ASBF Activities/Volunteers/Other Committee Procedures

Austin String Band Festival · Austin Friends of Traditional Music (AFTM) · Updated January 2026

Organization Timeline

- **June:** Start contacting Kids' Activities entertainers.
- **July:** Prepare volunteer sign-up page. Start finding volunteer area managers.
- **August 1:** Go live with the volunteer sign-up page and the festival web page.
- **August:** Find a manager for the Silent Auction.
- **September 1:** Go live with online ticket sales.
- **September:** Find hosts for Organized Jams.
- **Week of the festival:** Prepare gate lists (volunteers and managers, online ticket sales, activity leaders, organized jam hosts, etc.)

Activities

Kids' Activities

We have activities for children on the Saturday of the festival, generally from about noon through 4PM. Contact the entertainers by mid-June to ensure they save the date for our festival on their calendars.

A variety of activities is encouraged, so if you have an idea for something new, run it by the board!

The following are great options, and have all been at the festival many times:

- Texas Juggling Society – Contact via the form on https://juggling.place.org/
- Crafts with Natasha La Gitana – Contact by text. Ask James or Jeanne for her number.
- Face Painting by Doodle Bug (Betsy Kemper) – Contact by text. Ask James or Jeanne for her number.

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction is a great fundraising activity for AFTM. All items for the auction are donated, either by community members or sometimes by festival sponsors. The auction happens on the Saturday of the festival, usually from about noon to 6PM. Donations for the auction are brought to the festival on Saturday morning.

The auction will need one or two managers to run it. Start finding a potential manager(s) around August. Lee and Janita Thomas ran the auction for 2025 and would be great resources for advice on running it in the future.

Organized Jams

We like to have organized jams with dedicated jam hosts/leaders at the festival. Hosts can be community members or performers (work with the Booking Committee re: performer hosts). Start contacting potential jam hosts by September or earlier, though usually these can be set up pretty close to the festival date. Generally the organized jams are held Saturday late morning to early afternoon. In 2025, we tried a Friday evening welcome jam (Old Time) before stage performances started.

Jams to consider: Slow/Beginner Old Time, Old Time, Irish, Bluegrass, Cajun, and anything else the community might want.

Volunteers

Incentive

We have regular and "Prime" volunteer slots. The "Prime" slots are those that are in the evenings, and thus harder to fill, or for more difficult or more specialized jobs.

- Prime slot volunteers get a full weekend pass to the festival.
- Regular slot volunteers get a free day or 50% off a weekend pass (it works out to about the same, unless they have other discounts like the membership discount).
- Camping is extra in either case.

Sign-Up Page

Create a volunteer sign-up page, with a targeted go-live date of August 1.

Start creating the sign-up page in July, and have it reviewed by the board and other committee chairs to ensure their volunteer needs are covered, with any adjustments from the previous year.

In 2025, we used TallyCal, and paid for its "pro" level from July through October. It worked well. The 2025 sign-up page was a useful reference (tallycal.com/p/asbf2025). Here is an archive of that page in case it is taken down.

Managers

Each area of volunteering should have a manager in charge. The manager is generally a board member, but doesn't have to be. Non-board member volunteer managers get a free festival pass. Start soliciting volunteer area managers around July. Work with the board, friends, relatives, etc. to get managers for these areas:

- **Merchandise** – Coordinate setup and tear down of the Merch booth, train volunteers on the register system and how to work the booth, etc.
- **Front Gate** – Coordinate setup and tear down of the Front Gate, train volunteers on the register system, be available to help with any gate issues, etc.

- **Green Room** – Purchase the food and drink for the Green Room, coordinate its setup and tear down, train volunteers, etc. Sharon Isaac was the Green Room manager for 2025 and would be a great resource for advice for the next one.
- **Grounds** – This will be the chair of the Grounds Committee most likely.
- **Stage Manager** – Coordinates the stage during the festival, ensuring that bands start and end in a timely manner. Works with the MCs. Jeanne DeFriese was the stage manager for 2025 and would be a great resource for the next one.

Volunteer Sign-Up Promotion

Getting the word out about the sign-up page is very important to ensure that we get volunteers to sign-up. This can be done via the AFTM email list (hosted on MailChimp), the AFTM website, the AFTM Facebook page, the AFTM Instagram, etc. Requests for volunteers should be made early and often as they are critical to making the festival run. Start the same day the sign-up page goes live (August 1) with a Facebook post, Instagram post, and email blast. Continue with regular posts and requests every two weeks, with increasing frequency as the festival date approaches.

Volunteer Gate List

Create a sign-in sheet (Excel works well) for the festival Front Gate so that volunteers can check-in and get their free or discounted festival pass. Work with the Front Gate manager to ensure that the list is in a good, usable format for the gate.

The finalized list should be in the Front Gate manager's possession by the time that admissions formally open, usually around noon on the Friday of the festival, if not sooner.

Online Ticket Sales

Prepare the online ticket site so that it is ready to go live on September 1. We use TicketTailor for our online sales, of both festival passes and camping. The previous year's festival event in TicketTailor can be duplicated and adjusted for the current year.

For the month of September, we have a $5 discount on all festival passes purchased online. The discount should be configured to end on September 30. All online sales end one week before the festival so that we have enough time to pull together gate check-in lists (tickets are still available to be purchased at the gate during the festival).

AFTM members get an additional $5 discount on festival passes. Work with the Membership Coordinator to get a list of active members' email addresses so that they can be emailed a discount code to use on TicketTailor. Email members this code when the ticket site goes live on September 1.

Gate List

Prepare a check-in sheet of all prepaid tickets for the admissions gate. TicketTailor has a nice export option that makes this pretty easy. Make sure it is available for the admissions gate by Thursday or Friday morning of the festival weekend.

Festival Web Page

Work with the AFTM webmaster (Adam Brodkin) to get the festival web page created on aftm.us. It is a good idea to get it created at the latest by August 1 to coincide with the start of volunteer sign-ups, but earlier is even better. It does not need all information when it goes live, as more details can be added as the festival plans solidify.