

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

Job Title: Head Usher

Reports to: House Manager

Status: Part Time/Non-Exempt

Hourly Rate: \$21.63/hour

About Paper Mill Playhouse

Founded in 1934, Paper Mill Playhouse has been a cherished New Jersey arts institution for more than 80 years. Paper Mill brings new American Musical Theater to life, with a national reputation that continues to grow. Collaboration with other regional theaters and leading independent producers brings over 200,000 New Jersey audience members annually the best in musical theater, from celebrated revivals to groundbreaking new works. In 2016, Paper Mill received the Regional Theatre Tony award in recognition of its contribution to the national field, the industry's highest honor.

Paper Mill Playhouse facilities include a 1,150-seat theater with attendant backstage dressing rooms, offices, and production support areas; front-of-house lobbies with bars, concessions and restroom facilities; an 80-seat restaurant; a small house with two apartments; 2,500 square feet of education studios; three parking lots and grounds.

Position Overview

The Head Usher assists House Manager and Assistant House Manager in overseeing daily front-of-house operations, ensuring a positive, comfortable, and safe theater experience for all guests from arrival through departure. In addition to performing all core usher duties, the Head Usher provides additional support through usher task coordination, venue readiness, and serving as a key point of contact for usher teams during performances.

This role does not carry formal supervisory responsibilities but requires leadership, communication and team coordination skills. The Head Usher works closely with House Management to support an efficient, responsive, and welcoming environment.

This role supports a 5-show season and requires availability for evenings, weekends and occasional weekday performances during roughly 5-week production runs.

Essential Functions

All standard Usher responsibilities apply, including:

- Greet patrons warmly and provide excellent customer service throughout the theater experience
- Quickly and accurately scan tickets using provided technology to facilitate timely entry and manage lobby crowd flow
- Assist patrons with locating seats and navigating theater spaces, including those with limited mobility
- Offer support and information regarding accessible seating, assistive listening devices and other accommodations
- Monitor lobbies, aisles, and other public areas before, during, and after performances to ensure cleanliness, order and safety
- Enforce theater policies regarding late seating, photography, food and beverage, and audience behavior in a respectful and clear manner
- Assist and guide patrons during emergency situations under the direction of House Management or designated safety personnel

- Provide assistance to patrons during unexpected issues, including de-escalating complaints and reporting incidents to House Management
- Distribute programs, assist with post-show duties, and help prepare for audience arrival as needed
- Support patrons with accessibility needs and ensure the venue remains safe, clean, and functional throughout events
- Serve as additional eyes and ears for the House Manager and Assistant House Manager, reporting any issues or concerns
- Serve as a positive representative of Paper Mill Playhouse, maintaining a professional and welcoming demeanor at all times
- Participate in briefings or usher orientations prior to performances
- Participate in comprehensive usher training and ongoing performance briefings to ensure readiness
- Other front-of-house duties as assigned by House Management

Additional Head Usher Responsibilities:

- Act as a point of contact for ushers during performances, relaying questions, needs, or concerns to House Management as needed
- Help de-escalate patron concerns or complaints and escalate as appropriate
- Assist with the orientation of new ushers under the guidance of House Management
- Help monitor and restock programs or supplies in public spaces pre-show and during intermission
- Support House Management in preparing the venue and monitoring overall front-of-house readiness

Qualifications

- 1+ years of prior customer service experience in a public-facing role, preferably in theater, museum, or venue setting
- Strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills
- Comfort using radios or other communication devices to coordinate during events
- Ability to multi-task and maintain attention to detail in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to remain calm and patient in high-pressure or emergency situations
- Positive, proactive, and team-oriented attitude
- Ability to follow direction and respond quickly and appropriately to changing circumstances
- Comfortable interacting with a wide range of individuals and committed to providing accessible and inclusive service
- A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion with an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic experiences, free from prejudice and aggressions
- Reliable and punctual for all scheduled shifts
- Familiarity with live theater or event operations is a plus

Physical Qualifications

- Ability to stand for extended periods of time (up to 4+ hours per shift)
- Comfortable walking up and down stairs, including assisting patrons in low-light conditions
- Ability to push, pull, or lift up to 25 lbs (e.g., boxes of programs, assistive devices)
- Ability to accurately and efficiently operate handheld ticket scanning devices for extended periods while managing crowd flow
- Comfortable working in busy, loud, or dimly lit environments, especially during performances and changeovers

- Must be able to safely and efficiently navigate theater, including lobbies, aisles, seating areas and graded walkways

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job, with or without accommodation.

Work Schedule

- Part-time, event-based schedule aligned with Paper Mill Playhouse's production calendar
- Flexible availability to work evenings, weekends, holidays, and weekday performances is required
- Shifts are typically 3-5 hours in length, depending on performance needs

Apply

Paper Mill Playhouse is committed to hiring individuals of diverse backgrounds. We strive to provide our staff with a nurturing and inclusive environment, equal for all employees and optimal for their success. Paper Mill celebrates diversity and believes it enriches our work environment and the work on our stage.

Send cover letter and resume to Recruiting@PaperMill.org with subject line: **Head Usher**. No phone calls, please.

Our Mission

Paper Mill Playhouse entertains, inspires, and enriches lives. As the nation's premier musical theater, we foster a creative environment to advance the art form, educate students, develop future theater lovers, nurture inclusion, and provide access for all.

Paper Mill Playhouse is an **Equal Opportunity Employer** where the spirit of inclusion feeds into everything we do. We are committed to providing an environment of mutual respect where equal employment opportunities are available to all applicants and teammates. We strive to create opportunities, access, resources, and rewards that are available to and benefit everyone. *Paper Mill Playhouse* is committed to equal employment opportunity regardless of races, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, citizenship status, marital status, disability, gender equity, gender expression, and veteran status.