

Tips for Being a Great Volunteer

Thank you for volunteering! Your actions and reactions will enhance (or distract) from the overall learning experience at our event. We are counting on your skills, care, attention and leadership. Here are a few tips to guide you.

1. **Arrive early.** It is important to meet the other volunteers and the volunteer manager in advance, but also to get your final instructions. Some things will have changed, and new situations will have come up since you last checked in – you need to be abreast on everything. Arrive early and give yourself time to scope things out and settle in.
2. **Greet everyone warmly.** For many participants your greeting is the first thing they experience. Make it count.
3. **Find ways to be helpful.** Your job is to assist participants with their needs. Of course, you are there to answer questions, however there are many other ways you can be helpful: carry someone's bags or coffee to their seat, open a door, take someone to the room they are looking for, get them an agenda, help them with their coat, or introduce them to one of the speakers. You are there to make things easier.
4. **Be personal.** Introduce yourself to the people you meet, and work to connect authentically with each of them. When they feel they know you (even a little) they will more easily approach you with their questions and concerns.
5. **Smile.** Your face communicates volumes! When participants see a smiling warm face, they see "Hi, how can I help you?" – it's an invitation to ask a question or chat.
6. **Be fully present and attentive.** You will see what is needed and attend quickly to people's needs when you are alert and watching. Please put your phone away and keep chit-chat with friends to a minimum – your priority is the participants.
7. **Add to the experience.** Ensure participants enjoy each short personal interaction with you. You are an important part of the conference experience!
8. **Know the program and the venue well.** Most questions will be about *when* things are happening and *where* things are. Carry an agenda and map, and use them as a visual when helping participants – visual tools can help clarify.
9. **Be confident.** When participants believe you know what you are talking about they will be more likely to trust you with their questions and doubts.
10. **Be visible.** Your badge or name tag will help people know you are a volunteer. However, standing in a visible and well-trafficked area is also important. Make it easy for participants to find you.