you can develop within the job. If you speak Dutch, there are more jobs available. Job descriptions for Dutch speaking volunteers can be found in the Dutch Volunteers Policy, also available on our website.

Volunteer teams

Read all about our volunteer positions below. Once you have applied to become a volunteer, we will keep you updated of any changes via e-mail.

Jobs and criteria

Below is a list of volunteer jobs at IDFA that are available to **non-Dutch speaking volunteers**, stating the competencies you should have to carry out each job as required, and the skills you can develop within the job. If you speak Dutch, there are more jobs available. Job descriptions for Dutch speaking volunteers can be found in the Dutch Volunteers Policy, also available on our website.

A-team

The A-team is especially busy in the days before the start of festival with building up our locations. Their tasks include moving furniture, putting up signing and decorations, delivering things to different festival locations, and much more. During the festival they mostly help setting up for events at various festival locations, and after the festival they take everything down.

The A-team is a very close group of enthusiastic volunteers who love working hard. We are looking for flexible team players who are inventive, practical, and do not shy away from physical work.

Shifts: The A-team is active from **Friday the 30th of October until Monday November 23rd**. The A-team does not work in shifts, but full days. It is best if you are available the whole day, the A-team coordinator will tell you when they need you throughout the day. During the festival you are free to go and watch films in-between jobs.

Competences: This job allows you to develop your teamwork skills and gives an insight into the resources that go into making the festival work.

Car services

The drivers take care of transportation for the guests before, during, and after the festival between Schiphol/Amsterdam Central and the festival hotels or IDFA locations. Besides transporting our guests, car services volunteers are also used for all kinds of rides for the festival.

To be eligible, you must have held a driver's license for at least three years and have sufficient driving experience. As a driver, you need to have a strong sense of responsibility and be presentable, socially skilled, flexible, and proficiency in English is a must.

Period: The car services drivers will be deployed between **November 9th and November 21st**. Shifts will be adjusted according to scheduled rides and will take place throughout the

day.

Competences: In this role, you may encounter festival guests from various cultural backgrounds.

Distribution team

As part of the Distribution team, your responsibilities include ensuring that all our festival locations are stocked up with our festival publications. With your team you are responsible for stocking up, refilling, and checking that there is always a sufficient supply of our publications at all festival venues.

Shifts: The distribution team is active throughout the festival from the **13th till the 22nd of November**, mostly in the morning. On the first day of the festival the whole team works from 10:00 till 16:00, on the other days you will work in shifts.

Requirements: sense of responsibility, flexibility, fast worker, alert and good physical condition. This position also requires confidence with riding a cargo-bike (bakfiets) around Amsterdam.

Competences: This job allows you to develop in teamwork and organisational skills.

DocLab crew

As a DocLab volunteer, you will spend most of your time at the exhibition. Your responsibilities will include welcoming our visitors and telling visitors about the different interactive and digital documentary projects in the exhibition. You will receive special training before your first shift. It is important that you attend this training.

Shifts: A DocLab volunteer is needed on every day of the DocLab exhibition (dates are to be confirmed). DocLab has morning, afternoon and evening shifts.

Requirements: You should be social and friendly, speak English well and have no fear of technology. Affinity with emerging media or virtual reality is a definite plus. Please note that special technical knowledge is not required.

Competences: At DocLab, you can expand your knowledge of emerging media and virtual reality, as well as pioneering documentary storytelling formats and improve your presentation skills.

DocLab VR crew

As part of the DocLab VR crew, you will spend most of your time with different VR experiences. Your responsibilities will include welcoming our visitors, guiding them through the VR experience, occasional troubleshooting, and telling visitors about the different interactive and digital projects. You will receive special training before your first shift. It is essential that you attend this training.

Shifts: The Doclab VR crew is needed every day of the DocLab exhibition and there are morning, afternoon and evening shifts available.

Requirements: You should be social and friendly, speak English well and be curious to work with new technologies like VR. The ability to quickly identify technical issues is important, and experience with digital art, gaming, and/or virtual reality is a definite plus.

Competences: At DocLab, you can expand your knowledge of virtual reality, as well as pioneering documentary storytelling formats and improve your presentation skills.

Flex team

Flex team members are assigned to various positions. During the festival you will fill in for sick volunteers, perform courier tasks and get assigned to last-minute jobs such as event usher and manning the volunteer desk. Flex team members also handle the distribution of catering to the various venues.

Shifts: The Flex team is active throughout the festival (**12-22 November 2026**). There are morning, afternoon and evening shifts.

Requirements: You are service-oriented, flexible, an effective communicator, have a good command of English, are in good physical shape and able to think on your feet.

Competences: Depending on the various jobs you get assigned to, this position is a great opportunity to experience different aspects of the festival and develop a plethora of skills, among which your sense of responsibility and your skills as a team player.

Guest desk

The Guest Desk is the first place our 3000+ (international) professional guests visit when they arrive at the festival. Your most important task is to make our guests feel welcome. You will be handing out guest passes, supplying guests with relevant information about the festival and the city of Amsterdam and fielding any questions they might have about their stay at IDFA.

Shifts: The Guest Desk is open from **Wednesday November 11th till Thursday November 19th** and has multiple shifts per day between 09:00 and 21:00.

Requirements: You are an effective communicator, good with computers, able to improvise, service-oriented and have an excellent command of English.

Industry Crew

Are you interested in getting insight into the industry and business side of documentaries? As Industry Crew, you will be helping our team at Docs for Sale, IDFA Forum or IDFAcademy – IDFA's professional development and networking events. You will help prepare for the events (setting up the venue, filling goodie bags for registered guests), welcoming international guests and guiding them at the venue, sourcing questions, offering production assistance and keeping the venue neat and clean.

Requirements: You are an effective communicator, service minded, able to improvise and have an excellent command of English (most of our guests attending these events are international). Good computer skills are also needed for some roles.

The shifts will depend on the event you're working on. DfS have morning/afternoon and afternoon/evening shifts. It is best if you are available for all the days of the event. At IDFAcademy and Forum you will ideally work the full days of the events, and a shift in preparation of the event.

Competences: In this position, you can develop skills in terms of teamwork, people coordination, and hospitality. As a volunteer you are part of a bigger team of volunteers. You will gain insight into the importance of IDFA for documentary professionals and will see first-hand how industry events at IDFA function. It's great if you have an interest in or

understanding of the broader media field, as this will help guide our guests. These roles are service oriented and are an invaluable part of the production of the event. Therefore, there is no room for personal networking with our professional guests within these volunteer roles.

Poster crew

The poster crew is responsible for decorating the festival locations with film posters, updating public bulletin boards and distributing flyers. Because there is limited space for film posters, these need to be changed daily. The Poster team is active throughout the festival (**11th till 22nd of November**). There are morning and afternoon shifts, but you will mostly work in the morning. On the first festival day (November 12th) everyone works from 10:00 – 16:00.

Requirements: sense of responsibility, flexibility, fast worker, alert and good physical condition. This function requires a feeling of confidence with riding a bike around Amsterdam.

Competences: This job allows you to develop insight into the resources needed to promote the festival and inform our visitors.

Theatre crew

As a theater crew member, you are part of the largest group of volunteers. You'll be helping at our festival venues making sure that all screenings run smoothly. During your shift, the location or floor manager will assign you to one of the following tasks:

- scanning tickets,
- problem solving related to ticket scanning,
- upkeep of the screening rooms in between screenings,
- making sure the audience finds their way around the venue,
- and other small production-related jobs in the theater.

Shifts: The theatre crew is active throughout the festival (**12th till the 22nd of November**) and has morning, afternoon and evening shifts

Requirements: You are an effective communicator, helpful, service-minded and speak English very well. Attending the emergency and scan training for theater staff the Saturday before the festival is mandatory.

Competences: This position will allow you to develop skills in collaboration and communication.

4. Registration and getting to know IDFA

4.1 Recruitment and selection

The knowledge and skills of new volunteers are assessed based on an introductory interview with the volunteer's coordinator. The criteria for the various jobs are stated under 3.1. The volunteer is then assigned a team on basis of this information and their preference. Volunteers that have worked for the festival on previous occasions do not need to attend such an introductory interview at the office. After the selection, all volunteers must attend the instruction meeting for their team.

4.2 Job instruction

A team instruction meeting for some teams will be organized prior to the festival. During this meeting you will meet your coordinator and colleagues. The coordinator will give you a

job instruction and your schedule. You will also receive a printed instruction to read at home before your first shift. Attendance to this team instruction meeting is *mandatory*.

Each volunteer receives a volunteers' manual and is given the opportunity to ask questions during the meetings and by mail. Changes made after the manuals are given out will be passed on verbally or by email during the festival. Specific topics not covered by the manual can also be covered verbally or by email.

4.3 Safety training

Shortly before the festival – usually on the Saturday prior to the opening – an emergency training session is held. As the theatre crew, flex crew, floor and location managers in the cinemas are the public's first point of contact, they must be aware of what to do in the event of emergencies. At the festival locations, there is always sufficient staff on hand to act in the event of emergencies.

5. Information and consultation

5.1 Instructions

You will be given the relevant instructions for your tasks as a volunteer. These will be issued during the job instruction meeting for your job. Please make sure you have read the instruction manual before your first shift. These (if needed) will be provided in the final days before the festival starts. For certain teams there will be training sessions that will take place before the festival starts. For any questions you can always reach out to the location managers that are present during your shift or the volunteer coordinators.

5.2 Disputes

In the event of disputes between a volunteer and the location manager or team coordinator, please inform the volunteer's coordinators. They can speak to both parties and find a solution. If there's a dispute between the volunteer and the volunteer's coordinators, you can inform your location manager or team coordinator. When you find it hard to come to a solution with either your coordinator or the volunteer's coordinator, you can contact the production coordinator, Laura Springer at lauraspringer@idfa.nl.

5.3 Feedback

We are very interested in feedback from volunteers on the festival organization and their job. You can give your feedback verbally or in writing to your coordinator or the volunteer's coordinator. It is good to know that sometimes it is impossible to process feedback on the spot; we cannot change tasks for a certain position for large groups of volunteers during the festival.

6. Expenses

6.1 Travel expenses

Volunteers can claim their travel expenses to and from their home within the Netherlands based on the cheapest second-class rate charged by NS (Dutch Railways). Travel costs to Amsterdam *from outside the Netherlands*, cannot be reimbursed. Costs for transportation will only be reimbursed if they were necessary to get to their shift. To be able to make a declaration of travel expenses, you must hand in an expense form obtained from the volunteer's coordinator, accompanied by the original tickets (train tickets, print-out from the OV-chip card, ovpay travel declaration). Please note that printouts from the OV chip card cannot be made if you have an anonymous chip card. Expense forms and tickets must be submitted before **December 2nd, 2026**.

Travel costs by car will not be reimbursed.

Travelling expenses and other reimbursements cannot exceed €220 per month or €2200 per year. Otherwise, you need to inform the Dutch tax agency.

6.2 Other reimbursements

Some volunteer jobs require a lot of responsibility and availability. They are rewarded with a modest volunteer fee. A volunteer's fee is free from taxes, when it doesn't exceed €220 per month or €2200 per year, including travel expenses.

Reimbursement of other than travel costs will not take place, unless agreed upon in writing by the volunteer's coordinator. Declarations of OV bikes, food or drinks, parking costs and telephone costs will not be accepted, unless accompanied by written permission by the volunteer's coordinator (and a declaration form, original receipts or invoices, before December 2nd, 2026).

7. Insurance

7.1 Types of insurance

IDFA has liability insurance to cover its volunteers. This insurance can be called upon if IDFA is held liable for something caused by a volunteer while they were working for IDFA. Liability for damages will be assessed on a case-by-case basis; in some cases, a volunteer may have recourse to their own third-party liability insurance. In the latter case, if they are insufficiently insured, the volunteer may also have recourse to the Amsterdamse vrijwilligersverzekering.

IDFA is not responsible for loss or theft of personal belongings of volunteers. Don't leave valuables unattended in public areas, do not bring laptops, cameras, or other valuables when you're working as a volunteer.

What to do if you must make a claim on insurance? If you damage anything during one of your shifts, we ask you to inform your coordinator or the volunteer's coordinator immediately.

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